PHILOSOPHY AS A LIFE STRATEGY AND BASICS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY



Philosophy sourcebook

DROGOBYCH IVAN FRANKO STATE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY AS A LIFE STRATEGY AND BASICS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY

PHILOSOPHY SOURCEBOOK

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Reviewers:
Nadiia Pavlivna Hapon – Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor at the Department of Psychology, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv.
Vira Dmytrivna Slipetska – Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of the English Language Practice and Methods of Teaching, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University.
Valentyna Ivanivna Stets – Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, Associate Professor at the Department of Social Pedagogy and Social Work, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv.

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The reader is offered a chrestomathy that serves as one of the means of realizing the central aim of the author's philosophical and anthropological course "Philosophy as a Life Strategy and Basics of Psychotherapy." At its center is the individual – immersed in the world of culture, history, and social challenges, as well as in their own inner space of lived experience, unconscious motives, and traumatic experience.

We hope that this publication will become a space for dialogue between philosophical tradition and the demands of contemporary life, and will help preserve inner calm and psychological integrity in a world of radical change and "de-humanization" trends.

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FROM THE COMPILERS

The reader now holds a chrestomathy that serves as one of the means of realizing the central aim of the author's philosophical and anthropological course “Philosophy as a Life Strategy and Basics of Psychotherapy.” At its center stands the human being – immersed in the world of culture, history, and social challenges, as well as in their own inner space of experience, unconscious motives, and traumatic experience. Philosophizing here appears as a space of therapeutic thinking – as a culture of working with the soul, meaning, and inner integrity. This approach reveals a deep kinship between philosophical anthropology and contemporary psychotherapeutic practices, without equating or substituting one for the other.

This becomes especially relevant amid instability, the fluidity of social life, social ruptures, wars, and cultural traumas, when issues of meaning, endurance, and the integrity of human existence take on extreme urgency. In this context, the categories of life and health, happiness and frustration, success and failure are analyzed, along with the role of time and historical circumstance in shaping life decisions.

We sought to combine classical philosophical ideas – from Confucianism and Buddhism, Socratic care of the

soul, and Stoic practices, to contemporary searches for happiness and meaning – with the focus on the student's personal experience, inner conflicts, and questions. In particular, the texts may prompt an existential experiment: an attempt (even if only for a time) to live according to the strategy of a particular philosophical school.

Working with this chrestomathy involves practicing specific exercises adapted for the contemporary individual. These include tracking one's thoughts (Stoic Mindfulness), shifting perspective to reduce anxiety (View from Above), psychological preparation for hardship (Premeditatio Malorum), and regular reflection through journaling. By integrating elements of cognitive therapy with the authors' spiritual experience, the chrestomathy offers practices for attaining a state of virtuous living and inner balance.

All these techniques can be useful in crisis situations. “Yet,” in the words of P. Hadot, “we must not allow them to make us forget that what is most important is the profound orientation of our lives, the fundamental choice of a life, which engages us passionately. The problem is not so much to repress such-and-such a passion, as it is to learn to see things 'from above,' in the grandiose perspective of universal nature and of humanity,

compared to which many passions may appear ridiculously insignificant.”

We hope that this publication will become a space for dialogue between philosophical tradition and the demands of contemporary life, between theoretical reflection and personal inner work. It is addressed to those for whom philosophy is not merely an academic discipline, but a way of thinking that helps preserve inner calm and psychological integrity in a world of radical change and human "de-humanization."

We are aware of how responsible and challenging the task of selecting texts for this chrestomathy is, as these texts represent only small fragments of humanity’s spiritual quests. Firstly, it is impossible to fully represent the major figures of European and Eastern philosophy in a work of this kind. Secondly, such collections inevitably involve an element of subjectivity. Thirdly, this is only one possible path for a young person’s encounter with philosophy.

We remain open to and grateful for thoughtful suggestions and constructive advice.

INSTEAD OF A FOREWORD



PIERRE HADOT
PHILOSOPHY AS A WAY OF LIFE[1]

To take flight every day! At least for a moment, which may be brief, as long as it is intense. A "spiritual exercise" every day - either alone, or in the company of someone who also wishes to better himself. Spiritual exercises. Step out of duration ... try to get rid of your own passions, vanities, and the itch for talk about your own name, which sometimes burns you like a chronic disease. Avoid backbiting. Get rid of pity and hatred. Love all free human beings. Become eternal by transcending yourself.

This work on yourself is necessary; this ambition justified. Lots of people let themselves be wholly absorbed by militant politics and the preparation for social revolution. Rare, much more rare, are they who, in order to prepare for the revolution, are willing to make themselves worthy of it.

With the exception of the last few lines, doesn't this text look like a pastiche of Marcus Aurelius? It is by Georges Friedmann,' and it is quite possible that, when he wrote it, the author was not

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[1] Hadot P. Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault. /Translated by Michael Chase. Oxford : Blackwell Publishers Ltd. 1995. P. 81–93.

aware of the resemblance. Moreover, in the rest of his book, in which he seeks a place "to re-source himself",' he comes to the conclusion that there is no tradition – be it Jewish, Christian, or Oriental – compatible with contemporary spiritual demands. Curiously, however, he does not ask himself about the value of the philosophical tradition of Greco-Roman antiquity, although the lines we have just quoted show to just what extent ancient tradition continues – albeit unconsciously – to live within him, as it does within each of us.

"Spiritual exercises." The expression is a bit disconcerting for the contemporary reader. In the first place, it is no longer quite fashionable these days to use the word "spiritual." It is nevertheless necessary to use this term, I believe, because none of the other adjectives we could use – "psychic," "moral," "ethical," "intellectual," "of thought," "of the soul" – covers all the reality we want to describe. Since, in these exercises, it is thought that must modify itself, it would be possible for us to speak in terms of "thought exercises." Yet the word "thought" does not indicate clearly enough that imagination and sensibility play a very important role in these exercises. For the same reason, we cannot be satisfied with "intellectual exercises," although such intellectual factors as definition, division, ratiocination, reading, investigation, and rhetorical amplification play a large role in them.

"Ethical exercises" is a rather tempting expression, since, as we shall see, the exercises in question contribute in a powerful way to the therapeutics of the passions, and have to do with the conduct of life. Yet, here again, this would be too limited a view of things. As we can glimpse through Friedmann's text, these exercises in fact correspond to a transformation of our vision of the

world, and to a metamorphosis of our personality. The word "spiritual" is quite apt to make us understand that these exercises are the result, not merely of thought, but of the individual's entire psychism. Above all, the word "spiritual" reveals the true dimensions of these exercises. By means of them, the individual raises himself up to the life of the objective Spirit; that is to say, he re-places himself within the perspective of the Whole ("Become eternal by transcending yourself").

Here our reader may say, "All right, we'll accept the expression 'spiritual exercises.' But are we talking about Ignatius of Loyola's Exercitia spiritualia? What relationship is there between Ignatian meditations and Friedmann's program of 'stepping out of duration ... becoming eternal by transcending oneself'?"

Our reply, quite simply, is that Ignatius' Exercitia spiritualia are nothing but a Christian version of a Greco-Roman tradition, the extent of which we hope to demonstrate in what follows. In the first place, both the idea and the terminology of exercitium spirituale are attested in early Latin Christianity, well before Ignatius of Loyola, and they correspond to the Greek Christian term askesis. In turn, askesis – which must be understood not as asceticism, but as the practice of spiritual exercises – already existed within the philosophical tradition of antiquity. In the final analysis, it is to antiquity that we must return in order to explain the origin and significance of this idea of spiritual exercises, which, as Friedmann's example shows, is still alive in contemporary consciousness.

The goal of the present chapter is not merely to draw attention to the existence of spiritual exercises in Greco-Latin antiquity, but above all to delimit the scope and importance of the phenomenon,

and to show the consequences which it entails for the understanding not only of ancient thought, but of philosophy itself.

That philosophy, for them, was an "exercise." In their view, philosophy did not consist in teaching an abstract theory, much less in the exegesis of texts, but rather in the art of living. It is a concrete attitude and determinate lifestyle, which engages the whole of existence. The philosophical act is not situated merely on the cognitive level, but on that of the self and of being. It is a progress which causes us to be more fully, and makes us better. It is a conversion which turns our entire life upside down, changing the life of the person who goes through it. It raises the individual from an inauthentic condition of life, darkened by unconsciousness and harassed by worry, to an authentic state of life, in which he attains self-consciousness, an exact vision of the world, inner peace, and freedom.

In the view of all philosophical schools, mankind's principal cause of suffering, disorder, and unconsciousness were the passions: that is, unregulated desires and exaggerated fears. People are prevented from truly living, it was taught, because they are dominated by worries. Philosophy thus appears, in the first place, as therapeutics of the passions (in the words of Friedmann: "Try to get rid of your own passions"). Each school had its own therapeutic method, but all of them linked their therapeutics to a profound transformation of the individual's mode of seeing and being. The object of spiritual exercises is precisely to bring about this transformation.

To begin with, let us consider the example of the Stoics. For them, all mankind's woes derive from the fact that he seeks to acquire or to keep possessions that he may either lose or fail to

obtain, and from the fact that he tries to avoid misfortunes which are often inevitable. The task of philosophy, then, is to educate people, so that they seek only the goods they are able to obtain, and try to avoid only those evils which it is possible to avoid. In order for something good to be always obtainable, or an evil always avoidable, they must depend exclusively on man's freedom; but the only things which fulfill these conditions are moral good and evil. They alone depend on us; everything else does not depend on us. Here, "everything else," which does not depend on us, refers to the necessary linkage of cause and effect, which is not subject to our freedom. It must be indifferent to us: that is, we must not introduce any differences into it, but accept it in its entirety, as willed by fate. This is the domain of nature.

We have here a complete reversal of our usual way of looking at things. We are to switch from our "human" vision of reality, in which our values depend on our passions, to a "natural" vision of things, which replaces each event within the perspective of universal nature.

Such a transformation of vision is not easy, and it is precisely here that spiritual exercises come in. Little by little, they make possible the indispensable metamorphosis of our inner self. No systematic treatise codifying the instructions and techniques for spiritual exercises has come down to us. However, allusions to one or another of such inner activities are very frequent in the writings of the Roman and Hellenistic periods. It thus appears that these exercises were well known, and that it was enough to allude to them, since they were a part of daily life in the philosophical schools. They took their place within a traditional course of oral instruction.

Thanks to Philo of Alexandria, however, we do possess two lists of spiritual exercises. They do not completely overlap, but they do have the merit of giving us a fairly complete panorama of Stoic-Platonic inspired philosophical therapeutics. One of these lists enumerates the following elements: research (zetesis), thorough investigation (skepsis), reading (anagnosis), listening (akroasis), attention (prosochē), self-mastery (enkrateia), and indifference to indifferent things. The other names successively: reading, meditations (meletai), therapies of the passions, remembrance of good things, self-mastery (enkrateia), and the accomplishment of duties. With the help of these lists, we shall be able to give a brief description of Stoic spiritual exercises. We shall study the following groups in succession: first attention, then meditations and "remembrances of good things," then the more intellectual exercises: reading, listening, research, and investigation, and finally the more active exercises: self-mastery, accomplishment of duties, and indifference to indifferent things.

Attention (prosochē) is the fundamental Stoic spiritual attitude. It is a continuous vigilance and presence of mind, self-consciousness which never sleeps, and a constant tension of the spirit. Thanks to this attitude, the philosopher is fully aware of what he does at each instant, and he wills his actions fully. Thanks to his spiritual vigilance, the Stoic always has "at hand" (procheiron) the fundamental rule of life: that is, the distinction between what depends on us and what does not. As in Epicureanism, so for Stoicism: it is essential that the adepts be supplied with a fundamental principle which is formulable in a few words, and extremely clear and simple, precisely so that it may remain easily accessible to the mind, and be applicable with the

sureness and constancy of a reflex. "You must not separate yourself from these general principles; don't sleep, eat, drink, or converse with other men without them".

It is this vigilance of the spirit which lets us apply the fundamental rule to each of life's particular situations, and always to do what we do "appropriately". We could also define this attitude as "concentration on the present moment": Everywhere and at all times, it is up to you to rejoice piously at what is occurring at the present moment, to conduct yourself with justice towards the people who are present here and now, and to apply rules of discernment.

Attention (prosochē) allows us to respond immediately to events, as if they were questions asked of us all of a sudden. In order for this to be possible, we must always have the fundamental principles "at hand" (procheiron). We are to steep ourselves in the rule of life (kanōn), by mentally applying it to all life's possible different situations, just as we assimilate a grammatical or mathematical rule through practice, by applying it to individual cases. In this case, however, we are not dealing with mere knowledge, but with the transformation of our personality.

We must also associate our imagination and affectivity with the training of our thought. Here, we must bring into play all the psychagogic techniques and rhetorical methods of amplification. We must formulate the rule of life to ourselves in the most striking and concrete way. We must keep life's events "before our eyes," and see them in the light of the fundamental rule. This is known as the exercise of memorization (mnēmē) and meditation (meletē) on the rule of life.

The exercise of meditation allows us to be ready at the moment when an unexpected – and perhaps dramatic – circumstance occurs. In the exercise called praemeditatio malorum we are to represent to ourselves poverty, suffering, and death. We must confront life's difficulties face to face, remembering that they are not evils, since they do not depend on us. This is why we must engrave striking maxims in our memory, so that, when the time comes, they can help us accept such events, which are, after all, part of the course of nature; we will thus have these maxims and sentences "at hand". What we need are persuasive formulae or arguments (epilogismoi), which we can repeat to ourselves in difficult circumstances, so as to check movements of fear, anger, or sadness.

First thing in the morning, we should go over in advance what we have to do during the course of the day, and decide on the principles which will guide and inspire our actions. In the evening, we should examine ourselves again, so as to be aware of the faults we have committed or the progress we have made. We should also examine our dreams.

As we can see, the exercise of meditation is an attempt to control inner discourse, in an effort to render it coherent. The goal is to arrange it around a simple, universal principle: the distinction between what does and does not depend on us, or between freedom and nature. Whoever wishes to make progress strives, by means of dialogue with himself or with others, as well as by writing, to carry on his inquiries in due order, and finally at a complete transformation of his representation of the world, his inner climate, and his outer behavior. These methods testify to a deep knowledge of the therapeutic powers of the world.

The exercise of meditation and memorization requires nourishment. This is where the more specifically intellectual exercises, as enumerated by Philo, come in: reading, listening, research, and investigation. It is a relatively simple matter to provide food for meditation: one could read the sayings of the poets and philosophers, for instance, or the apophthegmata. "Reading," however, could also include the explanation of specifically philosophical texts, works written by teachers in philosophical schools. Such texts could be read or heard within the framework of the philosophical instruction given by a professor.

Fortified by such instruction, the disciple would be able to study with precision the entire speculative edifice which sustained and justified the fundamental rule, as well as all the physical and logical research of which this rule was the summary. "Research" and "investigation" were the result of putting instruction into practice. For example, we are to get used to defining objects and events from a physical point of view, that is, we must picture them as they are when situated within the cosmic Whole. Alternatively, we can divide or dissect events in order to recognize the elements into which they can be reduced.

Finally, we come to the practical exercises, intended to create habits. Some of these are very much "interior," and very close to the thought exercises we have just discussed. "Indifference to indifferent things," for example, was nothing other than the application of the fundamental rule. Other exercises, such as self-mastery and fulfilling the duties of social life, entailed practical forms of behavior. Here again, we encounter Friedmann's themes: "Try to get rid of your own passions, vanities, and the itch for talk

about your own name ... Avoid backbiting. Get rid of pity and hatred. Love all free human beings".

There are a large number of treatises relating to these exercises in Plutarch: On Restraining Anger, On Peace of Mind, On Brotherly Love, On the Love of Children, On Garrulity, On the Love of Wealth, On False Shame, On Envy and Hatred. Seneca also composed works of the same genre: On Anger, On Benefits, On Peace of Mind, On Leisure. In this kind of exercise, one very simple principle is always recommended: begin practicing on easier things, so as gradually to acquire a stable, solid habit.

But it will perhaps come as a surprise to learn that Epicureanism, usually considered the philosophy of pleasure, gives just as prominent a place as Stoicism to precise practices which are nothing other than spiritual exercises. The reason for this is that, for Epicurus just as much as for the Stoics, philosophy is a therapeutics: "We must concern ourselves with the healing of our own lives." In this context, healing consists in bringing one's soul back from the worries of life to the simple joy of existing. People's unhappiness, for the Epicureans, comes from the fact that they are afraid of things which are not to be feared, and desire things which it is not necessary to desire, and which are beyond their control. Consequently, their life is consumed in worries over unjustified fears and unsatisfied desires. As a result, they are deprived of the only genuine pleasure there is: the pleasure of existing. This is why Epicurean physics can liberate us from fear: it can show us that the gods have no effect on the progress of the world and that death, being complete dissolution, is not a part of life. Epicurean ethics can deliver us from desires by distinguishing between desires which are both natural and necessary, desires which are natural

but not necessary, and desires which are neither natural nor necessary. It is enough to satisfy the first category of desires, and give up the last – and eventually the second as well – in order to ensure the absence of worries and to reveal the sheer joy of existing: "The cries of the flesh are: 'Not to be hungry', 'not to be thirsty', 'not to be cold'. For if one enjoys the possession of this, and the hope of continuing to possess it, he might rival even Zeus in happiness." This is the source of the feeling of gratitude, which one would hardly have expected, which illuminates what one might call Epicurean piety towards all things: "Thanks be to blessed Nature, that she has made what is necessary easy to obtain, and what is not easy unnecessary".

Spiritual exercises are required for the healing of the soul. Like the Stoics, the Epicureans advise us to meditate upon and assimilate, "day and night," brief aphorisms or summaries which will allow us to keep the fundamental dogmas "at hand". For instance, there is the well-known tetrapharmakos, or four-fold healing formula: "God presents no fears, death no worries. And while good is readily attainable, evil is readily endurable." The abundance of collections of Epicurean aphorisms is a response to the demands of the spiritual exercise of meditation. As with the Stoics, however, the study of the dogmatic treatises of the school's great founders was also an exercise intended to provide material for meditation, so as more thoroughly to impregnate the soul with the fundamental intuitions of Epicureanism.

The study of physics is a particularly important spiritual exercise: "we should not think that any other end is served by knowledge of celestial phenomena than freedom from disturbance and firm confidence, just as in the other fields of study."

Contemplation of the physical world can bring about a complete change in our way of looking at things. The closed universe is infinitely dilated, and we derive from this spectacle a unique spiritual pleasure…

Meditation, however, be it simple or erudite, is not the only Epicurean spiritual exercise. To cure the soul, it is not necessary, as the Stoics would have it, to train it to stretch itself tight, but rather to train it to relax. Instead of picturing misfortunes in advance, so as to be prepared to bear them, we must rather, say the Epicureans, detach our thought from the vision of painful things, and fix our eyes on pleasurable ones. We are to relive memories of past pleasures, and enjoy the pleasures of the present, recognizing how intense and agreeable these present pleasures are. We have here a quite distinctive spiritual exercise, different from the constant vigilance of the Stoic, with his constant readiness to safeguard his moral liberty at each instant. Instead, Epicureanism preaches the deliberate, continually renewed choice of relaxation and serenity, combined with a profound gratitude toward nature and life, which constantly offer us joy and pleasure, if only we know how to find them.

By the same token, the spiritual exercise of trying to live in the present moment is very different for Stoics and Epicureans. For the former, it means mental tension and constant wakefulness of the moral conscience; for the latter, it is, as we have seen, an invitation to relaxation and serenity. Worry, which tears us in the direction of the future, hides from us the incomparable value of the simple fact of existing: "We are born once, and cannot be born twice, but for all time must be no more. But you, who are not master of tomorrow, postpone your happiness: life is wasted in

procrastination and each one of us dies overwhelmed with cares." This is the doctrine contained in Horace's famous saying: carpe diem.

<...>

The practice of spiritual exercises is likely to be rooted in traditions going back to immemorial times. It is, however, the figure of Socrates that causes them to emerge into Western consciousness, for this figure was, and has remained, the living call to awaken our moral consciousness. We ought not to forget that this call sounded forth within a specific form: that of dialogue. In the "Socratic" dialogue, the question truly at stake is not to ti is being talked about, but who is doing the talking.

Anyone who is close to Socrates and enters into conversation with him is liable to be drawn into an argument, and whatever subject he may start, he will be continually carried round and round by him, until at last he finds that he has to give an account both of his present and past life, and when he is once entangled, Socrates will not let him go until he has completely and thoroughly sifted him... And I think there is no harm in being reminded of any wrong thing which we are, or have been, doing; he who does not run away from criticism will be sure to take more heed of his afterlife.

In a "Socratic" dialogue, Socrates' interlocutor does not learn anything, and Socrates has no intention of teaching him anything. He repeats, moreover, to all who are willing to listen, that the only thing he knows is that he does not know anything. Yet, like an indefatigable horsefly, Socrates harassed his interlocutors with questions which put themselves into question, forcing them to pay attention to and take care of themselves.

Meditation – the practice of dialogue with oneself – seems to have held a place of honor among Socrates' disciples. When Antisthenes was asked what profit he had derived from philosophy, he replied: "The ability to converse with myself." The intimate connection between dialogue with others and dialogue with oneself is profoundly significant. Only he who is capable of a genuine encounter with the other is capable of an authentic encounter with himself, and the converse is equally true. Dialogue can be genuine only within the framework of presence to others and to oneself. From this perspective, every spiritual exercise is a dialogue, insofar as it is an exercise of authentic presence, to oneself and to others.

The borderline between "Socratic" and "Platonic" dialogue is impossible to delimit. Yet the Platonic dialogue is always "Socratic" in inspiration, because it is an intellectual and, in the last analysis, a "spiritual" exercise. This characteristic of the Platonic dialogue needs to be emphasized.

Platonic dialogues are model exercises. They are models, in that they are not transcriptions of real dialogues, but literary compositions which present an ideal dialogue. And they are exercises precisely insofar as they are dialogues: we have already seen, apropos of Socrates, the dialectical character of all spiritual exercises. A dialogue is an itinerary of thought, whose route is traced by the constantly maintained accord between questioner and respondent. In opposing his method to that of eristics, Plato strongly emphasizes this point: "When two friends, like you and I, feel like talking, we have to go about it in a gentler and more dialectical way. "More dialectical," it seems to me, means that we must not merely give true responses, but that we must base our

replies only on that which our interlocutor admits that he himself knows".

The dimension of the interlocutor is, as we can see, of capital importance. It is what prevents the dialogue from becoming a theoretical, dogmatic exposition, and forces it to be a concrete, practical exercise. For the point is not to set forth a doctrine, but rather to guide the interlocutor towards a determinate mental attitude. It is a combat, amicable but real.

As a dialectical exercise, the Platonic dialogue corresponds exactly to a spiritual exercise. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, discreetly but genuinely, the dialogue guides the interlocutor – and the reader – towards conversion. Dialogue is only possible if the interlocutor has a real desire to dialogue: that is, if he truly wants to discover the truth, desires the Good from the depths of his soul, and agrees to submit to the rational demands of the Logos. His act of faith must correspond to that of Socrates: "It is because I am convinced of its truth that I am ready, with your help, to inquire into the nature of virtue".

In fact, the dialectical effort is an ascent in common towards the truth and towards the Good, "which every soul pursues." Furthermore, in Plato's view, every dialectical exercise, precisely because it is an exercise of pure thought, subject to the demands of the Logos, turns the soul away from the sensible world, and allows it to convert itself towards the Good. It is the spirit's itinerary towards the divine.

<…>

In the preceding pages, we have tried to describe – albeit too briefly – the richness and variety of the practice of spiritual

exercises in antiquity. We have seen that, at first glance, they appear to vary widely.

All schools agree that man, before his philosophical conversion, is in a state of unhappy disquiet. Consumed by worries, torn by passions, he does not live a genuine life, nor is he truly himself. All schools also agree that man can be delivered from this state. He can accede to genuine life, improve himself, transform himself, and attain a state of perfection. It is precisely for this that spiritual exercises are intended. Their goal is a kind of self-formation, or paideia, which is to teach us to live, not in conformity with human prejudices and social conventions – for social life is itself a product of the passions – but in conformity with the nature of man, which is none other than reason. Each in its own way, all schools believed in the freedom of the will, thanks to which man has the possibility to modify, improve, and realize himself. Underlying this conviction is the parallelism between physical and spiritual exercises: just as, by dint of repeated physical exercises, athletes give new form and strength to their bodies, so the philosopher develops his strength of soul, modifies his inner climate, transforms his vision of the world, and, finally, his entire being. The analogy seems all the more self-evident in that the gymnasion, the place where physical exercises were practiced, was the same place where philosophy lessons were given; in other words, it was also the place for training in spiritual gymnastics.

The quest for self-realization, final goal of spiritual exercises, is well symbolized by the Plotinian image of sculpting one's own statue. It is often misunderstood, since people imagine that this expression corresponds to a kind of moral aestheticism. On this interpretation, its meaning would be to adopt a pose, to select an

attitude, or to fabricate a personality for oneself. In fact, it is nothing of the sort. For the ancients, sculpture was an art which "took away," as opposed to painting, an art which "added on." The statue pre-existed in the marble block, and it was enough to take away what was superfluous in order to cause it to appear.

One conception was common to all the philosophical schools: people are unhappy because they are the slave of their passions. In other words, they are unhappy because they desire things they may not be able to obtain, since they are exterior, alien, and superfluous to them. It follows that happiness consists in independence, freedom, and autonomy. In other words, happiness is the return to the essential: that which is truly "ourselves," and which depends on us.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE TEXTS

Much of the work with this sourcebook involves not only reading and discussing philosophical texts, but also engaging in "spiritual exercises" aimed at self-observation and self-reflection. Their primary purpose is not merely to acquire knowledge, but to test, through one's own experience, the idea that living a reflective, intentional (philosophical) life is worthwhile for its own sake.

Such work cannot, in our view, be adequately assessed through grades or numerical scores. Instead, the primary form of feedback will be comments on students' journal entries. The true measure of success is whether these practices become a resource for leading a more thoughtful, reflective, meaningful, and fulfilling life. This is something no instructor can assess, and it may well be that you yourself will only be able to appreciate their value long after the course has ended.

WE HOPE THAT ENGAGING WITH THESE EXERCISES WILL BECOME A SINCERE AND RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE OF CARING FOR ONESELF

THE DHAMMAPADA

A COLLECTION OF VERSES; BEING ONE OF THE CANONICAL BOOKS OF THE BUDDHISTS

Dear friend, before you are excerpts from the Dhammapada. This is neither mythology nor a promise of happiness in an afterlife, but a profound understanding of the fact that life is suffering, of what causes suffering, and of what can be done about it. The Buddha begins not with a god or a ritual, but with a thought: “All that we are is the result of what we have thought.” Indeed, the most dangerous “affliction” is found not in the body, but in our minds!

1. Craving is depicted as a shoot that grows like a creeping vine, until its very root is torn out. As long as the root of craving remains alive, suffering returns again and again “ – as a tree, even though it has been cut down, is firm so long as its root is safe, and grows again, thus, unless the feeders of thirst are destroyed, the pain (of life) will return again and again.”

Practice

Over the course of several days, observe one particular recurring desire (something you want to buy, obtain, or achieve). Each time it arises, try to name it plainly: “this is craving” – and notice whether satisfying it would truly bring peace.

Diary

Which desire did you choose to observe? How many times did it arise over these days?

Did you notice that as soon as one desire was satisfied, another followed right after it?

Try to describe what actually forms the “root” of this desire, rather than only its surface expression.

2. If a person acts or speaks with an evil thought, suffering follows them – "as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage." A telling example is that of an insult: as long as a person clings to the thought "he insulted me, he beat me, he robbed me," hatred does not cease; once that thought is let go, it ceases. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me"д – in those who harbour such thoughts, hatred will never cease. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me"ж – in those who do not harbour such thoughts, hatred will cease. For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love – this is an ancient rule.

Practice

Over the course of several days, follow one specific instance of insult or irritation. Notice the moment when you mentally "replay" the wrong done to you ("he did such-and-such to me"). Try to consciously let go of that particular thought – not of the event itself, which has already happened and cannot be changed.

Diary

What happened to your irritation when you tried to let go of the thought about the event, rather than denying the fact itself?

Were you able to apply the rule that "hatred ceases by love" – even simply by trying to wish well to the person who offended you? To meet the situation with kindness?

3. The mind is compared to a fish taken out of water – it trembles, thrashes, tries to flee: "As a fish taken from his watery home and thrown on dry ground, that mind quivers, in order to escape the dominion of Mara (the tempter)." The Buddha says that a tamed mind brings happiness, while an untamed one does us greater harm than an enemy does to an enemy, or even than our closest

relatives could help us: “Whatever a hater may do to a hater, or an enemy to an enemy, a wrongly-directed mind will do us greater mischief.”

Practice

Choose a few moments during the day when you notice your thoughts “scattering” – anxiety, replaying the future or the past. Simply note the moment to yourself: “my mind is restless right now,” without trying to fix anything immediately.

Diary

How many times a day did you notice your mind “scattering,” and in which situations did this happen most often?

What changed when you simply noticed this state, without struggling against it right away?

The Dhammapada says that an untamed mind does more harm than an enemy. Can you recognise in yourself a case where your own thoughts caused more harm than any outside circumstance?

4. “The best of ways is the eightfold” – a path that demands one’s own effort.

Practice

For several days, pay attention to the following: what did I say today without thinking (speech); what did I think that I am ashamed of (mind); what did I do with my body that went against my own principles (action).

Diary

Describe one particular day: what did you say without thinking (speech), what did you think that you are ashamed of (mind), what did you do that went against your own principles (action)?

Which of the three – speech, mind, or action – was hardest to control? Give an example.

Did it happen that you knew the right thing to do but did not do it? Describe that moment.

Your Possible Life Strategy (In Place of a Conclusion)

The Dhammapada does not leave love outside the path that leads out of suffering – on the contrary, it places love at the very foundation of Buddhist practice: “hatred does not cease by hatred, it ceases by love”; “let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good.” How close is this idea to your own view of the world?

CONFUCIUS
THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS
(FROM THE CHINESE CLASSICS)

Dear friend, before you is not a system of dogmas, but a collection of short conversations and instructions from a man who spent his whole life teaching not “how to think” but “how to be” – a son, a friend, a student, an official, a person among people. Confucius says almost nothing about the soul apart from relationships: for him, virtue is always tested in a concrete act – at home, at work, in conversation. Read these fragments not as proverbs from the past, but as questions about how honestly you fulfil the roles that already rest upon you.

1. The disciple Zeng examined himself daily on three points: “whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere; whether I may have not mastered and practised the instructions of my teacher.” This is not an abstract conscience, but a concrete daily report to oneself.

Practice

For several days, each evening ask yourself these same three questions of Confucius – without changing or softening them: Was I faithful (conscientious) today in a matter I handled for another person? Was I sincere with those I call friends? Did I actually put into practice what I have been taught (by parents, teachers, my own experience), or do I only know it in theory?

Diary

For each of the three questions, give an honest, specific answer – with an example from today, not a general assessment of "not bad overall."

Which of the three questions was hardest to live up to?

Did anything change in how you spent the next day, knowing that you would have to answer these same three questions again in the evening?

2. When asked about filial piety, Confucius answers different disciples differently: to one he says – do not disobey; to another – be concerned that your parents should not worry; to a third – that mere support of one's parents is worth nothing without reverence, since "even dogs and horses are able to do something in the way of support." In other words, this is not about formal duty, but about the quality of one's presence within the relationship.

Practice

Choose one person close to you (a parent, an elder relative, a mentor) and for several days consciously observe: is your care for them genuine respect and attention, or merely the formal discharge of a duty ("support," in Confucius's words, no different from looking after an animal)? Try, at least once, to do something not because

“it must be done,” but out of real attention to what this particular person actually needs right now.

Diary

Describe a specific interaction with this person over these days. What was mere formality, and what was genuine presence?

Did you notice a difference in your attitude once you became aware of Confucius’s point about respect without formalism?

What did this person probably feel – the indifference of mere “support,” or genuine attention?

3. Confucius constantly contrasts the junzi (the noble, superior man) with the xiaoren (the small, mean man): “the superior man thinks of virtue; the small man thinks of comfort”; “the mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain”; “the superior man is catholic and no partisan; the mean man is partisan and not catholic.”

Practice

For several days, whenever you make any decision – whom to spend time with, whom to help, how to allocate your time – pause for a second and honestly identify which motive is guiding you at that moment: gain or comfort for yourself, or fairness and virtue with regard to the situation as a whole.

Diary

Give 2–3 specific decisions from these days and honestly classify the motive behind each, using Confucius’s contrast.

Were there moments when you noticed in yourself a bias toward your own circle and indifference toward others?

Was it easy to distinguish gain from fairness in a real situation, or did this prove harder than in theory?

4. Confucius repeatedly warns that “fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue,” and also says that “the ancients did not readily give utterance to their words; they were afraid lest their actions should not come up to them.”

Practice

For a day or two, consciously watch for the gap between what you promise or say about yourself and what you actually do. Try, at least once, to deliberately hold back a promise or a bold statement until you are certain you can back it up with action.

Diary

Describe a moment when your words ran ahead of – or did not run ahead of – your actions.

Did you catch yourself putting on an “insinuating appearance” – saying something pleasant without meaning it?

How natural is it for you to hold a pause between word and promise, or did it require effort?

5. The disciple You says: “in practising the rules of propriety, a natural ease is to be prized” – yet this ease, too, must not exist apart from the rules themselves, “without regulating it by the rules of propriety”, or it becomes lawless self-will.

Practice

Find one ritual, custom, or formality in your life (a family tradition, a duty at work, a social norm) and observe for several days: do you carry it out as a living, natural act, or as an empty formality? Try, once, to perform it consciously and sincerely rather than mechanically.

Diary

Which rules, formal duties, or norms did you choose, and how do you usually relate to them?

What changed when you began to perform them consciously rather than automatically?

Confucius also warns of the opposite extreme – ease without rules, which turns into disorder. Do you see in your own life an example where “freedom from form” actually caused harm?

Your Possible Life Strategy (In Place of a Conclusion)

How close is the idea to you that virtue is tested in concrete roles and relationships – as a son, a friend, a subordinate, an elder – rather than in abstract self-improvement apart from other people? Is respect for elders today a myth or a reality?

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA
MORAL LETTERS TO LUCILIUS
(LETTERS FROM A STOIC)

Dear Friend! What follows is more than a philosophical work. It is a collection of letters written by a man who struggled each day with fear, illness, the loss of time, and the thought of death. Rather than moralizing or offering abstract theories, Seneca shared with his friend the wisdom he had gained from his own experience of how to live a truly human life. Read these letters not as a historical document, but as a personal correspondence addressed to you as well.

Letter I. On Saving Time

Practice

For the next few days, try to live according to Seneca's advice: treat time as the only true possession you have. Whenever you catch yourself postponing something until "tomorrow" without a good reason, stop and ask yourself: Is someone – or something – stealing

my time right now? Or am I doing it to myself? At least once during these days, consciously reclaim an hour that you would normally surrender without thinking – to social media, unnecessary conversations, or putting off what truly matters – and devote it to something that is genuinely important.

Diary

How much of your day was spent doing wrong, how much doing nothing, and how much doing things that were not to the purpose? (Seneca's three categories). Was there a moment when you postponed something until "tomorrow"? What was it, and why did you postpone it? Were you able to reclaim some of your time? What did you experience in that moment – a sense of control, or was it difficult to resist your usual habits? Write a few words from the perspective of your tomorrow self: knowing that time never returns, would you approve of the way you lived today?

Letter VII. On Crowds

Practice

For the next few days, pay close attention to the person you become after spending time among crowds – not only in a physical crowd, but also in the constant stream of social media, online comments, group chats, and news feeds. Seneca reminds us that after spending time with the crowd, we do not return home the same people we were when we left; something within us has been corrupted.

For a day or two, deliberately limit your exposure to these streams. Instead, as Seneca advises, withdraw into yourself, and choose to have a deeper conversation with one person rather than scattering your attention among many.

Diary

Did you notice a moment when, after being in a crowd, scrolling through social media, or engaging in an online argument, you became a slightly worse version of yourself – more harsh, more irritable, or more envious? Describe that particular moment.

Were you able to replace scattered attention with a deeper conversation with one person? How did that experience compare with your usual, more superficial interactions with many people?

Seneca quotes Democritus: "One man means as much to me as a multitude, and a multitude only as much as one man." After your experience over the past few days, do you agree with this idea?

Letter XIII. On Groundless Fears

Practice

For the next few days, try to live according to Seneca's advice: do not suffer in advance. Whenever anxiety about the future arises – an examination, an important conversation, a result, an illness – pause and ask yourself the very questions Seneca poses: Is this happening now, or am I only imagining it? Is my fear based on fact, or on rumour or conjecture? Then consciously postpone your anxiety until the moment the problem actually arrives – You will suffer soon enough, when it arrives."

Diary

Describe one specific episode of anxiety during these days. What were you afraid of, and how real did the source of your fear prove to be when you examined the facts?

Did your fear come true? If you still do not know, what is keeping you from being at peace – the facts themselves, or rumour, conjecture, or imagination?

Seneca says that "we suffer more often in imagination than in reality." To what extent was this confirmed by your own experience?

Letter XVI. On Philosophy, the Guide of Life

Practice

In this letter, Seneca emphasizes the distinction between desires that arise from nature (which are limited) and desires that arise from opinion (opinio) – which are limitless. For the next few days, pay close attention to your desires and purchases. Before every new "I want," ask yourself: Is this a genuine need of my body and mind, or is it a desire shaped by comparison with others, advertising, or social status?

Diary

Describe two or three desires or purchases you had during these days, and classify each one: a natural desire or a desire shaped by the opinions of others.

Did you discover a desire that, in Seneca's words, "knows no bounds" – one that grows stronger the more it is satisfied?

How would your day have been different if you had been guided only by your natural needs?

Letter XVIII. On Festivals and Fasting

Practice

Try living for one or two days according to Seneca's advice. Deliberately limit yourself: eat simple food, wear modest clothing, and give up some of your usual comforts (for example, no smartphone in the evening, no ready-made meals, or sleeping on a firm mattress instead of a soft one). The goal is not asceticism for the sake of suffering, but to discover whether such a way of living helps you attain inner peace.

Diary

What did you choose to do without, and for how long did you keep this practice?

What was the most difficult part? What did you miss the most?

After returning to your usual comforts, did your attitude toward them change? Seneca says that the goal is "to stop fearing involuntary poverty." Did you find yourself less afraid of losing material comfort?

Your Possible Life Strategy (Instead of a Conclusion)

Immanuel Kant wrote: “Young man! Deny yourself satisfaction (of amusement, of debauchery, of love, etc.), not with the Stoical intention of complete abstinence, but with the refined Epicurean intention of having in view an ever-growing pleasure. This stinginess with the cash of your vital urge makes you definitely richer through the postponement of pleasure, even if you should, for the most part, renounce the indulgence of it until the end of your life. The awareness of having pleasure under your control is, like everything idealistic, more fruitful and more abundant than everything that satisfies the sense through indulgence because it is thereby simultaneously consumed and consequently lost from the aggregate of totality”.

Letter XXIV. On Despising Death

Practice

Over the next few days, work with three of Seneca's techniques from this letter at the same time.

“Removing the mask” from fear. Each time you feel a fear – of pain, failure, illness, or death – name it plainly, without embellishment: “this is just fear,” “this is just pain,” “this is just uncertainty.”

Break the specific fear down into its parts: what in it is real, and what is a “performance” you are staging for yourself.

“Rehearsing the inevitable.” Choose one situation you fear (a trial, an illness, a loss) and mentally live through it as something that has already happened, rather than something that might happen. Ask yourself: how serious and how long-lasting will this experience really be, once measured honestly rather than through the lens of anxiety?

A foothold of courage. Take one of the examples of courage from the letter (Cato, Mucius, Scipio, Socrates) and consider exactly which inner resource – not heroism in the abstract, but a specific conviction or skill – that person drew on. Put that resource into a short phrase you yourself could use.

Diary

Describe the fear you worked with (technique 1), and what “mask” it wore (exaggeration, an imagined worst-case scenario, etc.).

Describe the situation you “rehearsed in advance” (technique 2). What changed in how serious it seemed, once you measured it honestly?

Which foothold of courage did you take from the example (technique 3), and were you able to use it even once these past few days?

Seneca says that we do not die in one final moment, but lose small pieces of life every day. How did this thought affect your sense of time these past few days?

Epicurus (as quoted by Seneca) says that the fear of death often robs us of life's peace more than death itself does. Do you agree? Give an example from your own experience.

Letter XXVIII. On Travel as a Cure for Discontent

Practice

For a few days, observe your own impulse to “escape” from discomfort – not necessarily through travel, but also through scrolling a feed, making a new purchase, changing your surroundings, or planning a vacation “to get away from yourself.” When you notice this impulse, following Socrates' example from the letter (“why do you wonder that globe-trotting does not help you, seeing that you always take yourself with you?”) – stop, and try to stay within the current situation, working out exactly what is troubling you from within.

Diary

Describe a moment when you wanted to “escape” (physically or mentally) from some state or problem.

What exactly was troubling you, once you stopped and looked at it directly, without escaping?

Did your sense of the problem change after you stayed with it instead of fleeing from it?

Your Possible Life Strategy (Instead of a Conclusion)

The letter ends with the idea that the recognition of one's sin is considered the beginning of salvation, and that a person should prove his own guilt, search out charges against himself, and play the role first of accuser, then of judge, and finally of intercessor, at times being strict with himself. What is the difference between self-criticism and repentance?

Ask yourself sincerely: have I set out on the path of repentance and confession? Am I ready to face the personal challenge of not being a self-satisfied individual, but of striving toward higher levels of

consciousness, psychological health, and spiritual communion with another, with one's neighbor, and ultimately with God.

Letter LXXVIII. On the healing power of the mind

Practice

This letter was written by Seneca himself during a serious illness – he describes how his state of mind (the practice of philosophy, the support of friends) affected the course of his physical suffering. Over the next few days, try working with several of his techniques at once.

Separating the symptom from the anxiety. Whenever you feel physical discomfort (fatigue, a minor illness, pain), track two things separately: the physical symptom itself, and the thoughts or fears that surround it. Consciously support yourself – through conversation with someone close to you, through reading, through something meaningful – and observe whether this changes how the discomfort itself feels.

Testing against “opinion.” Seneca says that pain is slight if opinion has added nothing to it. Choose a moment of discomfort and try to mentally strip away every judgment and apprehension (“this is terrible,” “this will never end”) – leaving only the bare physical fact. Compare how much more, or less, the “naked” symptom troubles you once that added anxiety is removed.

Turning the mind to brave memories. When you feel pain or discomfort, try, as Seneca advises, to deliberately turn your attention to a memory of some brave or worthy deed of your own from the past. Notice whether this changes the intensity of how you experience the discomfort.

An athlete, not a victim. Consider the letter's image of the athlete: he endures blows not because they are pleasant, but for the sake

of victory and the very skill of fighting. Choose one moment of discomfort these days and try treating it as “training” for resilience, rather than as pure suffering.

Diary

Describe the physical state you observed, and, separately, the thoughts or anxieties that accompanied it.

What did you try, in order to support your state of mind (technique 1)? How did this affect your perception of the symptom?

Once you stripped away the “added anxiety” (technique 2), did the symptom seem smaller, or the same?

Were you able to turn your mind to a brave memory (technique 3)? What did this change in how the discomfort felt?

Were you able to view the discomfort as “training” (technique 4), rather than as pure suffering?

Seneca says that study and friendship “saved” him more than his physicians did. Have you seen, in your own experience, a connection between your state of mind and your physical well-being?

If the discomfort these days had been more severe (not a minor ailment, but serious pain), do you think these same techniques would have held up? What would have changed in your reaction?

Letter CVII On obedience to the universal will

Practice

For a few days, try working with three of Seneca's techniques from this letter at the same time.

The “tax” of life. When some small annoyance occurs – someone lets you down, a plan falls through, transportation is delayed, the weather turns bad – instead of indignation, try to accept it as a “tax” owed equally by everyone, rather than as a personal injustice.

Preparing the mind in advance (premeditatio). Choose one difficulty that may arise in the near future and mentally rehearse it beforehand: how will I react, what will I tell myself, when this happens. Seneca says that a person who has prepared beforehand for danger meets it courageously, while the unprepared are frightened even by trifles.

An equal law for all. When an annoyance occurs, remind yourself: this has not happened to you alone – other people suffer, err, and lose things in just the same way, and this is not a misfortune aimed at you personally, but the ordinary course of things, the same for everyone. Try mentally "widening" your annoyance to the scale of humanity as a whole – does it become smaller as a result?

Diary

Describe a specific annoyance from these past few days, and your first reaction to it.

Were you able to apply Seneca's formula (technique 1) – to accept the event as an ordinary "payment" for life among people and nature, rather than as a blow aimed at you personally?

Describe the difficulty you "rehearsed" in advance (technique 2). Did this preparation help once the situation actually happened, or might have happened?

Were you able to apply the idea of an "equal law" (technique 3) – to recognize that the annoyance was not a personal injustice, but an ordinary part of life shared by everyone?

What changed in your emotional state when you tried to submit to necessity instead of resisting it?

Your Possible Life Strategy (Instead of a Conclusion)

Seneca compares submission to fate to a cart tied behind a horse: the obedient soul rides along calmly, while the one who resists is

dragged along regardless. How inclined are you, yourself, to fight against what you can no longer change, and how inclined are you to accept the inevitable calmly? Are there things in your life that are especially hard for you to make peace with?

SØREN AABYE KIERKEGAARD
BETWEEN THE AESTHETICAL AND THE ETHICAL IN THE COMPOSITION OF PERSONALITY

Dear Friend! What lies before you is not merely a philosophical text but a map of the inner traps that shape human life. Read these passages not as theory but as a mirror. As you read, pay attention to the following.

1. Masks and the "Midnight Hour"

Find in the text: The passage where the author says that at midnight everyone must remove their mask.

Question for reflection: Have you ever wondered who you are when there is no audience? If you have become accustomed to merely appearing successful, cheerful, or indifferent, are you afraid that beneath the mask you might discover the emptiness the author calls a "legion"?

Suggestion: Pay close attention to the author's description of the "dissolution" of the self. This is the condition in which a person becomes nothing more than a collection of social roles rather than a genuine self.

2. The Captain Metaphor: Why Is Not Choosing Also a Choice?

Find in the text: The description of the ship racing ahead while the captain hesitates.

Question for reflection: Have there been moments in your life when you spent so much time weighing your options that life made the decision for you? How did you feel afterward – relieved, or as though a part of yourself had been taken away?

Suggestion: Consider the author's central insight: if you do not take the helm now, necessity will choose for you, but you will lose your place as the author of your own life.

3. Despair as a Remedy

Find in the text: The appeal, “Choose despair!”

Question for reflection: Why do you think the author considers despair to be “greater than the angels”? Could it be that complete disillusionment with illusions is the only way to encounter your true self?

Suggestion: Do not be afraid of the word despair in this text. For Kierkegaard, it is not an ending but a spiritual rebirth. It is the moment when you cease to depend on external circumstances.

4. The Trap of Reason (Anesthesia)

Find in the text: The final passage describing “abstract thinking as an anesthetic.”

Question for reflection: Have you ever noticed yourself endlessly analyzing a problem instead of acting? Could your objectivity and rationality become a way of avoiding pain and postponing a decision?

Suggestion: Be careful. The author warns that it is possible to become a brilliant philosopher and yet remain inwardly dead because reason has become your primary defense against real life.

A Possible Way of Living (Instead of a Conclusion)

The aesthete says, “I am what I am” (I make no real choices). The ethicist says, “I become the person I choose to be”.

Your task: After reading the text, ask yourself honestly: Are you still decorating the mask, or are you ready to make the absolute choice of becoming your true self?

VIKTOR E. FRANKL
MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

Viktor Frankl believed that modern people are deeply concerned with the search for the meaning of their own existence. Human beings seek meaning because they are driven by a will to meaning, and they discover it through creativity, love, hope, and suffering. According to Frankl, each person must discover the true meaning of his or her own existence. For Frankl, however, meaning is not the meaning of life in general but the meaning of a particular life situation. Consequently, the meaning of life changes as life situations change.

1. For several days, whenever you find yourself in a difficult or simply important life situation, ask yourself the following questions:

What does this situation – this particular circumstance – require of me? What contribution can I make? What can I do so that, perhaps, something good may still come of this because of me?

As you complete this exercise, first try to set aside your previous knowledge, prejudices, anxious feelings, desires, expectations, and personal interests in order to become open to reality as it is and to perceive the world in its own intrinsic value. Frankl described this as the ability to take the position of an observer – that is, to distance yourself from your own thoughts and emotions.

Diary

What situation did you choose?

What was your first impulse?

How did your understanding of the situation change after asking yourself these questions?

Did you become aware of your own responsibility?

2. Meaning is not invented; it is discovered in the concrete circumstances of life. During difficult times, we do not need the meaning of life; we need the meaning of today.

Diary

For one week, at the beginning of each day, write down what is important for you to do that day: call a loved one, complete a task, visit a doctor, keep yourself from losing control, support your child, hug someone, or accomplish something at work.

3. Suffering does not make us better people, but it can become the material from which we grow. Frankl did not romanticize pain. Even when you are suffering, you do not have to turn that suffering into self-destruction. Suffering has meaning if it transforms the person you become.

Diary

When you are experiencing emotional or physical pain, ask yourself not, "Why is this happening to me?" but rather, "What can I do with this experience so that I do not lose myself?" Record your reflections.

4. Your Possible Life Strategy (Instead of a Conclusion)

Whenever possible, at the end of each day, recall all the goodness and beauty you encountered throughout the day. Reflect on the depth of love you felt for the people you met and for the events of the day. Did you have an opportunity to create something new?

Were you able to view the day's different situations with detachment, from the perspective of an observer?

PAUL TILLICH
THE COURAGE TO BE

Practice

Ask yourself: have there been situations in your life when you displayed genuine courage?

Analyze your own life experience through the lens of Paul Tillich's concept of courage. For each of the proposed types of courage below, give one or more examples from your own life and briefly explain why you consider them a manifestation of that particular type of courage.

1. *The courage of participation (the courage to be as a part).* The courage to be part of a family, a community, a society, a religious community, an organization, or another collective. At this stage, a person largely identifies with their social role and with the values of the community to which they belong.

2. *The courage to be oneself.* The courage to assert one's own individuality, to make independent decisions, to form one's own convictions and answer for them, even when they differ from the views of the majority.

3. *The courage to accept acceptance.* This is a person's capacity to accept that they are already accepted by God. The highest expression of this courage is a personal encounter between the individual and God. It requires humility before grace, the overcoming of pride, and the overcoming of the illusion of self-sufficiency. Such courage makes it possible to accept even the tragic circumstances of life without renouncing one's own being. It

is precisely here, according to Tillich, that one of the deepest forms of the courage to be reveals itself.

Diary

Which of the three types of courage appears most often in your life? Were there situations in which one type of courage turned into another?

Which of the types is the most difficult for you, and why?

Are you afraid to make choices in your life? Do you take responsible ownership of your life? Do you avoid resolving your own life situations by shifting them onto others, trying to live someone else's life instead?

Practice

According to P. Tillich, fear has a specific object: we fear something definite (illness, loss, failure, danger), and so we are able, in some way, to confront it. Anxiety, by contrast, is bound up with the awareness of one's own finitude, uncertainty, and the threat to one's very being. It has no specific object, and it opens up for a person a deeper existential dimension of their existence.

Over the course of several days, observe what type of anxiety, according to P. Tillich, you experienced:: «that of fate and death (briefly, the anxiety of death), that of emptiness and loss of meaning (briefly, the anxiety of meaninglessness), that of guilt and condemnation (briefly, the anxiety of condemnation).»

Diary

On the basis of this distinction between fear and anxiety, try to take a thoughtful look at your own life by answering the following questions:

What are you afraid of, and why?

Which fears in your life have a specific cause?

Have you ever experienced anxiety without a clearly defined cause?
When have you felt a loss of footing or of meaning?
What helps you overcome anxiety?
Has anxiety become, for you, an experience of self-knowledge?
How do you usually respond to anxiety: by trying to avoid it, by seeking control, or by accepting it as part of human existence?
Can anxiety, in your view, become not only a negative experience but also an impetus toward self-knowledge?

MICHEL FOUCAULT
TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF

Dear Friend! The lecture that follows closes the circle opened by Pierre Hadot at the very beginning of this reader. Where Hadot describes the ancient practice of spiritual exercise from within the tradition, Foucault offers a genealogical, analytical view of that same tradition – including several texts you have already read in this volume (Seneca, Plato's Alcibiades I, the Stoics). Use the questions below as a basis for seminar discussion rather than private reflection.

I. Context of Study

1. Foucault distinguishes four types of "technologies" (of production, of sign systems, of power, and of the self) and insists that they "hardly ever function separately." Using one of the texts already read in this reader (Seneca, Plato), show how a technology of power and a technology of the self are intertwined.
2. Why, according to Foucault, has "gnothi sauton" ("know yourself") eclipsed "epimeleisthai sautou" ("take care of yourself") in the Western tradition? Do you agree with this genealogy?

II. Alcibiades I

3. Foucault reconstructs "care of the self" through three aspects – political, pedagogical, epistemological. Compare this structure with how care of the self appears in Seneca's letters. What disappears, and what is transformed, between Plato and the Stoics?

4. Marcus Aurelius's letter to Fronto is offered as an example of a "new experience of the self." How does this experience differ in principle from the daily self-examination Seneca describes in De Ira?

III. From Dialogue to Silence

5. Foucault claims that the disappearance of dialogue and the rise of a "culture of silence" is one of the "great signs" of the shift from Plato to the imperial period. What structural cause, in your view, underlies this shift?

6. Compare the "administrative" model of self-examination Foucault attributes to Seneca with the "juridical" model he explicitly rejects. Why is this distinction essential to Foucault's larger argument?

IV. Askesis: Melete and Gymnasia

7. Foucault draws a sharp line between Stoic askesis (memory, preparation for this reality) and Christian asceticism (renunciation for the sake of another reality). How well does this line hold up historically, rather than merely rhetorically?

8. The "money changer" metaphor (Epictetus) and the same image in Cassian carry different weight. Unpack this difference – what exactly changes in the object being examined?

V–VI. Exomologesis and Exagoreusis

9. Foucault insists: "you cannot disclose without renouncing" – self-disclosure is always accompanied by self-renunciation, in both

exomologesis and exagoreusis. Does this claim apply to contemporary "technologies of the self" (therapy, social media, the journaling practices proposed by this very reader)?

10. In the final paragraph, Foucault hypothesizes that since the eighteenth century, techniques of verbalization have been "reinserted… without renunciation of the self." How does this bear on the psychotherapeutic practices this course engages with? Is contemporary psychotherapy truly a "technology of the self without renunciation," or does it inherit something from exagoreusis?

Concluding Question (in place of a Diary)

Foucault closes this book with the very question that opened it, through Hadot's lecture: whether philosophy is a way of life. Compare Hadot's and Foucault's answers to this question – where do they converge, and where do they diverge, in their understanding of what it means to "work on oneself"?

TEXTS FOR READING



OLD TESTAMENT

THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON[2]

Proverbs 1

1 The Parables of Solomon the son of David King of Israel,

2 To know wisdom, and instruction, to understand ye words of knowledge;

3 To receive instruction to do wisely, by justice and judgment and equity;

4 To give unto the simple, sharpness of wit, and to the child knowledge and discretion;

5 A wise man shall hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels;

6 To understand a parable, and the interpretation, the words of ye wise, and their dark sayings.

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8 My son, hear thy father's instruction, and forsake not thy mother's teaching,

[2] OLD TESTAMENT. The Proverbs. URL: https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/prov/1?lang=eng

9 For they shall be a comely ornament unto thine head, and as chains for thy neck.
10 My son, if sinners do entice thee, consent thou not;
11 If they say, Come with us, we will lay wait for blood, and lie privily for the innocent without a cause,
12 We will swallow them up alive like a grave even whole, as those that go down into the pit;
13 We shall find all precious riches, and fill our houses with spoil;
14 Cast in thy lot among us: we will all have one purse, –
15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them: refrain thy foot from their path,
16 For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood.
17 Certainly as without cause the net is spread before the eyes of all that hath wing;
18 So they lay wait for blood and lie privily for their lives.
19 Such are the ways of everyone that is greedy of gain: he would take away the life of the owners thereof.
20 Wisdom crieth without: she uttereth her voice in the streets,
21 She calleth in the high street, among the prease in the enterings of the gates, and uttereth her words in the city, saying:
22 O ye foolish, how long will ye love foolishness? and the scornful take their pleasure in scorning, and the fools hate knowledge?
23 (Turn you at my correction: lo, I will pour out my mind unto you, and make you understand my words).
24 Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out mine hand, and none would regard;
25 But ye have despised all my counsel, and would none of my correction.

26 I will also laugh at your destruction, and mock, when your fear cometh;
27 When your fear cometh like sudden desolation, and your destruction shall come like a whirlwind: when affliction and anguish shall come upon you.
28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.
29 Because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord,
30 They would none of my counsel, but despised all my correction;
31 Therefore shall they eat of ye fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.
32 For ease slayeth the foolish, and the prosperity of fools destroyeth them,
33 But he that obeyeth me, shall dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil.

Proverbs 10

1 THE PARABLE OF SOLOMON. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is an heaviness to his mother.
2 The treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.
3 The Lord will not famish the soul of the righteous: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.
4 A slothful hand maketh poor: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.
5 He that gathereth in summer, is the son of wisdom: but he that sleepeth in harvest, is the son of confusion.

6 Blessings are upon the head of the righteous: but iniquity shall cover the mouth of the wicked.
7 The memorial of the just shall be blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.
8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but the foolish in talk shall be beaten.
9 He that walketh uprightly, walketh boldly: but he that perverteth his ways, shall be known.
10 He that winketh with the eye, worketh sorrow, and he yet is foolish in talk, shall be beaten.
11 The mouth of a righteous man is a wellspring of life: but iniquity covereth the mouth of the wicked.
12 Hatred stirreth up contentions: but love covereth all trespasses.
13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found, and a rod shall be for the back of him that is destitute of wisdom.
14 Wise men lay up knowledge: but ye mouth of the fool is a present destruction.
15 The rich man's goods are his strong city: but the fear of the needy is their poverty.
16 The labor of the righteous tendeth to life: but the revenues of the wicked to sin.
17 He that regardeth instruction, is in the way of life: but he that refuseth correction, goeth out of the way.
18 He that dissembleth hatred with lying lips, and he that inventeth slander, is a fool.
19 In many words there cannot want iniquity: but he that refraineth his lips, is wise.
20 The tongue of the just man is as fined silver: but the heart of the wicked is little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous do feed many: but fools shall die for want of wisdom.
22 The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he doeth add no sorrows with it.
23 It is as a pastime to a fool to do wickedly: but wisdom is understanding to a man.
24 That which the wicked feareth, shall come upon him: but God will grant the desire of the righteous.
25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is as an everlasting foundation.
26 As vinegar is to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the slothful to them that send him.
27 The fear of the Lord increaseth the days: but the years of the wicked shall be diminished.
28 The patient abiding of the righteous shall be gladness: but the hope of the wicked shall perish.
29 The way of the Lord is strength to the upright man: but fear shall be for the workers of iniquity.
30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not dwell in the land.
31 The mouth of the just shall be fruitful in wisdom: but the tongue of the froward shall be cut out.
32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh froward things.



THE DHAMMAPADA

A COLLECTION OF VERSES; BEING ONE OF THE CANONICAL BOOKS OF THE BUDDHISTS[3]

Chapter I. The Twin-Verses

1. All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage.

3. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me," – in those who harbour such thoughts hatred will never cease.

4. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me," – in those who do not harbour such thoughts hatred will cease.

5. For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time: hatred ceases by love, this is an old rule.

6. The world does not know that we must all come to an end here; – but those who know it, their quarrels cease at once.

7. He who lives looking for pleasures only, his senses uncontrolled, immoderate in his food, idle, and weak, Mara (the tempter) will certainly overthrow him, as the wind throws down a weak tree.

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[3] The Dhammapada. A Collection of Verses; Being One of the Canonical Books of the Buddhists. / Translator from Pali by F. Max Müller. URL: https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2017/pg2017-images.html

8. He who lives without looking for pleasures, his senses well controlled, moderate in his food, faithful and strong, him Mara will certainly not overthrow, any more than the wind throws down a rocky mountain.

11. They who imagine truth in untruth, and see untruth in truth, never arrive at truth, but follow vain desires.

12. They who know truth in truth, and untruth in untruth, arrive at truth, and follow true desires.

13. As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, passion will break through an unreflecting mind.

14. As rain does not break through a well-thatched house, passion will not break through a well-reflecting mind.

15. The evil-doer mourns in this world, and he mourns in the next; he mourns in both. He mourns and suffers when he sees the evil of his own work.

18. The virtuous man is happy in this world, and he is happy in the next; he is happy in both. He is happy when he thinks of the good he has done; he is still more happy when going on the good path.

19. The thoughtless man, even if he can recite a large portion (of the law), but is not a doer of it, has no share in the priesthood, but is like a cowherd counting the cows of others.

20. The follower of the law, even if he can recite only a small portion (of the law), but, having forsaken passion and hatred and foolishness, possesses true knowledge and serenity of mind, he, caring for nothing in this world or that to come, has indeed a share in the priesthood.

Chapter III. Thought

33. As a fletcher makes straight his arrow, a wise man makes straight his trembling and unsteady thought, which is difficult to guard, difficult to hold back.

34. As a fish taken from his watery home and thrown on dry ground, our thought trembles all over in order to escape the dominion of Mara (the tempter).

35. It is good to tame the mind, which is difficult to hold in and flighty, rushing wherever it listeth; a tamed mind brings happiness.

36. Let the wise man guard his thoughts, for they are difficult to perceive, very artful, and they rush wherever they list: thoughts well guarded bring happiness.

37. Those who bridle their mind which travels far, moves about alone, is without a body, and hides in the chamber (of the heart), will be free from the bonds of Mara (the tempter).

38. If a man's thoughts are unsteady, if he does not know the true law, if his peace of mind is troubled, his knowledge will never be perfect.

39. If a man's thoughts are not dissipated, if his mind is not perplexed, if he has ceased to think of good or evil, then there is no fear for him while he is watchful.

40. Knowing that this body is (fragile) like a jar, and making this thought firm like a fortress, one should attack Mara (the tempter) with the weapon of knowledge, one should watch him when conquered, and should never rest.

41. Before long, alas! this body will lie on the earth, despised, without understanding, like a useless log.

42. Whatever a hater may do to a hater, or an enemy to an enemy, a wrongly-directed mind will do us greater mischief.

43. Not a mother, not a father will do so much, nor any other relative; a well-directed mind will do us greater service.

Chapter IX. Evil

116. If a man would hasten towards the good, he should keep his thought away from evil; if a man does what is good slothfully, his mind delights in evil.

118. If a man does what is good, let him do it again; let him delight in it: happiness is the outcome of good.

119. Even an evil-doer sees happiness as long as his evil deed has not ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then does the evil-doer see evil.

120. Even a good man sees evil days, as long as his good deed has not ripened; but when his good deed has ripened, then does the good man see happy days.

121. Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled; the fool becomes full of evil, even if he gather it little by little.

122. Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled; the wise man becomes full of good, even if he gather it little by little.

123. Let a man avoid evil deeds, as a merchant, if he has few companions and carries much wealth, avoids a dangerous road; as a man who loves life avoids poison.

124. He who has no wound on his hand, may touch poison with his hand; poison does not affect one who has no wound; nor is there evil for one who does not commit evil.

125. If a man offend a harmless, pure, and innocent person, the evil falls back upon that fool, like light dust thrown up against the wind.

126. Some people are born again; evil-doers go to hell; righteous people go to heaven; those who are free from all worldly desires attain Nirvana.

127. Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, not if we enter into the clefts of the mountains, is there known a spot in the whole world where a man might be freed from an evil deed.

128. Not in the sky, not in the midst of the sea, not if we enter into the clefts of the mountains, is there known a spot in the whole world where death could not overcome (the mortal).

Chapter XI. Old Age

146. How is there laughter, how is there joy, as this world is always burning? Why do you not seek a light, ye who are surrounded by darkness?

147. Look at this dressed-up lump, covered with wounds, joined together, sickly, full of many thoughts, which has no strength, no hold!

148. This body is wasted, full of sickness, and frail; this heap of corruption breaks to pieces, life indeed ends in death.

149. Those white bones, like gourds thrown away in the autumn, what pleasure is there in looking at them?

150. After a stronghold has been made of the bones, it is covered with flesh and blood, and there dwell in it old age and death, pride and deceit.

151. The brilliant chariots of kings are destroyed, the body also approaches destruction, but the virtue of good people never approaches destruction,—thus do the good say to the good.

152. A man who has learnt little, grows old like an ox; his flesh grows, but his knowledge does not grow.

153, 154. Looking for the maker of this tabernacle, I shall have to run through a course of many births, so long as I do not find (him); and painful is birth again and again. But now, maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen; thou shalt not make up this tabernacle again. All thy rafters are broken, thy ridge-pole is sundered; the mind, approaching the Eternal (visankhara, nirvana), has attained to the extinction of all desires.

155. Men who have not observed proper discipline, and have not gained treasure in their youth, perish like old herons in a lake without fish.

156. Men who have not observed proper discipline, and have not gained treasure in their youth, lie, like broken bows, sighing after the past.

Chapter XV. Happiness

197. Let us live happily then, not hating those who hate us! among men who hate us let us dwell free from hatred!

200. Let us live happily then, though we call nothing our own! We shall be like the bright gods, feeding on happiness!

201. Victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy. He who has given up both victory and defeat, he, the contented, is happy.

203. Hunger is the worst of diseases, the body the greatest of pains; if one knows this truly, that is Nirvana, the highest happiness.

204. Health is the greatest of gifts, contentedness the best riches; trust is the best of relationships, Nirvana the highest happiness.

205. He who has tasted the sweetness of solitude and tranquillity, is free from fear and free from sin, while he tastes the sweetness of drinking in the law.

206. The sight of the elect (Arya) is good, to live with them is always happiness; if a man does not see fools, he will be truly happy.
207. He who walks in the company of fools suffers a long way; company with fools, as with an enemy, is always painful; company with the wise is pleasure, like meeting with kinsfolk.
208. Therefore, one ought to follow the wise, the intelligent, the learned, the much enduring, the dutiful, the elect; one ought to follow a good and wise man, as the moon follows the path of the stars.

Chapter XVII. Anger

221. Let a man leave anger, let him forsake pride, let him overcome all bondage! No sufferings befall the man who is not attached to name and form, and who calls nothing his own.
222. He who holds back rising anger like a rolling chariot, him I call a real driver; other people are but holding the reins.
223. Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth!
224. Speak the truth, do not yield to anger; give, if thou art asked for little; by these three steps thou wilt go near the gods.
225. The sages who injure nobody, and who always control their body, they will go to the unchangeable place (Nirvana), where, if they have gone, they will suffer no more.
226. Those who are ever watchful, who study day and night, and who strive after Nirvana, their passions will come to an end.
227. This is an old saying, O Atula, this is not only of to-day: `They blame him who sits silent, they blame him who speaks much, they also blame him who says little; there is no one on earth who is not blamed.'

228. There never was, there never will be, nor is there now, a man who is always blamed, or a man who is always praised.

229, 230. But he whom those who discriminate praise continually day after day, as without blemish, wise, rich in knowledge and virtue, who would dare to blame him, like a coin made of gold from the Gambu river? Even the gods praise him, he is praised even by Brahman.

231. Beware of bodily anger, and control thy body! Leave the sins of the body, and with thy body practise virtue!

233. Beware of the anger of the mind, and control thy mind! Leave the sins of the mind, and practise virtue with thy mind!

234. The wise who control their body, who control their tongue, the wise who control their mind, are indeed well controlled.

Chapter XX. The Way

273. The best of ways is the eightfold; the best of truths the four words; the best of virtues passionlessness; the best of men he who has eyes to see.

274. This is the way, there is no other that leads to the purifying of intelligence. Go on this way! Everything else is the deceit of Mara (the tempter).

275. If you go on this way, you will make an end of pain! The way was preached by me, when I had understood the removal of the thorns (in the flesh).

276. You yourself must make an effort. The Tathagatas (Buddhas) are only preachers. The thoughtful who enter the way are freed from the bondage of Mara.

277. `All created things perish,' he who knows and sees this becomes passive in pain; this is the way to purity.

279. `All forms are unreal,' he who knows and sees this becomes passive in pain; this is the way that leads to purity.

280. He who does not rouse himself when it is time to rise, who, though young and strong, is full of sloth, whose will and thought are weak, that lazy and idle man will never find the way to knowledge.

281. Watching his speech, well restrained in mind, let a man never commit any wrong with his body! Let a man but keep these three roads of action clear, and he will achieve the way which is taught by the wise.

282. Through zeal knowledge is gotten, through lack of zeal knowledge is lost; let a man who knows this double path of gain and loss thus place himself that knowledge may grow.

283. Cut down the whole forest (of lust), not a tree only! Danger comes out of the forest (of lust). When you have cut down both the forest (of lust) and its undergrowth, then, Bhikshus, you will be rid of the forest and free!

284. So long as the love of man towards women, even the smallest, is not destroyed, so long is his mind in bondage, as the calf that drinks milk is to its mother.

285. Cut out the love of self, like an autumn lotus, with thy hand! Cherish the road of peace. Nirvana has been shown by Sugata (Buddha).

286. `Here I shall dwell in the rain, here in winter and summer,' thus the fool meditates, and does not think of his death.

287. Death comes and carries off that man, praised for his children and flocks, his mind distracted, as a flood carries off a sleeping village.

288. Sons are no help, nor a father, nor relations; there is no help from kinsfolk for one whom death has seized.

289. A wise and good man who knows the meaning of this, should quickly clear the way that leads to Nirvana.

Chapter XXIV. Thirst

334. The thirst of a thoughtless man grows like a creeper; he runs from life to life, like a monkey seeking fruit in the forest.

335. Whomsoever this fierce thirst overcomes, full of poison, in this world, his sufferings increase like the abounding Birana grass.

336. He who overcomes this fierce thirst, difficult to be conquered in this world, sufferings fall off from him, like water-drops from a lotus leaf.

337. This salutary word I tell you, `Do ye, as many as are here assembled, dig up the root of thirst, as he who wants the sweet-scented Usira root must dig up the Birana grass, that Mara (the tempter) may not crush you again and again, as the stream crushes the reeds.'

338. As a tree, even though it has been cut down, is firm so long as its root is safe, and grows again, thus, unless the feeders of thirst are destroyed, the pain (of life) will return again and again.

339. He whose thirst running towards pleasure is exceeding strong in the thirty-six channels, the waves will carry away that misguided man, viz. his desires which are set on passion.

340. The channels run everywhere, the creeper (of passion) stands sprouting; if you see the creeper springing up, cut its root by means of knowledge.

343. Men, driven on by thirst, run about like a snared hare; let therefore the mendicant drive out thirst, by striving after passionlessness for himself.

344. He who having got rid of the forest (of lust) (i.e. after having reached Nirvana) gives himself over to forest-life (i.e. to lust), and who, when removed from the forest (i.e. from lust), runs to the forest (i.e. to lust), look at that man! though free, he runs into bondage.

345. Wise people do not call that a strong fetter which is made of iron, wood, or hemp; far stronger is the care for precious stones and rings, for sons and a wife.

346. That fetter wise people call strong which drags down, yields, but is difficult to undo; after having cut this at last, people leave the world, free from cares, and leaving desires and pleasures behind.

347. Those who are slaves to passions, run down with the stream (of desires), as a spider runs down the web which he has made himself; when they have cut this, at last, wise people leave the world free from cares, leaving all affection behind.

348. Give up what is before, give up what is behind, give up what is in the middle, when thou goest to the other shore of existence; if thy mind is altogether free, thou wilt not again enter into birth and decay.

349. If a man is tossed about by doubts, full of strong passions, and yearning only for what is delightful, his thirst will grow more and more, and he will indeed make his fetters strong.

351. He who has reached the consummation, who does not tremble, who is without thirst and without sin, he has broken all the thorns of life: this will be his last body.

352. He who is without thirst and without affection, who understands the words and their interpretation, who knows the

order of letters (those which are before and which are after), he has received his last body, he is called the great sage, the great man.

353. `I have conquered all, I know all, in all conditions of life I am free from taint; I have left all, and through the destruction of thirst I am free; having learnt myself, whom shall I teach?'

354. The gift of the law exceeds all gifts; the sweetness of the law exceeds all sweetness; the delight in the law exceeds all delights; the extinction of thirst overcomes all pain.

355. Pleasures destroy the foolish, if they look not for the other shore; the foolish by his thirst for pleasures destroys himself, as if he were his own enemy.

356. The fields are damaged by weeds, mankind is damaged by passion: therefore a gift bestowed on the passionless brings great reward.



CONFUCIUS

THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS (FROM THE CHINESE CLASSICS)[4]

BOOK I. HSIO R.

CHAP. II. 1. The philosopher Yu said, 'They are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors. There have been none, who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of stirring up confusion. 2. 'The superior man bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission! – are they not the root of all benevolent actions?'

CHAP. III. The Master said, 'Fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue.'

CHAP. IV. The philosopher Tsang said, 'I daily examine myself on three points: whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; – whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere; – whether I may have not mastered and practised the instructions of my teacher.'

CHAP. V. The Master said, To rule a country of a thousand chariots, there must be reverent attention to business, and

[4] The Analects of Confucius (from the Chinese Classics) / translated by James Legge. Electronic edition, Project Gutenberg, 2002. URL: https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/3330/pg3330-images.html

sincerity; economy in expenditure, and love for men; and the employment of the people at the proper seasons.

CHAP. VI. The Master said, 'A youth, when at home, should be filial, and, abroad, respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and cultivate the friendship of the good. When he has time and opportunity, after the performance of these things, he should employ them in polite studies.'

CHAP. VII. Tsze-hsia said, 'If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous; if, in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if, in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if, in his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere: – although men say that he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has.'

CHAP. VIII. 1. The Master said, 'If the scholar be not grave, he will not call forth any veneration, and his learning will not be solid. 2. 'Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles. 3. 'Have no friends not equal to yourself. 4. 'When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.'

CHAP. XII. 1. The philosopher Yu said, 'In practising the rules of propriety, a natural ease is to be prized. In the ways prescribed by the ancient kings, this is the excellent quality, and in things small and great we follow them. 2. 'Yet it is not to be observed in all cases. If one, knowing how such ease should be prized, manifests it, without regulating it by the rules of propriety, this likewise is not to be done.'

CHAP. XIV. The Master said, 'He who aims to be a man of complete virtue in his food does not seek to gratify his appetite, nor in his dwelling place does he seek the appliances of ease; he is earnest in

what he is doing, and careful in his speech; he frequents the company of men of principle that he may be rectified: – such a person may be said indeed to love to learn.'

CHAP. XV. 1. Tsze-kung said, 'What do you pronounce concerning the poor man who yet does not flatter, and the rich man who is not proud?' The Master replied, 'They will do; but they are not equal to him, who, though poor, is yet cheerful, and to him, who, though rich, loves the rules of propriety.' 2. Tsze-kung replied, 'It is said in the Book of Poetry, "As you cut and then file, as you carve and then polish." – The meaning is the same, I apprehend, as that which you have just expressed.' 3. The Master said, 'With one like Ts'ze, I can begin to talk about the odes. I told him one point, and he knew its proper sequence.'

BOOK II. WEI CHANG.

CHAP. I. The Master said, 'He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it.'

CHAP. II. The Master said, 'In the Book of Poetry are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in one sentence – "Having no depraved thoughts."'

CHAP. III. 1. The Master said, 'If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. 2. 'If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good.'

CHAP. IV. 1. The Master said, 'At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. 2. 'At thirty, I stood firm. 3. 'At forty, I had no doubts. 4.

'At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven. 5. 'At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. 6. 'At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.'

CHAP. V. 1. Mang I asked what filial piety was. The Master said, 'It is not being disobedient.' 2. Soon after, as Fan Ch'ih was driving him, the Master told him, saying, 'Mang-sun asked me what filial piety was, and I answered him,— "not being disobedient."' 3. Fan Ch'ih said, 'What did you mean?' The Master replied, 'That parents, when alive, be served according to propriety; that, when dead, they should be buried according to propriety; and that they should be sacrificed to according to propriety.'

CHAP. VI. Mang Wu asked what filial piety was. The Master said, 'Parents are anxious lest their children should be sick.'

CHAP. VII. Tsze-yu asked what filial piety was. The Master said, 'The filial piety of now-a-days means the support of one's parents. But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something in the way of support;— without reverence, what is there to distinguish the one support given from the other?'

CHAP. X. 1. The Master said, 'See what a man does. 2. 'Mark his motives. 3. 'Examine in what things he rests. 4. 'How can a man conceal his character? 5. How can a man conceal his character?'

CHAP. XIV. The Master said, 'The superior man is catholic and no partisan. The mean man is partisan and not catholic.'

CHAP. XV. The Master said, 'Learning without thought is labour lost; thought without learning is perilous.'

CHAP. XVI. The Master said, 'The study of strange doctrines is injurious indeed!'

CHAP. XVII. 1. Tsze-chang was learning with a view to official emolument. 2. The Master said, 'Hear much and put aside the points of which you stand in doubt, while you speak cautiously at the same time of the others: – then you will afford few occasions for blame. See much and put aside the things which seem perilous, while you are cautious at the same time in carrying the others into practice: – then you will have few occasions for repentance. When one gives few occasions for blame in his words, and few occasions for repentance in his conduct, he is in the way to get emolument.'

CHAP. XXI. 1. Some one addressed Confucius, saying, 'Sir, why are you not engaged in the government?' 2. The Master said, 'What does the Shu-ching say of filial piety? – "You are filial, you discharge your brotherly duties. These qualities are displayed in government." This then also constitutes the exercise of government. Why must there be THAT— making one be in the government?'

BOOK III. PA YIH.

CHAP. III. The Master said, 'If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with the rites of propriety? If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music?'

CHAP. VII. The Master said, 'The student of virtue has no contentions. If it be said he cannot avoid them, shall this be in archery? But he bows complaisantly to his competitors; thus he ascends the hall, descends, and exacts the forfeit of drinking. In his contention, he is still the Chun-tsze.'

CHAP. IX. The Master said, 'I could describe the ceremonies of the Hsia dynasty, but Chi cannot sufficiently attest my words. I could

describe the ceremonies of the Yin dynasty, but Sung cannot sufficiently attest my words. (They cannot do so) because of the insufficiency of their records and wise men. If those were sufficient, I could adduce them in support of my words.'

CHAP. XVII. 1. Tsze-kung wished to do away with the offering of a sheep connected with the inauguration of the first day of each month. 2. The Master said, 'Ts'ze, you love the sheep; I love the ceremony.'

CHAP. XX. The Master said, 'The Kwan Tsu is expressive of enjoyment without being licentious, and of grief without being hurtfully excessive.'

CHAP. XXIV. The border warden at Yi requested to be introduced to the Master, saying, 'When men of superior virtue have come to this, I have never been denied the privilege of seeing them.' The followers of the sage introduced him, and when he came out from the interview, he said, 'My friends, why are you distressed by your master's loss of office? The kingdom has long been without the principles of truth and right; Heaven is going to use your master as a bell with its wooden tongue.'

CHAP. XXVI. The Master said, 'High station filled without indulgent generosity; ceremonies performed without reverence; mourning conducted without sorrow; – wherewith should I contemplate such ways?'

BOOK IV. LE JIN.

CHAP. II. The Master said, 'Those who are without virtue cannot abide long either in a condition of poverty and hardship, or in a condition of enjoyment. The virtuous rest in virtue; the wise desire virtue.'

CHAP. V. 1. The Master said, 'Riches and honours are what men desire. If it cannot be obtained in the proper way, they should not be held. Poverty and meanness are what men dislike. If it cannot be avoided in the proper way, they should not be avoided. 2. 'If a superior man abandon virtue, how can he fulfil the requirements of that name? 3. 'The superior man does not, even for the space of a single meal, act contrary to virtue. In moments of haste, he cleaves to it. In seasons of danger, he cleaves to it.'

CHAP. VI. 1. The Master said, 'I have not seen a person who loved virtue, or one who hated what was not virtuous. He who loved virtue, would esteem nothing above it. He who hated what is not virtuous, would practise virtue in such a way that he would not allow anything that is not virtuous to approach his person. 2. 'Is any one able for one day to apply his strength to virtue? I have not seen the case in which his strength would be insufficient. 3. 'Should there possibly be any such case, I have not seen it.'

CHAP. VII. The Master said, 'The faults of men are characteristic of the class to which they belong. By observing a man's faults, it may be known that he is virtuous.'

CHAP. XI. The Master said, 'The superior man thinks of virtue; the small man thinks of comfort. The superior man thinks of the sanctions of law; the small man thinks of favours which he may receive.'

CHAP. XIII. The Master said, 'If a prince is able to govern his kingdom with the complaisance proper to the rules of propriety, what difficulty will he have? If he cannot govern it with that complaisance, what has he to do with the rules of propriety?'

CHAP. XV. 1. The Master said, 'Shan, my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity.' The disciple Tsang replied, 'Yes.' 2. The Master

went out, and the other disciples asked, saying, 'What do his words mean?' Tsang said, 'The doctrine of our master is to be true to the principles of our nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others, – this and nothing more.'

CHAP. XVI. The Master said, 'The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain.'

CHAP. XX. The Master said, 'If the son for three years does not alter from the way of his father, he may be called filial.'

CHAP. XXI. The Master said, 'The years of parents may by no means not be kept in the memory, as an occasion at once for joy and for fear.'

CHAP. XXII. The Master said, 'The reason why the ancients did not readily give utterance to their words, was that they feared lest their actions should not come up to them.'

CHAP. XXVI. Tsze-yu said, 'In serving a prince, frequent remonstrances lead to disgrace. Between friends, frequent reproofs make the friendship distant.'

BOOK V. KUNG-YE CH'ANG.

CHAP. IX. 1. Tsai Yu being asleep during the daytime, the Master said, 'Rotten wood cannot be carved; a wall of dirty earth will not receive the trowel. This Yu! – what is the use of my reproving him?'

2. The Master said, 'At first, my way with men was to hear their words, and give them credit for their conduct. Now my way is to hear their words, and look at their conduct. It is from Yu that I have learned to make this change.'

CHAP. XV. The Master said of Tsze-ch'an that he had four of the characteristics of a superior man: – in his conduct of himself, he

was humble; in serving his superiors, he was respectful; in nourishing the people, he was kind; in ordering the people, he was just.'

CHAP. XVI. The Master said, 'Yen P'ing knew well how to maintain friendly intercourse. The acquaintance might be long, but he showed the same respect as at first.'

CHAP. XXIV. The Master said, 'Fine words, an insinuating appearance, and excessive respect; – Tso Ch'iu-ming was ashamed of them. I also am ashamed of them. To conceal resentment against a person, and appear friendly with him; – Tso Ch'iu-ming was ashamed of such conduct. I also am ashamed of it.'

CHAP. XXVI. The Master said, 'It is all over! I have not yet seen one who could perceive his faults, and inwardly accuse himself.'

CHAP. XXVII. The Master said, 'In a hamlet of ten families, there may be found one honourable and sincere as I am, but not so fond of learning.'

BOOK VI. YUNG YEY.

CHAP. I. 1. The Master said, 'There is Yung! – He might occupy the place of a prince.' 2. Chung-kung asked about Tsze-sang Po-tsze. The Master said, 'He may pass. He does not mind small matters.' 3. Chung-kung said, 'If a man cherish in himself a reverential feeling of the necessity of attention to business, though he may be easy in small matters in his government of the people, that may be allowed. But if he cherish in himself that easy feeling, and also carry it out in his practice, is not such an easy mode of procedure excessive?' 4. The Master said, 'Yung's words are right.'

CHAP. II. The Duke Ai asked which of the disciples loved to learn. Confucius replied to him, 'There was Yen Hui; HE loved to learn.

He did not transfer his anger; he did not repeat a fault. Unfortunately, his appointed time was short and he died; and now there is not such another. I have not yet heard of any one who loves to learn as he did.'

CHAP. III. 1. Tsze-hwa being employed on a mission to Ch'i, the disciple Zan requested grain for his mother. The Master said, 'Give her a fu.' Yen requested more. 'Give her an yu,' said the Master. Yen gave her five ping. 2. The Master said, 'When Ch'ih was proceeding to Ch'i, he had fat horses to his carriage, and wore light furs. I have heard that a superior man helps the distressed, but does not add to the wealth of the rich.' 3. Yuan Sze being made governor of his town by the Master, he gave him nine hundred measures of grain, but Sze declined them. 4. The Master said, 'Do not decline them. May you not give them away in the neighborhoods, hamlets, towns, and villages?'

CHAP. VI. Chi K'ang asked about Chung-yu, whether he was fit to be employed as an officer of government. The Master said, 'Yu is a man of decision; what difficulty would he find in being an officer of government?' K'ang asked, 'Is Ts'ze fit to be employed as an officer of government?' and was answered, 'Ts'ze is a man of intelligence; what difficulty would he find in being an officer of government?' And to the same question about Ch'iu the Master gave the same reply, saying, 'Ch'iu is a man of various ability.'

CHAP. IX. The Master said, 'Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui! With a single bamboo dish of rice, a single gourd dish of drink, and living in his mean narrow lane, while others could not have endured the distress, he did not allow his joy to be affected by it. Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hui!'

CHAP. X. Yen Ch'iu said, 'It is not that I do not delight in your doctrines, but my strength is insufficient.' The Master said, 'Those whose strength is insufficient give over in the middle of the way but now you limit yourself.'

CHAP. XI. The Master said to Tsze-hsia, 'Do you be a scholar after the style of the superior man, and not after that of the mean man.'

CHAP. XVIII. The Master said, 'They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it.'

CHAP. XX. Fan Ch'ih asked what constituted wisdom. The Master said, 'To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom.' He asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, 'The man of virtue makes the difficulty to be overcome his first business, and success only a subsequent consideration; – this may be called perfect virtue.'

CHAP. XXI. The Master said, 'The wise find pleasure in water; the virtuous find pleasure in hills. The wise are active; the virtuous are tranquil. The wise are joyful; the virtuous are long-lived.'

CHAP. XXV. The Master said, 'The superior man, extensively studying all learning, and keeping himself under the restraint of the rules of propriety, may thus likewise not overstep what is right.'

CHAP. XXVIII. 1. Tsze-kung said, 'Suppose the case of a man extensively conferring benefits on the people, and able to assist all, what would you say of him? Might he be called perfectly virtuous?' The Master said, 'Why speak only of virtue in connexion with him? Must he not have the qualities of a sage? Even Yao and Shun were still solicitous about this. 2. 'Now the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to

be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others. 3. 'To be able to judge of others by what is nigh in ourselves; – this may be called the art of virtue.'

BOOK VII. SHU R.

CHAP. III. The Master said, 'The leaving virtue without proper cultivation; the not thoroughly discussing what is learned; not being able to move towards righteousness of which a knowledge is gained; and not being able to change what is not good: – these are the things which occasion me solicitude.'

CHAP. VI. 1. The Master said, 'Let the will be set on the path of duty. 2. 'Let every attainment in what is good be firmly grasped. 3. 'Let perfect virtue be accorded with. 4. 'Let relaxation and enjoyment be found in the polite arts.'

CHAP. VIII. The Master said, 'I do not open up the truth to one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor help out any one who is not anxious to explain himself. When I have presented one corner of a subject to any one, and he cannot from it learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson.'

CHAP. XV. The Master said, 'With coarse rice to eat, with water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow; – I have still joy in the midst of these things. Riches and honours acquired by unrighteousness, are to me as a floating cloud.'

CHAP. XVI. The Master said, 'If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the Yi, and then I might come to be without great faults.' CHAP. XVII The Master's frequent themes of discourse were – the Odes, the History, and the maintenance of the Rules of Propriety. On all these he frequently discoursed.

CHAP. XXIX. The Master said, 'Is virtue a thing remote? I wish to be virtuous, and lo! virtue is at hand.'

CHAP. XXX. 1. The minister of crime of Ch'an asked whether the duke Chao knew propriety, and Confucius said, 'He knew propriety.' 2. Confucius having retired, the minister bowed to Wu-ma Ch'i to come forward, and said, 'I have heard that the superior man is not a partisan. May the superior man be a partisan also? The prince married a daughter of the house of Wu, of the same surname with himself, and called her, – "The elder Tsze of Wu." If the prince knew propriety, who does not know it?' 3. Wu-ma Ch'i reported these remarks, and the Master said, 'I am fortunate! If I have any errors, people are sure to know them.'

CHAP. XXXIII. The Master said, 'The sage and the man of perfect virtue;— how dare I rank myself with them? It may simply be said of me, that I strive to become such without satiety, and teach others without weariness.' Kung-hsi Hwa said, 'This is just what we, the disciples, cannot imitate you in.'

CHAP. XXXVI. The Master said, 'The superior man is satisfied and composed; the mean man is always full of distress.'

BOOK XII. YEN YUAN.

CHAP. I. 1. Yen Yuan asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, 'To subdue one's self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him. Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?' 2. Yen Yuan said, 'I beg to ask the steps of that process.' The Master replied, 'Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make

no movement which is contrary to propriety.' Yen Yuan then said, 'Though I am deficient in intelligence and vigour, I will make it my business to practise this lesson.'

CHAP. III. 1. Sze-ma Niu asked about perfect virtue. 2. The Master said, 'The man of perfect virtue is cautious and slow in his speech.' 3. 'Cautious and slow in his speech!' said Niu; – 'is this what is meant by perfect virtue?' The Master said, 'When a man feels the difficulty of doing, can he be other than cautious and slow in speaking?'

CHAP. IV. 1. Sze-ma Niu asked about the superior man. The Master said, 'The superior man has neither anxiety nor fear.' 2. 'Being without anxiety or fear!' said Nui; – 'does this constitute what we call the superior man?' 3. The Master said, 'When internal examination discovers nothing wrong, what is there to be anxious about, what is there to fear?'

CHAP. V. 1. Sze-ma Niu, full of anxiety, said, 'Other men all have their brothers, I only have not.' 2. Tsze-hsia said to him, 'There is the following saying which I have heard: – 3. '"Death and life have their determined appointment; riches and honours depend upon Heaven." 4. 'Let the superior man never fail reverentially to order his own conduct, and let him be respectful to others and observant of propriety: – then all within the four seas will be his brothers. What has the superior man to do with being distressed because he has no brothers?'

CHAP. VIII. 1. Chi Tsze-ch'ang said, 'In a superior man it is only the substantial qualities which are wanted; – why should we seek for ornamental accomplishments?' 2. Tsze-kung said, 'Alas! Your words, sir, show you to be a superior man, but four horses cannot overtake the tongue. 3. Ornament is as substance; substance is as

ornament. The hide of a tiger or a leopard stripped of its hair, is like the hide of a dog or a goat stripped of its hair.'

CHAP. X. 1. Tsze-chang having asked how virtue was to be exalted, and delusions to be discovered, the Master said, 'Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles, and be moving continually to what is right; – this is the way to exalt one's virtue. 2. 'You love a man and wish him to live; you hate him and wish him to die. Having wished him to live, you also wish him to die. This is a case of delusion. 3. '"It may not be on account of her being rich, yet you come to make a difference."'

CHAP. XI. 1. The Duke Ching, of Ch'i, asked Confucius about government. 2. Confucius replied, 'There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son.' 3. 'Good!' said the duke; 'if, indeed; the prince be not prince, the minister not minister, the father not father, and the son not son, although I have my revenue, can I enjoy it?'

CHAP. XIV. Tsze-chang asked about government. The Master said, 'The art of governing is to keep its affairs before the mind without weariness, and to practise them with undeviating consistency.'

CHAP. XV. The Master said, 'By extensively studying all learning, and keeping himself under the restraint of the rules of propriety, one may thus likewise not err from what is right.'

CHAP. XVI. The Master said, 'The superior man seeks to perfect the admirable qualities of men, and does not seek to perfect their bad qualities. The mean man does the opposite of this.'

CHAP. XVII. Chi K'ang asked Confucius about government. Confucius replied, 'To govern means to rectify. If you lead on the people with correctness, who will dare not to be correct?'

CHAP. XX. 1. Tsze-chang asked, 'What must the officer be, who may be said to be distinguished?' 2. The Master said, 'What is it you call being distinguished?' 3. Tsze-chang replied, 'It is to be heard of through the State, to be heard of throughout his clan.' 4. The Master said, 'That is notoriety, not distinction. 5. 'Now the man of distinction is solid and straightforward, and loves righteousness. He examines people's words, and looks at their countenances. He is anxious to humble himself to others. Such a man will be distinguished in the country; he will be distinguished in his clan. 6. 'As to the man of notoriety, he assumes the appearance of virtue, but his actions are opposed to it, and he rests in this character without any doubts about himself. Such a man will be heard of in the country; he will be heard of in the clan.'

CHAP. XXI. 1. Fan Ch'ih rambling with the Master under the trees about the rain altars, said, 'I venture to ask how to exalt virtue, to correct cherished evil, and to discover delusions.' 2. The Master said, 'Truly a good question! 3. 'If doing what is to be done be made the first business, and success a secondary consideration; – is not this the way to exalt virtue? To assail one's own wickedness and not assail that of others; – is not this the way to correct cherished evil? For a morning's anger to disregard one's own life, and involve that of his parents; – is not this a case of delusion?'

CHAP. XXII. 1. Fan Ch'ih asked about benevolence. The Master said, 'It is to love all men.' He asked about knowledge. The Master said, 'It is to know all men.' 2. Fan Ch'ih did not immediately understand these answers. 3. The Master said, 'Employ the upright and put aside all the crooked; – in this way the crooked can be made to be upright.' 4. Fan Ch'ih retired, and, seeing Tsze-hsia, he said to him, 'A Little while ago, I had an interview with our Master,

and asked him about knowledge. He said, 'Employ the upright, and put aside all the crooked; – in this way, the crooked will be made to be upright.' What did he mean?' 5. Tsze-hsia said, 'Truly rich is his saying! 6. 'Shun, being in possession of the kingdom, selected from among all the people, and employed Kao-yao, on which all who were devoid of virtue disappeared. T'ang, being in possession of the kingdom, selected from among all the people, and employed I Yin, and all who were devoid of virtue disappeared.'

CHAP. XXIII. Tsze-kung asked about friendship. The Master said, 'Faithfully admonish your friend, and skillfully lead him on. If you find him impracticable, stop. Do not disgrace yourself.'

CHAP. XXIV. The philosopher Tsang said, 'The superior man on grounds of culture meets with his friends, and by their friendship helps his virtue.'

BOOK XV. WEI LING KUNG.

CHAP. V. 1. Tsze-chang asked how a man should conduct himself, so as to be everywhere appreciated. 2. The Master said, 'Let his words be sincere and truthful, and his actions honourable and careful; – such conduct may be practised among the rude tribes of the South or the North. If his words be not sincere and truthful and his actions not honourable and careful, will he, with such conduct, be appreciated, even in his neighborhood? 3. 'When he is standing, let him see those two things, as it were, fronting him. When he is in a carriage, let him see them attached to the yoke. Then may he subsequently carry them into practice.' 4. Tsze-chang wrote these counsels on the end of his sash.

CHAP. VI. 1. The Master said, 'Truly straightforward was the historiographer Yu. When good government prevailed in his State,

he was like an arrow. When bad government prevailed, he was like an arrow. 2. A superior man indeed is Chu Po-yu! When good government prevails in his state, he is to be found in office. When bad government prevails, he can roll his principles up, and keep them in his breast.'

CHAP. VII. The Master said, 'When a man may be spoken with, not to speak to him is to err in reference to the man. When a man may not be spoken with, to speak to him is to err in reference to our words. The wise err neither in regard to their man nor to their words.'

CHAP. VIII. The Master said, 'The determined scholar and the man of virtue will not seek to live at the expense of injuring their virtue. They will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their virtue complete.'

CHAP. XII. The Master said, 'It is all over! I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves beauty.'

CHAP. XIV. The Master said, 'He who requires much from himself and little from others, will keep himself from being the object of resentment.'

CHAP. XVII. The Master said, 'The superior man in everything considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rules of propriety. He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. This is indeed a superior man.'

CHAP. XIX. The Master said, 'The superior man dislikes the thought of his name not being mentioned after his death.'

CHAP. XX. The Master said, 'What the superior man seeks, is in himself. What the mean man seeks, is in others.'

CHAP. XXI. The Master said, 'The superior man is dignified, but does not wrangle. He is sociable, but not a partizan.'

CHAP. XXII. The Master said, 'The superior man does not promote a man simply on account of his words, nor does he put aside good words because of the man.'

CHAP. XXIII. Tsze-kung asked, saying, 'Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?' The Master said, 'Is not RECIPROCITY such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.'

CHAP. XXVI. The Master said, 'Specious words confound virtue. Want of forbearance in small matters confounds great plans.'

CHAP. XXVII. The Master said, 'When the multitude hate a man, it is necessary to examine into the case. When the multitude like a man, it is necessary to examine into the case.'

CHAP. XXIX. The Master said, 'To have faults and not to reform them, – this, indeed, should be pronounced having faults.'

CHAP. XXXI. The Master said, 'The object of the superior man is truth. Food is not his object. There is plowing; – even in that there is sometimes want. So with learning; – emolument may be found in it. The superior man is anxious lest he should not get truth; he is not anxious lest poverty should come upon him.'

CHAP. XXXII. 1. The Master said, 'When a man's knowledge is sufficient to attain, and his virtue is not sufficient to enable him to hold, whatever he may have gained, he will lose again. 2. 'When his knowledge is sufficient to attain, and he has virtue enough to hold fast, if he cannot govern with dignity, the people will not respect him. 3. 'When his knowledge is sufficient to attain, and he has virtue enough to hold fast; when he governs also with dignity, yet if he try to move the people contrary to the rules of propriety: – full excellence is not reached.'

CHAP. XXXIV. The Master said, 'Virtue is more to man than either water or fire. I have seen men die from treading on water and fire, but I have never seen a man die from treading the course of virtue.'

CHAP. XXXV. The Master said, 'Let every man consider virtue as what devolves on himself. He may not yield the performance of it even to his teacher.'

BOOK XX. YAO YUEH.

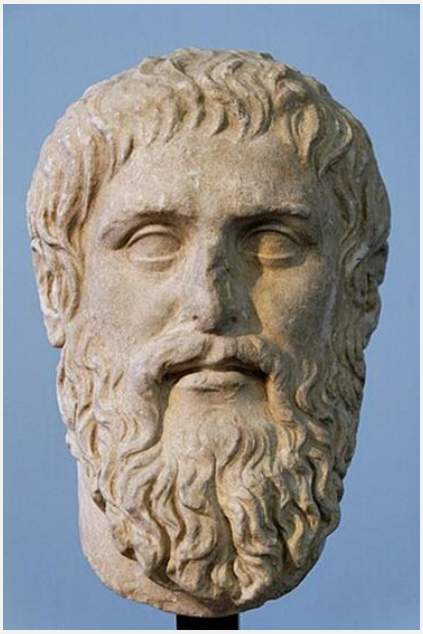
CHAP. I. 1. Yao said, 'Oh! you, Shun, the Heaven-determined order of succession now rests in your person. Sincerely hold fast the due Mean. If there shall be distress and want within the four seas, the Heavenly revenue will come to a perpetual end.' 2. Shun also used the same language in giving charge to Yu. 3. T'ang said, 'I the child Li, presume to use a dark-coloured victim, and presume to announce to Thee, O most great and sovereign God, that the sinner I dare not pardon, and thy ministers, O God, I do not keep in obscurity. The examination of them is by thy mind, O God. If, in my person, I commit offences, they are not to be attributed to you, the people of the myriad regions. If you in the myriad regions commit offences, these offences must rest on my person.' 4. Chau conferred great gifts, and the good were enriched. 5. 'Although he has his near relatives, they are not equal to my virtuous men. The people are throwing blame upon me, the One man.' 6. He carefully attended to the weights and measures, examined the body of the laws, restored the discarded officers, and the good government of the kingdom took its course. 7. He revived States that had been extinguished, restored families whose line of succession had been broken, and called to office those who had retired into obscurity, so that throughout the kingdom the hearts of the people turned

towards him. 8. What he attached chief importance to, were the food of the people, the duties of mourning, and sacrifices. 9. By his generosity, he won all. By his sincerity, he made the people repose trust in him. By his earnest activity, his achievements were great. By his justice, all were delighted.

CHAP. II. 1. Tsze-chang asked Confucius, saying, 'In what way should a person in authority act in order that he may conduct government properly?' The Master replied, 'Let him honour the five excellent, and banish away the four bad, things; – then may he conduct government properly.' Tsze-chang said, 'What are meant by the five excellent things?' The Master said, 'When the person in authority is beneficent without great expenditure; when he lays tasks on the people without their repining; when he pursues what he desires without being covetous; when he maintains a dignified ease without being proud; when he is majestic without being fierce.' 2. Tsze-chang said, 'What is meant by being beneficent without great expenditure?' The Master replied, 'When the person in authority makes more beneficial to the people the things from which they naturally derive benefit; – is not this being beneficent without great expenditure? When he chooses the labours which are proper, and makes them labour on them, who will repine? When his desires are set on benevolent government, and he secures it, who will accuse him of covetousness? Whether he has to do with many people or few, or with things great or small, he does not dare to indicate any disrespect; – is not this to maintain a dignified ease without any pride? He adjusts his clothes and cap, and throws a dignity into his looks, so that, thus dignified, he is looked at with awe; – is not this to be majestic without being fierce?' 3. Tsze-chang then asked, 'What are meant by the four bad things?' The Master

said, 'To put the people to death without having instructed them; – this is called cruelty. To require from them, suddenly, the full tale of work, without having given them warning; – this is called oppression. To issue orders as if without urgency, at first, and, when the time comes, to insist on them with severity; – this is called injury. And, generally, in the giving pay or rewards to men, to do it in a stingy way; this; – is called acting the part of a mere official.'

CHAP III. 1. The Master said, 'Without recognising the ordinances of Heaven, it is impossible to be a superior man. 2. 'Without an acquaintance with the rules of Propriety, it is impossible for the character to be established. 3. 'Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know men.'



PLATO

ALCIBIADES I[5]

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SOCRATES: O my friend, be persuaded by me, and hear the Delphian inscription, 'Know thyself' – not the men whom you think, but these kings are our rivals, and we can only overcome them by pains and skill. And if you fail in the required qualities, you will fail also in becoming renowned among Hellenes and Barbarians, which you seem to desire more than any other man ever desired anything.

ALCIBIADES: I entirely believe you; but what are the sort of pains which are required, Socrates, – can you tell me?

SOCRATES: Yes, I can; but we must take counsel together concerning the manner in which both of us may be most improved. For what I am telling you of the necessity of education applies to myself as well as to you; and there is only one point in which I have an advantage over you.

ALCIBIADES: What is that?

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[5] Plato. Alcibiades I. /Translated by Benjamin Jowett. URL: https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1676/pg1676-images.html

SOCRATES: I have a guardian who is better and wiser than your guardian, Pericles.

ALCIBIADES: Who is he, Socrates?

SOCRATES: God, Alcibiades, who up to this day has not allowed me to converse with you; and he inspires in me the faith that I am especially designed to bring you to honour.

ALCIBIADES: You are jesting, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Perhaps, at any rate, I am right in saying that all men greatly need pains and care, and you and I above all men.

ALCIBIADES: You are not far wrong about me.

SOCRATES: And certainly not about myself.

ALCIBIADES: But what can we do?

SOCRATES: There must be no hesitation or cowardice, my friend.

ALCIBIADES: That would not become us, Socrates.

SOCRATES: No, indeed, and we ought to take counsel together: for do we not wish to be as good as possible?

ALCIBIADES: We do.

SOCRATES: In what sort of virtue?

ALCIBIADES: Plainly, in the virtue of good men.

SOCRATES: Who are good in what?

ALCIBIADES: Those, clearly, who are good in the management of affairs.

SOCRATES: What sort of affairs? Equestrian affairs?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: You mean that about them we should have recourse to horsemen?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Well, naval affairs?

ALCIBIADES: No.

SOCRATES: You mean that we should have recourse to sailors about them?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then what affairs? And who do them?

ALCIBIADES: The affairs which occupy Athenian gentlemen.

SOCRATES: And when you speak of gentlemen, do you mean the wise or the unwise?

ALCIBIADES: The wise.

SOCRATES: And a man is good in respect of that in which he is wise?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And evil in respect of that in which he is unwise?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: The shoemaker, for example, is wise in respect of the making of shoes?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then he is good in that?

ALCIBIADES: He is.

SOCRATES: But in respect of the making of garments he is unwise?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then in that he is bad?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then upon this view of the matter the same man is good and also bad?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: But would you say that the good are the same as the bad?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: Then whom do you call the good?

ALCIBIADES: I mean by the good those who are able to rule in the city.

SOCRATES: Not, surely, over horses?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: But over men?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: When they are sick?

ALCIBIADES: No.

SOCRATES: Or on a voyage?

ALCIBIADES: No.

SOCRATES: Or reaping the harvest?

ALCIBIADES: No.

SOCRATES: When they are doing something or nothing?

ALCIBIADES: When they are doing something, I should say.

SOCRATES: I wish that you would explain to me what this something is.

ALCIBIADES: When they are having dealings with one another, and using one another's services, as we citizens do in our daily life.

SOCRATES: Those of whom you speak are ruling over men who are using the services of other men?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Are they ruling over the signal-men who give the time to the rowers?

ALCIBIADES: No; they are not.

SOCRATES: That would be the office of the pilot?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: But, perhaps you mean that they rule over flute-players, who lead the singers and use the services of the dancers?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: That would be the business of the teacher of the chorus?

ALCIBIADES: Yes

SOCRATES: Then what is the meaning of being able to rule over men who use other men?

ALCIBIADES: I mean that they rule over men who have common rights of citizenship, and dealings with one another.

SOCRATES: And what sort of an art is this? Suppose that I ask you again, as I did just now, What art makes men know how to rule over their fellow-sailors, – how would you answer?

ALCIBIADES: The art of the pilot.

SOCRATES: And, if I may recur to another old instance, what art enables them to rule over their fellow-singers?

ALCIBIADES: The art of the teacher of the chorus, which you were just now mentioning.

SOCRATES: And what do you call the art of fellow-citizens?

ALCIBIADES: I should say, good counsel, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And is the art of the pilot evil counsel?

ALCIBIADES: No.

SOCRATES: But good counsel?

ALCIBIADES: Yes, that is what I should say, – good counsel, of which the aim is the preservation of the voyagers.

SOCRATES: True. And what is the aim of that other good counsel of which you speak?

ALCIBIADES: The aim is the better order and preservation of the city.

SOCRATES: And what is that of which the absence or presence improves and preserves the order of the city? Suppose you were to ask me, what is that of which the presence or absence improves or

preserves the order of the body? I should reply, the presence of health and the absence of disease. You would say the same?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And if you were to ask me the same question about the eyes, I should reply in the same way, 'the presence of sight and the absence of blindness;' or about the ears, I should reply, that they were improved and were in better case, when deafness was absent, and hearing was present in them.

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: And what would you say of a state? What is that by the presence or absence of which the state is improved and better managed and ordered?

ALCIBIADES: I should say, Socrates: – the presence of friendship and the absence of hatred and division.

SOCRATES: And do you mean by friendship agreement or disagreement?

ALCIBIADES: Agreement.

SOCRATES: What art makes cities agree about numbers?

ALCIBIADES: Arithmetic.

SOCRATES: And private individuals?

ALCIBIADES: The same.

SOCRATES: And what art makes each individual agree with himself?

ALCIBIADES: The same.

SOCRATES: And what art makes each of us agree with himself about the comparative length of the span and of the cubit? Does not the art of measure?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Individuals are agreed with one another about this; and states, equally?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And the same holds of the balance?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: But what is the other agreement of which you speak, and about what? what art can give that agreement? And does that which gives it to the state give it also to the individual, so as to make him consistent with himself and with another?

ALCIBIADES: I should suppose so.

SOCRATES: But what is the nature of the agreement? – answer, and faint not.

ALCIBIADES: I mean to say that there should be such friendship and agreement as exists between an affectionate father and mother and their son, or between brothers, or between husband and wife.

SOCRATES: But can a man, Alcibiades, agree with a woman about the spinning of wool, which she understands and he does not?

ALCIBIADES: No, truly.

SOCRATES: Nor has he any need, for spinning is a female accomplishment.

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And would a woman agree with a man about the science of arms, which she has never learned?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: I suppose that the use of arms would be regarded by you as a male accomplishment?

ALCIBIADES: It would.

SOCRATES: Then, upon your view, women and men have two sorts of knowledge?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then in their knowledge there is no agreement of women and men?

ALCIBIADES: There is not.

SOCRATES: Nor can there be friendship, if friendship is agreement?

ALCIBIADES: Plainly not.

SOCRATES: Then women are not loved by men when they do their own work?

ALCIBIADES: I suppose not.

SOCRATES: Nor men by women when they do their own work?

ALCIBIADES: No.

SOCRATES: Nor are states well administered, when individuals do their own work?

ALCIBIADES: I should rather think, Socrates, that the reverse is the truth. (Compare Republic.)

SOCRATES: What! do you mean to say that states are well administered when friendship is absent, the presence of which, as we were saying, alone secures their good order?

ALCIBIADES: But I should say that there is friendship among them, for this very reason, that the two parties respectively do their own work.

SOCRATES: That was not what you were saying before; and what do you mean now by affirming that friendship exists when there is no agreement? How can there be agreement about matters which the one party knows, and of which the other is in ignorance?

ALCIBIADES: Impossible.

SOCRATES: And when individuals are doing their own work, are they doing what is just or unjust?

ALCIBIADES: What is just, certainly.

SOCRATES: And when individuals do what is just in the state, is there no friendship among them?

ALCIBIADES: I suppose that there must be, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then what do you mean by this friendship or agreement about which we must be wise and discreet in order that we may be good men? I cannot make out where it exists or among whom; according to you, the same persons may sometimes have it, and sometimes not.

ALCIBIADES: But, indeed, Socrates, I do not know what I am saying; and I have long been, unconsciously to myself, in a most disgraceful state.

SOCRATES: Nevertheless, cheer up; at fifty, if you had discovered your deficiency, you would have been too old, and the time for taking care of yourself would have passed away, but yours is just the age at which the discovery should be made.

ALCIBIADES: And what should he do, Socrates, who would make the discovery?

SOCRATES: Answer questions, Alcibiades; and that is a process which, by the grace of God, if I may put any faith in my oracle, will be very improving to both of us.

ALCIBIADES: If I can be improved by answering, I will answer.

SOCRATES: And first of all, that we may not peradventure be deceived by appearances, fancying, perhaps, that we are taking care of ourselves when we are not, what is the meaning of a man taking care of himself? and when does he take care? Does he take care of himself when he takes care of what belongs to him?

ALCIBIADES: I should think so.

SOCRATES: When does a man take care of his feet? Does he not take care of them when he takes care of that which belongs to his feet?

ALCIBIADES: I do not understand.

SOCRATES: Let me take the hand as an illustration; does not a ring belong to the finger, and to the finger only?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And the shoe in like manner to the foot?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And when we take care of our shoes, do we not take care of our feet?

ALCIBIADES: I do not comprehend, Socrates.

SOCRATES: But you would admit, Alcibiades, that to take proper care of a thing is a correct expression?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And taking proper care means improving?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And what is the art which improves our shoes?

ALCIBIADES: Shoemaking.

SOCRATES: Then by shoemaking we take care of our shoes?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And do we by shoemaking take care of our feet, or by some other art which improves the feet?

ALCIBIADES: By some other art.

SOCRATES: And the same art improves the feet which improves the rest of the body?

ALCIBIADES: Very true.

SOCRATES: Which is gymnastic?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then by gymnastic we take care of our feet, and by shoemaking of that which belongs to our feet?
ALCIBIADES: Very true.
SOCRATES: And by gymnastic we take care of our hands, and by the art of graving rings of that which belongs to our hands?
ALCIBIADES: Yes.
SOCRATES: And by gymnastic we take care of the body, and by the art of weaving and the other arts we take care of the things of the body?
ALCIBIADES: Clearly.
SOCRATES: Then the art which takes care of each thing is different from that which takes care of the belongings of each thing?
ALCIBIADES: True.
SOCRATES: Then in taking care of what belongs to you, you do not take care of yourself?
ALCIBIADES: Certainly not.
SOCRATES: For the art which takes care of our belongings appears not to be the same as that which takes care of ourselves?
ALCIBIADES: Clearly not.
SOCRATES: And now let me ask you what is the art with which we take care of ourselves?
ALCIBIADES: I cannot say.
SOCRATES: At any rate, thus much has been admitted, that the art is not one which makes any of our possessions, but which makes ourselves better?
ALCIBIADES: True.
SOCRATES: But should we ever have known what art makes a shoe better, if we did not know a shoe?
ALCIBIADES: Impossible.

SOCRATES: Nor should we know what art makes a ring better, if we did not know a ring?

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: And can we ever know what art makes a man better, if we do not know what we are ourselves?

ALCIBIADES: Impossible.

SOCRATES: And is self-knowledge such an easy thing, and was he to be lightly esteemed who inscribed the text on the temple at Delphi? Or is self-knowledge a difficult thing, which few are able to attain?

ALCIBIADES: At times I fancy, Socrates, that anybody can know himself; at other times the task appears to be very difficult.

SOCRATES: But whether easy or difficult, Alcibiades, still there is no other way; knowing what we are, we shall know how to take care of ourselves, and if we are ignorant we shall not know.

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: Well, then, let us see in what way the self-existent can be discovered by us; that will give us a chance of discovering our own existence, which otherwise we can never know.

ALCIBIADES: You say truly.

SOCRATES: Come, now, I beseech you, tell me with whom you are conversing? – with whom but with me?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: As I am, with you?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: That is to say, I, Socrates, am talking?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And Alcibiades is my hearer?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And I in talking use words?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And talking and using words have, I suppose, the same meaning?

ALCIBIADES: To be sure

SOCRATES: And the user is not the same as the thing which he uses?

ALCIBIADES: What do you mean?

SOCRATES: I will explain; the shoemaker, for example, uses a square tool, and a circular tool, and other tools for cutting?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: But the tool is not the same as the cutter and user of the tool?

ALCIBIADES: Of course not.

SOCRATES: And in the same way the instrument of the harper is to be distinguished from the harper himself?

ALCIBIADES: It is.

SOCRATES: Now the question which I asked was whether you conceive the user to be always different from that which he uses?

ALCIBIADES: I do.

SOCRATES: Then what shall we say of the shoemaker? Does he cut with his tools only or with his hands?

ALCIBIADES: With his hands as well.

SOCRATES: He uses his hands too?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And does he use his eyes in cutting leather?

ALCIBIADES: He does.

SOCRATES: And we admit that the user is not the same with the things which he uses?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then the shoemaker and the harper are to be distinguished from the hands and feet which they use?

ALCIBIADES: Clearly.

SOCRATES: And does not a man use the whole body?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And that which uses is different from that which is used?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: Then a man is not the same as his own body?

ALCIBIADES: That is the inference.

SOCRATES: What is he, then?

ALCIBIADES: I cannot say.

SOCRATES: Nay, you can say that he is the user of the body.

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And the user of the body is the soul?

ALCIBIADES: Yes, the soul.

SOCRATES: And the soul rules?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Let me make an assertion which will, I think, be universally admitted.

ALCIBIADES: What is it?

SOCRATES: That man is one of three things.

ALCIBIADES: What are they?

SOCRATES: Soul, body, or both together forming a whole.

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: But did we not say that the actual ruling principle of the body is man?

ALCIBIADES: Yes, we did.

SOCRATES: And does the body rule over itself?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: It is subject, as we were saying?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: Then that is not the principle which we are seeking?

ALCIBIADES: It would seem not.

SOCRATES: But may we say that the union of the two rules over the body, and consequently that this is man?

ALCIBIADES: Very likely.

SOCRATES: The most unlikely of all things; for if one of the members is subject, the two united cannot possibly rule.

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: But since neither the body, nor the union of the two, is man, either man has no real existence, or the soul is man?

ALCIBIADES: Just so.

SOCRATES: Is anything more required to prove that the soul is man?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly not; the proof is, I think, quite sufficient.

SOCRATES: And if the proof, although not perfect, be sufficient, we shall be satisfied; – more precise proof will be supplied when we have discovered that which we were led to omit, from a fear that the enquiry would be too much protracted.

ALCIBIADES: What was that?

SOCRATES: What I meant, when I said that absolute existence must be first considered; but now, instead of absolute existence, we have been considering the nature of individual existence, and this may, perhaps, be sufficient; for surely there is nothing which may be called more properly ourselves than the soul?

ALCIBIADES: There is nothing.

SOCRATES: Then we may truly conceive that you and I are conversing with one another, soul to soul?

ALCIBIADES: Very true.

SOCRATES: And that is just what I was saying before – that I, Socrates, am not arguing or talking with the face of Alcibiades, but with the real Alcibiades; or in other words, with his soul.

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: Then he who bids a man know himself, would have him know his soul?

ALCIBIADES: That appears to be true.

SOCRATES: He whose knowledge only extends to the body, knows the things of a man, and not the man himself?

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: Then neither the physician regarded as a physician, nor the trainer regarded as a trainer, knows himself?

ALCIBIADES: He does not.

SOCRATES: The husbandmen and the other craftsmen are very far from knowing themselves, for they would seem not even to know their own belongings? When regarded in relation to the arts which they practise they are even further removed from self-knowledge, for they only know the belongings of the body, which minister to the body.

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: Then if temperance is the knowledge of self, in respect of his art none of them is temperate?

ALCIBIADES: I agree.

SOCRATES: And this is the reason why their arts are accounted vulgar, and are not such as a good man would practise?

ALCIBIADES: Quite true.

SOCRATES: Again, he who cherishes his body cherishes not himself, but what belongs to him?

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: But he who cherishes his money, cherishes neither himself nor his belongings, but is in a stage yet further removed from himself?

ALCIBIADES: I agree.

SOCRATES: Then the money-maker has really ceased to be occupied with his own concerns?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: And if any one has fallen in love with the person of Alcibiades, he loves not Alcibiades, but the belongings of Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: But he who loves your soul is the true lover?

ALCIBIADES: That is the necessary inference.

SOCRATES: The lover of the body goes away when the flower of youth fades?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: But he who loves the soul goes not away, as long as the soul follows after virtue?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And I am the lover who goes not away, but remains with you, when you are no longer young and the rest are gone?

ALCIBIADES: Yes, Socrates; and therein you do well, and I hope that you will remain.

SOCRATES: Then you must try to look your best.

ALCIBIADES: I will.

SOCRATES: The fact is, that there is only one lover of Alcibiades the son of Cleinias – there neither is nor ever has been seemingly any other; and he is his darling, – Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus and Phaenarete.

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: And did you not say, that if I had not spoken first, you were on the point of coming to me, and enquiring why I only remained?

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: The reason was that I loved you for your own sake, whereas other men love what belongs to you; and your beauty, which is not you, is fading away, just as your true self is beginning to bloom. And I will never desert you, if you are not spoiled and deformed by the Athenian people; for the danger which I most fear is that you will become a lover of the people and will be spoiled by them. Many a noble Athenian has been ruined in this way. For the demus of the great-hearted Erechteus is of a fair countenance, but you should see him naked; wherefore observe the caution which I give you.

ALCIBIADES: What caution?

SOCRATES: Practise yourself, sweet friend, in learning what you ought to know, before you enter on politics; and then you will have an antidote which will keep you out of harm's way.

ALCIBIADES: Good advice, Socrates, but I wish that you would explain to me in what way I am to take care of myself.

SOCRATES: Have we not made an advance? for we are at any rate tolerably well agreed as to what we are, and there is no longer any danger, as we once feared, that we might be taking care not of ourselves, but of something which is not ourselves.

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: And the next step will be to take care of the soul, and look to that?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Leaving the care of our bodies and of our properties to others?

ALCIBIADES: Very good.

SOCRATES: But how can we have a perfect knowledge of the things of the soul? – For if we know them, then I suppose we shall know ourselves. Can we really be ignorant of the excellent meaning of the Delphian inscription, of which we were just now speaking?

ALCIBIADES: What have you in your thoughts, Socrates?

SOCRATES: I will tell you what I suspect to be the meaning and lesson of that inscription. Let me take an illustration from sight, which I imagine to be the only one suitable to my purpose.

ALCIBIADES: What do you mean?

SOCRATES: Consider; if some one were to say to the eye, 'See thyself,' as you might say to a man, 'Know thyself,' what is the nature and meaning of this precept? Would not his meaning be: – That the eye should look at that in which it would see itself?

ALCIBIADES: Clearly.

SOCRATES: And what are the objects in looking at which we see ourselves?

ALCIBIADES: Clearly, Socrates, in looking at mirrors and the like.

SOCRATES: Very true; and is there not something of the nature of a mirror in our own eyes?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Did you ever observe that the face of the person looking into the eye of another is reflected as in a mirror; and in

the visual organ which is over against him, and which is called the pupil, there is a sort of image of the person looking?

ALCIBIADES: That is quite true.

SOCRATES: Then the eye, looking at another eye, and at that in the eye which is most perfect, and which is the instrument of vision, will there see itself?

ALCIBIADES: That is evident.

SOCRATES: But looking at anything else either in man or in the world, and not to what resembles this, it will not see itself?

ALCIBIADES: Very true.

SOCRATES: Then if the eye is to see itself, it must look at the eye, and at that part of the eye where sight which is the virtue of the eye resides?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: And if the soul, my dear Alcibiades, is ever to know herself, must she not look at the soul; and especially at that part of the soul in which her virtue resides, and to any other which is like this?

ALCIBIADES: I agree, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And do we know of any part of our souls more divine than that which has to do with wisdom and knowledge?

ALCIBIADES: There is none.

SOCRATES: Then this is that part of the soul which resembles the divine; and he who looks at this and at the whole class of things divine, will be most likely to know himself?

ALCIBIADES: Clearly.

SOCRATES: And self-knowledge we agree to be wisdom?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: But if we have no self-knowledge and no wisdom, can we ever know our own good and evil?

ALCIBIADES: How can we, Socrates?

SOCRATES: You mean, that if you did not know Alcibiades, there would be no possibility of your knowing that what belonged to Alcibiades was really his?

ALCIBIADES: It would be quite impossible.

SOCRATES: Nor should we know that we were the persons to whom anything belonged, if we did not know ourselves?

ALCIBIADES: How could we?

SOCRATES: And if we did not know our own belongings, neither should we know the belongings of our belongings?

ALCIBIADES: Clearly not.

SOCRATES: Then we were not altogether right in acknowledging just now that a man may know what belongs to him and yet not know himself; nay, rather he cannot even know the belongings of his belongings; for the discernment of the things of self, and of the things which belong to the things of self, appear all to be the business of the same man, and of the same art.

ALCIBIADES: So much may be supposed.

SOCRATES: And he who knows not the things which belong to himself, will in like manner be ignorant of the things which belong to others?

ALCIBIADES: Very true.

SOCRATES: And if he knows not the affairs of others, he will not know the affairs of states?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: Then such a man can never be a statesman?

ALCIBIADES: He cannot.

SOCRATES: Nor an economist?

ALCIBIADES: He cannot.

SOCRATES: He will not know what he is doing?

ALCIBIADES: He will not.

SOCRATES: And will not he who is ignorant fall into error?

ALCIBIADES: Assuredly.

SOCRATES: And if he falls into error will he not fail both in his public and private capacity?

ALCIBIADES: Yes, indeed.

SOCRATES: And failing, will he not be miserable?

ALCIBIADES: Very.

SOCRATES: And what will become of those for whom he is acting?

ALCIBIADES: They will be miserable also.

SOCRATES: Then he who is not wise and good cannot be happy?

ALCIBIADES: He cannot.

SOCRATES: The bad, then, are miserable?

ALCIBIADES: Yes, very.

SOCRATES: And if so, not he who has riches, but he who has wisdom, is delivered from his misery?

ALCIBIADES: Clearly.

SOCRATES: Cities, then, if they are to be happy, do not want walls, or triremes, or docks, or numbers, or size, Alcibiades, without virtue? (Compare Arist. Pol.)

ALCIBIADES: Indeed they do not.

SOCRATES: And you must give the citizens virtue, if you mean to administer their affairs rightly or nobly?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: But can a man give that which he has not?

ALCIBIADES: Impossible.

SOCRATES: Then you or any one who means to govern and superintend, not only himself and the things of himself, but the state and the things of the state, must in the first place acquire virtue.

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: You have not therefore to obtain power or authority, in order to enable you to do what you wish for yourself and the state, but justice and wisdom.

ALCIBIADES: Clearly.

SOCRATES: You and the state, if you act wisely and justly, will act according to the will of God?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: As I was saying before, you will look only at what is bright and divine, and act with a view to them?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: In that mirror you will see and know yourselves and your own good?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And so you will act rightly and well?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: In which case, I will be security for your happiness.

ALCIBIADES: I accept the security.

SOCRATES: But if you act unrighteously, your eye will turn to the dark and godless, and being in darkness and ignorance of yourselves, you will probably do deeds of darkness.

ALCIBIADES: Very possibly.

SOCRATES: For if a man, my dear Alcibiades, has the power to do what he likes, but has no understanding, what is likely to be the result, either to him as an individual or to the state – for example,

if he be sick and is able to do what he likes, not having the mind of a physician – having moreover tyrannical power, and no one daring to reprove him, what will happen to him? Will he not be likely to have his constitution ruined?

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: Or again, in a ship, if a man having the power to do what he likes, has no intelligence or skill in navigation, do you see what will happen to him and to his fellow-sailors?

ALCIBIADES: Yes; I see that they will all perish.

SOCRATES: And in like manner, in a state, and where there is any power and authority which is wanting in virtue, will not misfortune, in like manner, ensue?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Not tyrannical power, then, my good Alcibiades, should be the aim either of individuals or states, if they would be happy, but virtue.

ALCIBIADES: That is true.

SOCRATES: And before they have virtue, to be commanded by a superior is better for men as well as for children? (Compare Arist. Pol.)

ALCIBIADES: That is evident.

SOCRATES: And that which is better is also nobler?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: And what is nobler is more becoming?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly.

SOCRATES: Then to the bad man slavery is more becoming, because better?

ALCIBIADES: True.

SOCRATES: Then vice is only suited to a slave?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And virtue to a freeman?

ALCIBIADES: Yes.

SOCRATES: And, O my friend, is not the condition of a slave to be avoided?

ALCIBIADES: Certainly, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And are you now conscious of your own state? And do you know whether you are a freeman or not?

ALCIBIADES: I think that I am very conscious indeed of my own state.

SOCRATES: And do you know how to escape out of a state which I do not even like to name to my beauty?

ALCIBIADES: Yes, I do.

SOCRATES: How?

ALCIBIADES: By your help, Socrates.

SOCRATES: That is not well said, Alcibiades.

ALCIBIADES: What ought I to have said?

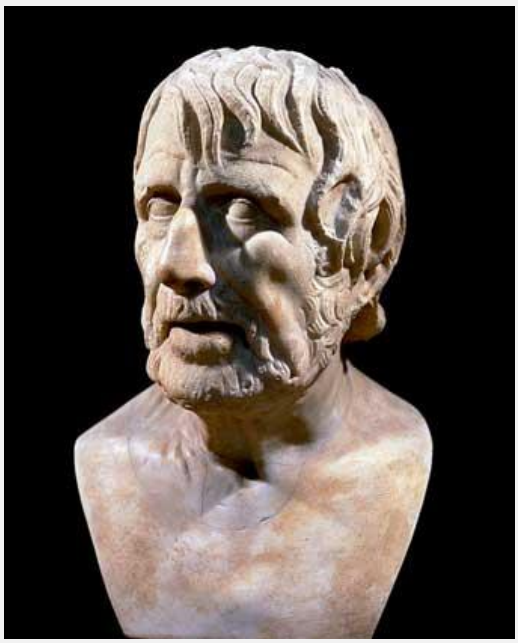
SOCRATES: By the help of God.

ALCIBIADES: I agree; and I further say, that our relations are likely to be reversed. From this day forward, I must and will follow you as you have followed me; I will be the disciple, and you shall be my master.

SOCRATES: O that is rare! My love breeds another love: and so like the stork I shall be cherished by the bird whom I have hatched.

ALCIBIADES: Strange, but true; and henceforward I shall begin to think about justice.

SOCRATES: And I hope that you will persist; although I have fears, not because I doubt you; but I see the power of the state, which may be too much for both of us.



LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

MORAL LETTERS TO LUCILIUS

(LETTERS FROM A STOIC)[6]

Letter I. On Saving Time

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. Continue to act thus, my dear Lucilius – set yourself free for your own sake; gather and save your time, which till lately has been forced from you, or filched away, or has merely slipped from your hands. Make yourself believe the truth of my words, – that certain moments are torn from us, that some are gently removed, and that others glide beyond our reach. The most disgraceful kind of loss, however, is that due to carelessness. Furthermore, if you will pay close heed to the problem, you will find that the largest portion of our life passes while we are doing ill, a goodly share while we are doing nothing, and the whole while we are doing that which is not to the purpose.

2. What man can you show me who places any value on his time, who reckons the worth of each day, who understands that he is

[6] Seneca Lucius Annaeus. Moral Letters to Lucilius (Letters from a Stoic) / translated by Richard Mott Gummere. Loeb Classical Library Edition, 1915/ URL: https://onemorelibrary.com/index.php/en/?option=com_djclassifieds&format=raw&view=download&task=download&fid=16913

dying daily? For we are mistaken when we look forward to death; the major portion of death has already passed. Whatever years be behind us are in death's hands. Therefore, Lucilius, do as you write me that you are doing: hold every hour in your grasp. Lay hold of to-day's task, and you will not need to depend so much upon to-morrow's. While we are postponing, life speeds by.

3. Nothing, Lucilius, is ours, except time. We were entrusted by nature with the ownership of this single thing, so fleeting and slippery that anyone who will can oust us from possession. What fools these mortals be! They allow the cheapest and most useless things, which can easily be replaced, to be charged in the reckoning, after they have acquired them; but they never regard themselves as in debt when they have received some of that precious commodity, – time! And yet time is the one loan which even a grateful recipient cannot repay.

4. You may desire to know how I, who preach to you so freely, am practising. I confess frankly: my expense account balances, as you would expect from one who is free-handed but careful. I cannot boast that I waste nothing, but I can at least tell you what I am wasting, and the cause and manner of the loss; I can give you the reasons why I am a poor man. My situation, however, is the same as that of many who are reduced to slender means through no fault of their own: every one forgives them, but no one comes to their rescue.

5. What is the state of things, then? It is this: I do not regard a man as poor, if the little which remains is enough for him. I advise you, however, to keep what is really yours; and you cannot begin too early. For, as our ancestors believed, it is too late to spare when

you reach the dregs of the cask[7]. Of that which remains at the bottom, the amount is slight, and the quality is vile. Farewell.

Letter VII. On Crowds

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. Do you ask me what you should regard as especially to be avoided? I say, crowds; for as yet you cannot trust yourself to them with safety. I shall admit my own weakness, at any rate; for I never bring back home the same character that I took abroad with me. Something of that which I have forced to be calm within me is disturbed; some of the foes that I have routed return again. Just as the sick man, who has been weak for a long time, is in such a condition that he cannot be taken out of the house without suffering a relapse, so we ourselves are affected when our souls are recovering from a lingering disease.

2. To consort with the crowd is harmful; there is no person who does not make some vice attractive to us, or stamp it upon us, or taint us unconsciously therewith. Certainly, the greater the mob with which we mingle, the greater the danger. But nothing is so damaging to good character as the habit of lounging at the games; for then it is that vice steals subtly upon one through the avenue of pleasure. 3. What do you think I mean? I mean that I come home more greedy, more ambitious, more voluptuous, and even more cruel and inhuman, because I have been among human beings. By chance I attended a mid-day exhibition, expecting some fun, wit, and relaxation, – an exhibition at which men's eyes have respite from the slaughter of their fellow-men. But it was quite the reverse.

[7] Hesiod, Works and Days, 369.

The previous combats were the essence of compassion; but now all the trifling is put aside and it is pure murder[8]. The men have no defensive armour. They are exposed to blows at all points, and no one ever strikes in vain.

4. Many persons prefer this programme to the usual pairs and to the bouts "by request." Of course they do; there is no helmet or shield to deflect the weapon. What is the need of defensive armour, or of skill? All these mean delaying death. In the morning they throw men to the lions and the bears; at noon, they throw them to the spectators. The spectators demand that the slayer shall face the man who is to slay him in his turn; and they always reserve the latest conqueror for another butchering. The outcome of every fight is death, and the means are fire and sword. This sort of thing goes on while the arena is empty.

5. You may retort: "But he was a highway robber; he killed a man!" And what of it? Granted that, as a murderer, he deserved this punishment, what crime have you committed, poor fellow, that you should deserve to sit and see this show? In the morning they cried "Kill him! Lash him! Burn him! Why does he meet the sword in so cowardly a way? Why does he strike so feebly? Why doesn't he die game? Whip him to meet his wounds! Let them receive blow for blow, with chests bare and exposed to the stroke!" And when the games stop for the intermission, they announce: "A little throatcutting in the meantime, so that there may still be something going on!" Come now; do you[9] not understand even this truth, that

[8] During the luncheon interval condemned criminals were often driven into the arena and compelled to fight, for the amusement of those spectators who remained throughout the day.

[9] The remark is addressed to the brutalized spectators.

a bad example reacts on the agent? Thank the immortal gods that you are teaching cruelty to a person who cannot learn to be cruel.

6. The young character, which cannot hold fast to righteousness, must be rescued from the mob; it is too easy to side with the majority. Even Socrates, Cato, and Laelius might have been shaken in their moral strength by a crowd that was unlike them; so true it is that none of us, no matter how much he cultivates his abilities, can withstand the shock of faults that approach, as it were, with so great a retinue.

7. Much harm is done by a single case of indulgence or greed; the familiar friend, if he be luxurious, weakens and softens us imperceptibly; the neighbour, if he be rich, rouses our covetousness; the companion, if he be slanderous, rubs off some of his rust upon us, even though we be spotless and sincere. What then do you think the effect will be on character, when the world at large assaults it! You must either imitate or loathe the world.

8. But both courses are to be avoided; you should not copy the bad simply because they are many, nor should you hate the many because they are unlike you. Withdraw into yourself, as far as you can. Associate with those who will make a better man of you. Welcome those whom you yourself can improve. The process is mutual; for men learn while they teach.

9. There is no reason why pride in advertising your abilities should lure you into publicity, so that you should desire to recite or harangue before the general public. Of course I should be willing for you to do so if you had a stock-in-trade that suited such a mob; as it is, there is not a man of them who can understand you. One or two individuals will perhaps come in your way, but even these will have to be moulded and trained by you so that they will

understand you. You may say: “For what purpose did I learn all these things?” But you need not fear that you have wasted your efforts; it was for yourself that you learned them.

10. In order, however, that I may not to-day have learned exclusively for myself, I shall share with you three excellent sayings, of the same general purport, which have come to my attention. This letter will give you one of them as payment of my debt; the other two you may accept as a contribution in advance. Democritus[10] says: “One man means as much to me as a multitude, and a multitude only as much as one man.”

11. The following also was nobly spoken by someone or other, for it is doubtful who the author was; they asked him what was the object of all this study applied to an art that would reach but very few. He replied: “I am content with few, content with one, content with none at all.” The third saying – and a noteworthy one, too – is by Epicurus[11], written to one of the partners of his studies: “I write this not for the many, but for you; each of us is enough of an audience for the other.”

12. Lay these words to heart, Lucilius, that you may scorn the pleasure which comes from the applause of the majority. Many men praise you; but have you any reason for being pleased with yourself, if you are a person whom the many can understand? Your good qualities should face inwards. Farewell.

[10] Frag. 302[a] Diels.

[11] Frag. 208 Usener.

Letter XIII. On Groundless Fears

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. I know that you have plenty of spirit; for even before you began to equip yourself with maxims which were wholesome and potent to overcome obstacles, you were taking pride in your contest with Fortune; and this is all the more true, now that you have grappled with Fortune and tested your powers. For our powers can never inspire in us implicit faith in ourselves except when many difficulties have confronted us on this side and on that, and have occasionally even come to close quarters with us. It is only in this way that the true spirit can be tested, – the spirit that will never consent to come under the jurisdiction of things external to ourselves.

2. This is the touchstone of such a spirit; no prizefighter can go with high spirits into the strife if he has never been beaten black and blue; the only contestant who can confidently enter the lists is the man who has seen his own blood, who has felt his teeth rattle beneath his opponent's fist, who has been tripped and felt the full force of his adversary's charge, who has been downed in body but not in spirit, one who, as often as he falls, rises again with greater defiance than ever.

3. So then, to keep up my figure, Fortune has often in the past got the upper hand of you, and yet you have not surrendered, but have leaped up and stood your ground still more eagerly. For manliness gains much strength by being challenged; nevertheless, if you approve, allow me to offer some additional safeguards by which you may fortify yourself.

4. There are more things, Lucilius, likely to frighten us than there are to crush us; we suffer more often in imagination than in reality.

I am not speaking with you in the Stoic strain but in my milder style. For it is our Stoic fashion to speak of all those things, which provoke cries and groans, as unimportant and beneath notice; but you and I must drop such great-sounding words, although, heaven knows, they are true enough. What I advise you to do is, not to be unhappy before the crisis comes; since it may be that the dangers before which you paled as if they were threatening you, will never come upon you; they certainly have not yet come.

5. Accordingly, some things torment us more than they ought; some torment us before they ought; and some torment us when they ought not to torment us at all. We are in the habit of exaggerating, or imagining, or anticipating, sorrow. The first of these three faults[12] may be postponed for the present, because the subject is under discussion and the case is still in court, so to speak. That which I should call trifling, you will maintain to be most serious; for of course I know that some men laugh while being flogged, and that others wince at a box on the ear. We shall consider later whether these evils derive their power from their own strength, or from our own weakness.

6. Do me the favour, when men surround you and try to talk you into believing that you are unhappy, to consider not what you hear but what you yourself feel, and to take counsel with your feelings and question yourself independently, because you know your own affairs better than anyone else does. Ask: "Is there any reason why these persons should condole with me? Why should they be worried or even fear some infection from me, as if troubles could

[12] Seneca dismisses the topic of "exaggerated ills," because judgements will differ concerning present troubles; the Stoics, for example, would not admit that torture was an evil at all. He then passes on to the topic of "imaginary ills," §§ 6-7, and afterwards to "anticipated ills," §§ 8-11.

be transmitted? Is there any evil involved, or is it a matter merely of ill report, rather than an evil?" Put the question voluntarily to yourself: "Am I tormented without sufficient reason, am I morose, and do I convert what is not an evil into what is an evil?"

7. You may retort with the question: "How am I to know whether my sufferings are real or imaginary?" Here is the rule for such matters: we are tormented either by things present, or by things to come, or by both. As to things present, the decision is easy. Suppose that your person enjoys freedom and health, and that you do not suffer from any external injury. As to what may happen to it in the future, we shall see later on. To-day there is nothing wrong with it.

8. "But," you say, "something will happen to it." First of all, consider whether your proofs of future trouble are sure. For it is more often the case that we are troubled by our apprehensions, and that we are mocked by that mocker, rumour, which is wont to settle wars, but much more often settles individuals. Yes, my dear Lucilius; we agree too quickly with what people say. We do not put to the test those things which cause our fear; we do not examine into them; we blench and retreat just like soldiers who are forced to abandon their camp because of a dust-cloud raised by stampeding cattle, or are thrown into a panic by the spreading of some unauthenticated rumour.

9. And somehow or other it is the idle report that disturbs us most. For truth has its own definite boundaries, but that which arises from uncertainty is delivered over to guesswork and the irresponsible license of a frightened mind. That is why no fear is so ruinous and so uncontrollable as panic fear. For other fears are groundless, but this fear is witless.

10. Let us, then, look carefully into the matter. It is likely that some troubles will befall us; but it is not a present fact. How often has the unexpected happened! How often has the expected never come to pass! And even though it is ordained to be, what does it avail to run out to meet your suffering? You will suffer soon enough, when it arrives; so look forward meanwhile to better things.

11. What shall you gain by doing this? Time. There will be many happenings meanwhile which will serve to postpone, or end, or pass on to another person, the trials which are near or even in your very presence. A fire has opened the way to flight. Men have been let down softly by a catastrophe. Sometimes the sword has been checked even at the victim's throat. Men have survived their own executioners. Even bad fortune is fickle. Perhaps it will come, perhaps not; in the meantime it is not. So look forward to better things.

12. The mind at times fashions for itself false shapes of evil when there are no signs that point to any evil; it twists into the worst construction some word of doubtful meaning; or it fancies some personal grudge to be more serious than it really is, considering not how angry the enemy is, but to what lengths he may go if he is angry. But life is not worth living, and there is no limit to our sorrows, if we indulge our fears to the greatest possible extent; in this matter, let prudence help you, and contemn with a resolute spirit even when it is in plain sight. If you cannot do this, counter one weakness with another, and temper your fear with hope. There is nothing so certain among these objects of fear that it is not more certain still that things we dread sink into nothing and that things we hope for mock us.

13. Accordingly, weigh carefully your hopes as well as your fears, and whenever all the elements are in doubt, decide in your own favour; believe what you prefer. And if fear wins a majority of the votes, incline in the other direction anyhow, and cease to harassyour soul, reflecting continually that most mortals, even when no troubles are actually at hand or are certainly to be expected in the future, become excited and disquieted. No one calls a halt on himself, when he begins to be urged ahead; nor does he regulate his alarm according to the truth. No one says; "The author of the story is a fool, and he who has believed it is a fool, as well as he who fabricated it." We let ourselves drift with every breeze; we are frightened at uncertainties, just as if they were certain. We observe no moderation. The slightest thing turns the scales and throws us forthwith into a panic.

14. But I am ashamed either to admonish you sternly or to try to beguile you with such mild remedies[13]. Let another say. "Perhaps the worst will not happen." You yourself must say. "Well, what if it does happen? Let us see who wins! Perhaps it happens for my best interests; it may be that such a death will shed credit upon my life." Socrates was ennobled by the hemlock draught. Wrench from Cato's hand his sword, the vindicator of liberty, and you deprive him of the greatest share of his glory.

15. I am exhorting you far too long, since you need reminding rather than exhortation. The path on which I am leading you is not different from that on which your nature leads you; you were born to such conduct as I describe. Hence there is all the more reason why you should increase and beautify the good that is in you.

[13] Cf. Solon's καί με κωτίλλοντα λείως τραχὺν ἐκφανεῖ νόον.

16. But now, to close my letter, I have only to stamp the usual seal upon it, in other words, to commit thereto some noble message to be delivered to you: “The fool, with all his other faults, has this also, he is always getting ready to live[14].” Reflect, my esteemed Lucilius, what this saying means, and you will see how revolting is the fickleness of men who lay down every day new foundations of life, and begin to build up fresh hopes even at the brink of the grave.
17. Look within your own mind for individual instances; you will think of old men who are preparing themselves at that very hour for a political career, or for travel, or for business. And what is baser than getting ready to live when you are already old? I should not name the author of this motto, except that it is somewhat unknown to fame and is not one of those popular sayings of Epicurus which I have allowed myself to praise and to appropriate. Farewell.

Letter XVI. On Philosophy, the Guide of Life

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. It is clear to you, I am sure, Lucilius, that no man can live a happy life, or even a supportable life, without the study of wisdom; you know also that a happy life is reached when our wisdom is brought to completion, but that life is at least endurable even when our wisdom is only begun. This idea, however, clear though it is, must be strengthened and implanted more deeply by daily reflection; it is more important for you to keep the resolutions you have already made than to go on and make noble ones. You must persevere, must develop new strength by continuous study, until

[14] Epicurus, Frag. 494 Usener.

that which is only a good inclination becomes a good settled purpose.

2. Hence you no longer need to come to me with much talk and protestations; I know that you have made great progress. I understand the feelings which prompt your words; they are not feigned or specious words. Nevertheless I shall tell you what I think, – that at present I have hopes for you, but not yet perfect trust. And I wish that you would adopt the same attitude towards yourself; there is no reason why you should put confidence in yourself too quickly and readily. Examine yourself; scrutinize and observe yourself in divers ways; but mark, before all else, whether it is in philosophy or merely in life itself[15] that you have made progress.

3. Philosophy is no trick to catch the public; it is not devised for show. It is a matter, not of words, but of facts. It is not pursued in order that the day may yield some amusement before it is spent, or that our leisure may be relieved of a tedium that irks us. It moulds and constructs the soul; it orders our life, guides our conduct, shows us what we should do and what we should leave undone; it sits at the helm and directs our course as we waver amid uncertainties. Without it, no one can live fearlessly or in peace of mind. Countless things that happen every hour call for advice; and such advice is to be sought in philosophy.

4. Perhaps someone will say: “How can philosophy help me, if Fate exists? Of what avail is philosophy, if God rules the universe? Of what avail is it, if Chance governs everything? For not only is it impossible to change things that are determined, but it is also

[15] i.e., have merely advanced in years.

impossible to plan beforehand against what is undetermined; either God has forestalled my plans, and decided what I am to do, or else Fortune gives no free play to my plans."

5. Whether the truth, Lucilius, lies in one or in all of these views, we must be philosophers; whether Fate binds us down by an inexorable law, or whether God as arbiter of the universe has arranged everything, or whether Chance drives and tosses human affairs without method, philosophy ought to be our defence. She will encourage us to obey God cheerfully, but Fortune defiantly; she will teach us to follow God and endure Chance.

6. But it is not my purpose now to be led into a discussion as to what is within our own control, – if foreknowledge is supreme, or if a chain of fated events drags us along in its clutches, or if the sudden and the unexpected play the tyrant over us; I return now to my warning and my exhortation, that you should not allow the impulse of your spirit to weaken and grow cold. Hold fast to it and establish it firmly, in order that what is now impulse may become a habit of the mind.

7. If I know you well, you have already been trying to find out, from the very beginning of my letter, what little contribution it brings to you. Sift the letter, and you will find it. You need not wonder at any genius of mine; for as yet I am lavish only with other men's property. – But why did I say "other men"? Whatever is well said by anyone is mine. This also is a saying of Epicurus:[16] "If you live according to nature, you will never be poor; if you live according to opinion, you will never be rich."

[16] Frag. 201 Usener.

8. Nature's wants are slight; the demands of opinion are boundless. Suppose that the property of many millionaires is heaped up in your possession. Assume that fortune carries you far beyond the limits of a private income, decks you with gold, clothes you in purple, and brings you to such a degree of luxury and wealth that you can bury the earth under your marble floors; that you may not only possess, but tread upon, riches. Add statues, paintings, and whatever any art has devised for the luxury; you will only learn from such things to crave still greater.

9. Natural desires are limited; but those which spring from false opinion can have no stopping-point. The false has no limits. When you are travelling on a road, there must be an end; but when astray, your wanderings are limitless. Recall your steps, therefore, from idle things, and when you would know whether that which you seek is based upon a natural or upon a misleading desire, consider whether it can stop at any definite point. If you find, after having travelled far, that there is a more distant goal always in view, you may be sure that this condition is contrary to nature. Farewell.

Letter XVIII. On Festivals and Fasting

1. It is the month of December, and yet the city is at this very moment in a sweat. License is given to the general merrymaking. Everything resounds with mighty preparations, – as if the Saturnalia differed at all from the usual business day! So true it is that the difference is nil, that I regard as correct the remark of the man who said: "Once December was a month; now it is a year."[17]

[17] i.e., the whole year is a Saturnalia.

2. If I had you with me, I should be glad to consult you and find out what you think should be done, – whether we ought to make no change in our daily routine, or whether, in order not to be out of sympathy with the ways of the public, we should dine in gayer fashion and doff the toga[18]. As it is now, we Romans have changed our dress for the sake of pleasure and holiday-making, though in former times that was only customary when the State was disturbed and had fallen on evil days. 3. I am sure that, if I know you aright, playing the part of an umpire you would have wished that we should be neither like the libertycapped[19] throng in all ways, nor in all ways unlike them; unless, perhaps, this is just the season when we ought to lay down the law to the soul, and bid it be alone in refraining from pleasures just when the whole mob has let itself go in pleasures; for this is the surest proof which a man can get of his own constancy, if he neither seeks the things which are seductive and allure him to luxury, nor is led into them.

4. It shows much more courage to remain dry and sober when the mob is drunk and vomiting; but it shows greater selfcontrol to refuse to withdraw oneself and to do what the crowd does, but in a different way, – thus neither making oneself conspicuous nor becoming one of the crowd. For one may keep holiday without extravagance.

5. I am so firmly determined, however, to test the constancy of your mind that, drawing from the teachings of great men, I shall give you also a lesson: Set aside a certain number of days, during which you shall be content with the scantiest and cheapest fare, with

[18] For a dinner dress.

[19] The pilleus was worn by newly freed slaves and by the Roman populace on festal occasions.

coarse and rough dress, saying to yourself the while: “Is this the condition that I feared?”

6. It is precisely in times of immunity from care that the soul should toughen itself beforehand for occasions of greater stress, and it is while Fortune is kind that it should fortify itself against her violence. In days of peace the soldier performs manoeuvres, throws up earthworks with no enemy in sight, and wearies himself by gratuitous toil, in order that he may be equal to unavoidable toil. If you would not have a man flinch when the crisis comes, train him before it comes. Such is the course which those men[20] have followed who, in their imitation of poverty, have every month come almost to want, that they might never recoil from what they had so often rehearsed.

7. You need not suppose that I mean meals like Timon’s, or “paupers’ huts,”[21] or any other device which luxurious millionaires use to beguile the tedium of their lives. Let the pallet be a real one, and the coarse cloak; let the bread be hard and grimy. Endure all this for three or four days at a time, sometimes for more, so that it may be a test of yourself instead of a mere hobby. Then, I assure you, my dear Lucilius, you will leap for joy when filled with a pennyworth of food, and you will understand that a man’s peace of mind does not depend upon Fortune; for, even when angry she grants enough for our needs.

8. There is no reason, however, why you should think that you are doing anything great; for you will merely be doing what many thousands of slaves and many thousands of poor men are doing every day. But you may credit yourself with this item, – that you

[20] The Epicurians. Cf. § 9 and Epicurus, Frag. 158. Usener.
[21] Cf. Ep. c. 6 and Martial, iii. 48.

will not be doing it under compulsion, and that it will be as easy for you to endure it permanently as to make the experiment from time to time. Let us practise our strokes on the "dummy"[22]; let us become intimate with poverty, so that Fortune may not catch us off our guard. We shall be rich with all the more comfort, if we once learn how far poverty is from being a burden.

9. Even Epicurus, the teacher of pleasure, used to observe stated intervals, during which he satisfied his hunger in niggardly fashion; he wished to see whether he thereby fell short of full and complete happiness, and, if so, by what amount he fell short, and whether this amount was worth purchasing at the price of great effort. At any rate, he makes such a statement in the well known letter written to Polyaenus in the archonship of Charinus[23]. Indeed, he boasts that he himself lived on less than a penny, but that Metrodorus, whose progress was not yet so great, needed a whole penny. 10. Do you think that there can be fullness on such fare? Yes, and there is pleasure also, – not that shifty and fleeting Pleasure which needs a fillip now and then, but a pleasure that is steadfast and sure. For though water, barley-meal, and crusts of barley-bread, are not a cheerful diet, yet it is the highest kind of Pleasure to be able to derive pleasure from this sort of food, and to have reduced one's needs to that modicum which no unfairness of Fortune can snatch away.

11. Even prison fare is more generous; and those who have been set apart for capital punishment are not so meanly fed by the man

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[22] The post which gladiators used when preparing themselves for combats in the arena.

[23] Usually identified with Chaerimus, 307-8 B.C. But Wilhelm, Öster Jahreshefte, V.136, has shown that there is probably no confusion of names. A Charinus was archon at Athens in 290-89; see Johnson, Class. Phil. ix. p. 256.

who is to execute them. Therefore, what a noble soul must one have, to descend of one's own free will to a diet which even those who have been sentenced to death have not to fear! This is indeed forestalling the spearthrusts of Fortune.

12. So begin, my dear Lucilius, to follow the custom of these men, and set apart certain days on which you shall withdraw from your business and make yourself at home with the scantiest fare. Establish business relations with poverty. Dare, O my friend, to scorn the sight of wealth. And mould thyself to kinship with thy God[24].

13. For he alone is in kinship with God who has scorned wealth. Of course I do not forbid you to possess it, but I would have you reach the point at which you possess it dauntlessly; this can be accomplished only by persuading yourself that you can live happily without it as well as with it, and by regarding riches always as likely to elude you.

14. But now I must begin to fold up my letter. "Settle your debts first," you cry. Here is a draft on Epicurus; he will pay down the sum: "Ungoverned anger begets madness."[25] You cannot help knowing the truth of these words, since you have had not only slaves, but also enemies.

15. But indeed this emotion blazes out against all sorts of persons; it springs from love as much as from hate, and shows itself not less in serious matters than in jest and sport. And it makes no difference how important the provocation may be, but into what kind of soul it penetrates. Similarly with fire; it does not matter how great is the flame, but what it falls upon. For solid timbers

[24] Vergil, Aeneid, viii. 364 f.
[25] Frag. 484 Usener.

have repelled a very great fire; conversely, dry and easily inflammable stuff nourishes the slightest spark into a conflagration. So it is with anger, my dear Lucilius; the outcome of a mighty anger is madness, and hence anger should be avoided, not merely that we may escape excess, but that we may have a healthy mind. Farewell.

Letter XXIV. On Despising Death[26]

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. You write me that you are anxious about the result of a lawsuit, with which an angry opponent is threatening you; and you expect me to advise you to picture to yourself a happier issue, and to rest in the allurements of hope. Why, indeed, is it necessary to summon trouble, – which must be endured soon enough when it has once arrived, or to anticipate trouble and ruin the present through fear of the future? It is indeed foolish to be unhappy now because you may be unhappy at some future time.

2. But I shall conduct you to peace of mind by another route: if you would put off all worry, assume that what you fear may happen will certainly happen in any event; whatever the trouble may be, measure it in your own mind, and estimate the amount of your fear. You will thus understand that what you fear is either insignificant or short-lived.

3. And you need not spend a long time in gathering illustrations which will strengthen you; every epoch has produced them. Let your thoughts travel into any era of Roman or foreign history, and

[26] Seneca's theme is suggested by the fear which possesses Lucilius as to the issue of a lawsuit. This fear is taken as typical of all fears, and Seneca devotes most of his letter to the greatest fear of all, – fear of death.

there will throng before you notable examples of high achievement or of high endeavour. If you lose this case, can anything more severe happen to you than being sent into exile or led to prison? Is there a worse fate that any man may fear than being burned or being killed? Name such penalties one by one, and mention the men who have scorned them; one does not need to hunt for them, – it is simply a matter of selection.

4. Sentence of conviction was borne by Rutilius as if the injustice of the decision were the only thing which annoyed him. Exile was endured by Metellus with courage, by Rutilius even with gladness; for the former consented to come back only because his country called him; the latter refused to return when Sulla summoned him, – and nobody in those days said "No" to Sulla! Socrates in prison discoursed, and declined to flee when certain persons gave him the opportunity; he remained there, in order to free mankind from the fear of two most grievous things, death and imprisonment.

5. Mucius put his hand into the fire. It is painful to be burned; but how much more painful to inflict such suffering upon oneself! Here was a man of no learning, not primed to face death and pain by any words of wisdom, and equipped only with the courage of a soldier, who punished himself for his fruitless daring; he stood and watched his own right hand falling away piecemeal on the enemy's brazier[27], nor did he withdraw the dissolving limb, with its uncovered bones, until his foe removed the fire. He might have accomplished something more successful in that camp, but never anything more brave. See how much keener a brave man is to lay

[27] The foculus in this version of the story was evidently a movable fire, a brazier.

hold of danger than a cruel man is to inflict it: Porsenna was more ready to pardon Mucius for wishing to slay him than Mucius to pardon himself for failing to slay Porsenna!

6. "Oh," say you, "those stories have been droned to death in all the schools; pretty soon, when you reach the topic 'On Despising Death,' you will be telling me about Cato." But why should I not tell you about Cato, how he read Plato's[28] book on that last glorious night, with a sword laid at his pillow? He had provided these two requisites for his last moments, – the first, that he might have the will to die, and the second, that he might have the means. So he put his affairs in order, – as well as one could put in order that which was ruined and near its end, – and thought that he ought to see to it that no one should have the power to slay or the good fortune to save[29] Cato.

7. Drawing the sword, – which he had kept unstained from all bloodshed against the final day, he cried: "Fortune, you have accomplished nothing by resisting all my endeavours. I have fought, till now, for my country's freedom, and not for my own, I did not strive so doggedly to be free, but only to live among the free. Now, since the affairs of mankind are beyond hope, let Cato be withdrawn to safety."

8. So saying, he inflicted a mortal wound upon his body. After the physicians had bound it up, Cato had less blood and less strength, but no less courage; angered now not only at Caesar but also at himself, he rallied his unarmed hands against his wound, and

[28] The Phaedo on the immortality of the soul.

[29] i.e., to save and bring back to Rome as prisoner.

expelled, rather than dismissed, that noble soul which had been so defiant of all worldly power.

9. I am not now heaping up these illustrations for the purpose of exercising my wit, but for the purpose of encouraging you to face that which is thought to be most terrible. And I shall encourage you all the more easily by showing that not only resolute men have despised that moment when the soul breathes its last, but that certain persons, who were craven in other respects, have equalled in this regard the courage of the bravest. Take, for example, Scipio, the father-in-law of Gnaeus Pompeius: he was driven back upon the African coast by a head-wind and saw his ship in the power of the enemy. He therefore pierced his body with a sword; and when they asked where the commander was, he replied: "All is well with the commander."

10. These words brought him up to the level of his ancestors and suffered not the glory which fate gave to the Scipios in Africa[30] to lose its continuity. It was a great deed to conquer Carthage, but a greater deed to conquer death. "All is well with the commander!" Ought a general to die otherwise, especially one of Cato's generals?

11. I shall not refer you to history, or collect examples of those men who throughout the ages have despised death; for they are very many. Consider these times of ours, whose enervation and over-refinement call forth our complaints; they nevertheless will include men of every rank, of every lot in life, and of every age, who have cut short their misfortunes by death. Believe me, Lucilius; death is

[30] Scipio Africanus defeated Hannibal at Zama in 202 B.C. Scipio Aemilianus, also surnamed Africanus, was by adoption the grandson of Hannibal's conqueror. He captured Carthage in the Third Punic War, 146 B.C. The Scipio mentioned by Seneca died in 46 B.C.

so little to be feared that through its good offices nothing is to be feared.

12. Therefore, when your enemy threatens, listen unconcernedly. Although your conscience makes you confident, yet, since many things have weight which are outside your case[31], both hope for that which is utterly just, and prepare yourself against that which is utterly unjust. Remember, however, before all else, to strip things of all that disturbs and confuses, and to see what each is at bottom; you will then comprehend that they contain nothing fearful except the actual fear. 13. That you see happening to boys happens also to ourselves, who are only slightly bigger boys: when those whom they love, with whom they daily associate, with whom they play, appear with masks on, the boys are frightened out of their wits. We should strip the mask, not only from men, but from things, and restore to each object its own aspect.

14. "Why dost thou[32] hold up before my eyes swords, fires, and a throng of executioners raging about thee? Take away all that vain show, behind which thou lurkest and scarest fools! Ah! thou art naught but Death, whom only yesterday a manservant of mine and a maid-servant did despise! Why dost thou again unfold and spread before me, with all that great display, the whip and the rack? Why are those engines of torture made ready, one for each several member of the body, and all the other innumerable machines for tearing a man apart piecemeal? Away with all such stuff, which makes us numb with terror! And thou, silence the groans the cries, and the bitter shrieks ground out of the victim as he is torn on the

[31] He refers to the lawsuit, as again in § 16.

[32] He refers to the lawsuit, as again in § 16.

rack! Forsooth thou are naught but Pain, scorned by yonder gout-ridden wretch, endured by yonder dyspeptic in the midst of his dainties, borne bravely by the girl in travail. Slight thou art, if I can bear thee; short thou art if I cannot bear thee!"

15. Ponder these words which you have often heard and often uttered. Moreover, prove by the result whether that which you have heard and uttered is true. For there is a very disgraceful charge often brought against our school, – that we deal with the words, and not with the deeds, of philosophy. What, have you only at this moment learned that death is hanging over your head, at this moment exile, at this moment grief? You were born to these perils. Let us think of everything that can happen as something which will happen.

16. I know that you have really done what I advise you to do; I now warn you not to drown your soul in these petty anxieties of yours; if you do, the soul will be dulled and will have too little vigour left when the time comes for it to arise. Remove the mind from this case of yours to the case of men in general. Say to yourself that our petty bodies are mortal and frail; pain can reach them from other sources than from wrong or the might of the stronger. Our pleasures themselves become torments; banquets bring indigestion, carousals paralysis of the muscles and palsy, sensual habits affect the feet, the hands, and every joint of the body.

17. I may become a poor man; I shall then be one among many. I may be exiled; I shall then regard myself as born in the place to which I shall be sent. They may put me in chains. What then? Am I free from bonds now? Behold this clogging burden of a body, to which nature has fettered me! "I shall die," you say; you mean to

say “I shall cease to run the risk of sickness; I shall cease to run the risk of imprisonment; I shall cease to run the risk of death.”

18. I am not so foolish as to go through at this juncture the arguments which Epicurus harps upon, and say that the terrors of the world below are idle, – that Ixion does not whirl round on his wheel, that Sisyphus does not shoulder his stone uphill, that a man’s entrails cannot be restored and devoured every day[33]; no one is so childish as to fear Cerberus, or the shadows, or the spectral garb of those who are held together by naught but their unfleshed bones. Death either annihilates us or strips us bare. If we are then released, there remains the better part, after the burden has been withdrawn; if we are annihilated, nothing remains; good and bad are alike removed.

19. Allow me at this point to quote a verse of yours, first suggesting that, when you wrote it, you meant it for yourself no less than for others. It is ignoble to say one thing and mean another; and how much more ignoble to write one thing and mean another! I remember one day you were handling the well-known commonplace, – that we do not suddenly fall on death, but advance towards it by slight degrees; we die every day.

20. For every day a little of our life is taken from us; even when we are growing, our life is on the wane. We lose our childhood, then our boyhood, and then our youth. Counting even yesterday, all past time is lost time; the very day which we are now spending is shared between ourselves and death. It is not the last drop that empties the water-clock, but all that which previously has flowed out; similarly, the final hour when we cease to exist does not of

[33] As mythology describes the treatment of Tityus or of Prometheus.

itself bring death; it merely of itself completes the death-process. We reach death at that moment, but we have been a long time on the way.

21. In describing this situation, you said in your customary, style (for you are always impressive, but never more pungent than when you are putting the truth in appropriate words): Not single is the death which comes; the death Which takes us off is but the last of all. I prefer that you should read your own words rather than my letter; for then it will be clear to you that this death, of which we are afraid, is the last but not the only death.

22. I see what you are looking for; you are asking what I have packed into my letter, what inspiriting saying from some master-mind, what useful precept. So I shall send you something dealing with this very subject which has been under discussion. Epicurus[34] upbraids those who crave, as much as those who shrink from, death: "It is absurd," he says, "to run towards death because you are tired of life, when it is your manner of life that has made you run towards death."

23. And in another passage[35]: "What is so absurd as to seek death, when it is through fear of death that you have robbed your life of peace?" And you may add a third statement, of the same stamp[36]: "Men are so thoughtless, nay, so mad, that some, through fear of death, force themselves to die."

24. Whichever of these ideas you ponder, you will strengthen your mind for the endurance alike of death and of life. For we need to be

[34] Frag. 496 Usener.

[35] Frag. 498 Usener.

[36] Frag. 497 Usener.

warned and strengthened in both directions, – not to love or to hate life overmuch; even when reason advises us to make an end of it, the impulse is not to be adopted without reflection or at headlong speed. 25. The grave and wise man should not beat a hasty retreat from life; he should make a becoming exit. And above all, he should avoid the weakness which has taken possession of so many, – the lust for death. For just as there is an unreflecting tendency of the mind towards other things, so, my dear Lucilius, there is an unreflecting tendency towards death; this often seizes upon the noblest and most spirited men, as well as upon the craven and the abject. The former despise life; the latter find it irksome.

26. Others also are moved by a satiety of doing and seeing the same things, and not so much by a hatred of life as because they are cloyed with it. We slip into this condition, while philosophy itself pushes us on, and we say; “How long must I endure the same things? Shall I continue to wake and sleep, be hungry and be cloyed, shiver and perspire? There is an end to nothing; all things are connected in a sort of circle; they flee and they are pursued. Night is close at the heels of day, day at the heels of night; summer ends in autumn, winter rushes after autumn, and winter softens into spring; all nature in this way passes, only to return. I do nothing new; I see nothing new; sooner or later one sickens of this, also.” There are many who think that living is not painful, but superfluous. Farewell.

Letter XXVIII. On Travel as a Cure for Discontent

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. Do you suppose that you alone have had this experience? Are you surprised, as if it were a novelty, that after such long travel

and so many changes of scene you have not been able to shake off the gloom and heaviness of your mind? You need a change of soul rather than a change of climate[37]. Though you may cross vast spaces of sea, and though, as our Vergil[38] remarks, Lands and cities are left astern, your faults will follow you whithersoever you travel.

2. Socrates made the same remark to one who complained; he said: "Why do you wonder that globe-trotting does not help you, seeing that you always take yourself with you? The reason which set you wandering is ever at your heels." What pleasure is there in seeing new lands? Or in surveying cities and spots of interest? All your bustle is useless. Do you ask why such flight does not help you? It is because you flee along with yourself. You must lay aside the burdens of the mind; until you do this, no place will satisfy you.

3. Reflect that your present behaviour is like that of the prophetess whom Vergil describes[39]: she is excited and goaded into fury, and contains within herself much inspiration that is not her own: The priestess raves, if haply she may shake The great god from her heart. You wander hither and yon, to rid yourself of the burden that rests upon you, though it becomes more troublesome by reason of your very restlessness, just as in a ship the cargo when stationary makes no trouble, but when it shifts to this side or that, it causes the vessel to heel more quickly in the direction where it has settled. Anything you do tells against you, and you hurt yourself by your very unrest; for you are shaking up a sick man.

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[37] Cf. Horace, Ep. i. 11, 27 caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.

[38] Aeneid, iii. 72.

[39] Aeneid, vi. 78 f.

4. That trouble once removed, all change of scene will become pleasant; though you may be driven to the uttermost ends of the earth, in whatever corner of a savage land you may find yourself, that place, however forbidding, will be to you a hospitable abode. The person you are matters more than the place to which you go; for that reason we should not make the mind a bondsman to any one place. Live in this belief: "I am not born for any one corner of the universe; this whole world is my country."

5. If you saw this fact clearly, you would not be surprised at getting no benefit from the fresh scenes to which you roam each time through weariness of the old scenes. For the first would have pleased you in each case, had you believed it wholly yours[40]. As it is, however, you are not journeying; you are drifting and being driven, only exchanging one place for another, although that which you seek, – to live well, – is found everywhere[41].

6. Can there be any spot so full of confusion as the Forum? Yet you can live quietly even there, if necessary. Of course, if one were allowed to make one's own arrangements, I should flee far from the very sight and neighbourhood of the Forum. For just as pestilential places assail even the strongest constitution, so there are some places which are also unwholesome for a healthy mind which is not yet quite sound, though recovering from its ailment.

7. I disagree with those who strike out into the midst of the billows and, welcoming a stormy existence, wrestle daily in hardihood of soul with life's problems. The wise man will endure all that, but will not choose it; he will prefer to be at peace rather than at war.

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[40] i.e., had you been able to say patria mea totus mundus est.

[41] Cf. Horace, Ep. i. 11, 28 – navibus atque Quadrigis petimus bene vivere; quod petis, hic est.

It helps little to have cast out your own faults if you must quarrel with those of others.

8. Says one: “There were thirty tyrants surrounding Socrates, and yet they could not break his spirit”; but what does it matter how many masters a man has? “Slavery” has no plural; and he who has scorned it is free, – no matter amid how large a mob of over-lords he stands.

9. It is time to stop, but not before I have paid duty. “The knowledge of sin is the beginning of salvation.” This saying of Epicurus[6] seems to me to be a noble one. For he who does not know that he has sinned does not desire correction; you must discover yourself in the wrong before you can reform yourself.

10. Some boast of their faults. Do you think that the man has any thought of mending his ways who counts over his vices as if they were virtues? Therefore, as far as possible, prove yourself guilty, hunt up charges against yourself; play the part, first of accuser, then of judge, last of intercessor. At times be harsh with yourself[42]. Farewell.

Letter LXXVIII. On the healing power of the mind

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. That you are frequently troubled by the snuffling of catarrh and by short attacks of fever which follow after long and chronic catarrhal seizures, I am sorry to hear; particularly because I have experienced this sort of illness myself, and scorned it in its early stages. For when I was still young, I could put up with hardships and show a bold front to illness. But I finally succumbed, and

[42] i.e., refuse your own intercession.

arrived at such a state that I could do nothing but snuffle, reduced as I was to the extremity of thinness[43].

2. I often entertained the impulse of ending my life then and there; but the thought of my kind old father kept me back. For I reflected, not how bravely I had the power to die, but how little power he had to bear bravely the loss of me. And so I commanded myself to live. For sometimes it is an act of bravery even to live.

3. Now I shall tell you what consoled me during those days, stating at the outset that these very aids to my peace of mind were as efficacious as medicine. Honourable consolation results in a cure; and whatever has uplifted the soul helps the body also. My studies were my salvation. I place it to the credit of philosophy that I recovered and regained my strength. I owe my life to philosophy, and that is the least of my obligations!

4. My friends, too, helped me greatly toward good health; I used to be comforted by their cheering words, by the hours they spent at my bedside, and by their conversation. Nothing, my excellent Lucilius, refreshes and aids a sick man so much as the affection of his friends; nothing so steals away the expectation and the fear of death. In fact, I could not believe that, if they survived me, I should be dying at all. Yes, I repeat, it seemed to me that I should continue to live, not with them, but through them. I imagined myself not to be yielding up my soul, but to be making it over to them. All these things gave me the inclination to succour myself and to endure any torture; besides, it is a most miserable state to have lost one's zest for dying, and to have no zest in living.

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[43] o such a degree that Seneca's enemy Caligula refrained from executing him, on the ground that he would soon die

5. These, then, are the remedies to which you should have recourse. The physician will prescribe your walks and your exercise; he will warn you not to become addicted to idleness, as is the tendency of the inactive invalid; he will order you to read in a louder voice and to exercise your lungs[44] the passages and cavity of which are affected; or to sail and shake up your bowels by a little mild motion; he will recommend the proper food, and the suitable time for aiding your strength with wine or refraining from it in order to keep your cough from being irritated and hacking. But as for me, my counsel to you is this, – and it is a cure, not merely of this disease of yours, but of your whole life, – "Despise death." There is no sorrow in the world, when we have escaped from the fear of death.

6. There are these three serious elements in every disease: fear of death, bodily pain, and interruption of pleasures. Concerning death enough has been said, and I shall add only a word: this fear is not a fear of disease, but a fear of nature. Disease has often postponed death, and a vision of dying has been many a man's salvation[45]. You will die, not because you are ill, but because you are alive; even when you have been cured, the same end awaits you; when you have recovered, it will be not death, but ill-health, that you have escaped.

7. Let us now return to the consideration of the characteristic disadvantage of disease: it is accompanied by great suffering. The suffering, however, is rendered endurable by interruptions; for the strain of extreme pain must come to an end[46]. No man can suffer

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[44] Cf. Ep. xv. 7 f.

[45] i.e., men have become healthier after passing through serious illness.

[46] Cf. Epicurus, Frag. 446 Usener.

both severely and for a long time; Nature, who loves us most tenderly, has so constituted us as to make pain either endurable or short[47].

8. The severest pains have their seat in the most slender parts of our body; nerves, joints, and any other of the narrow passages, hurt most cruelly when they have developed trouble within their contracted spaces. But these parts soon become numb, and by reason of the pain itself lose the sensation of pain, whether because the life-force, when checked in its natural course and changed for the worse, loses the peculiar power through which it thrives and through which it warns us, or because the diseased humours of the body, when they cease to have a place into which they may flow, are thrown back upon themselves, and deprive of sensation the parts where they have caused congestion.

9. So gout, both in the feet and in the hands, and all pain in the vertebrae and in the nerves, have their intervals of rest at the times when they have dulled the parts which they before had tortured; the first twinges[48], in all such cases, are what cause the distress, and their onset is checked by lapse of time, so that there is an end of pain when numbness has set in. Pain in the teeth, eyes, and ears is most acute for the very reason that it begins among the narrow spaces of the body, – no less acute, indeed, than in the head itself. But if it is more violent than usual, it turns to delirium and stupor.

10. This is, accordingly, a consolation for excessive pain, – that you cannot help ceasing to feel it if you feel it to excess. The reason, however, why the inexperienced are impatient when their bodies suffer is, that they have not accustomed themselves to be

[47] Compare, from among many parallels, Ep. xxiv. 14 (dolor) levis es, si ferre possum, brevis es, si ferre non possum.

[48] See also Ep. xcv. 17. The word literally means "maggots," "bots," in horses or cattle.

contented in spirit. They have been closely associated with the body. Therefore a high-minded and sensible man divorces soul from body, and dwells much with the better or divine part, and only as far as he must with this complaining and frail portion.

11. “But it is a hardship,” men say, “to do without our customary pleasures, – to fast, to feel thirst and hunger.” These are indeed serious when one first abstains from them. Later the desire dies down, because the appetites themselves which lead to desire are wearied and forsake us; then the stomach becomes petulant, then the food which we craved before becomes hateful. Our very wants die away. But there is no bitterness in doing without that which you have ceased to desire.

12. Moreover, every pain sometimes stops, or at any rate slackens; moreover, one may take precautions against its return, and, when it threatens, may check it by means of remedies. Every variety of pain has its premonitory symptoms; this is true, at any rate, of pain that is habitual and recurrent. One can endure the suffering which disease entails, if one has come to regard its results with scorn.

13. But do not of your own accord make your troubles heavier to bear and burden yourself with complaining. Pain is slight if opinion has added nothing to it; but if, on the other hand, you begin to encourage yourself and say, “It is nothing, – a trifling matter at most; keep a stout heart and it will soon cease”; then in thinking it slight, you will make it slight. Everything depends on opinion; ambition, luxury, greed, hark back to opinion. It is according to opinion that we suffer.

14. A man is as wretched as he has convinced himself that he is. I hold that we should do away with complaint about past sufferings

and with all language like this: “None has ever been worse off than I. What sufferings, what evils have I endured! No one has thought that I shall recover. How often have my family bewailed me, and the physicians given me over! Men who are placed on the rack are not torn asunder with such agony!” However, even if all this is true, it is over and gone. What benefit is there in reviewing past sufferings, and in being unhappy, just because once you were unhappy? Besides, every one adds much to his own ills, and tells lies to himself. And that which was bitter to bear is pleasant to have borne; it is natural to rejoice at the ending of one’s ills. Two elements must therefore be rooted out once for all, – the fear of future suffering, and the recollection of past suffering; since the latter no longer concerns me, and the former concerns me not yet.

15. But when set in the very midst of troubles one should say: Perchance some day the memory of this sorrow Will even bring delight[49]. Let such a man fight against them with all his might: if he once gives way, he will be vanquished; but if he strives against his sufferings, he will conquer. As it is, however, what most men do is to drag down upon their own heads a falling ruin which they ought to try to support. If you begin to withdraw your support from that which thrusts toward you and totters and is ready to plunge, it will follow you and lean more heavily upon you; but if you hold your ground and make up your mind to push against it, it will be forced back.

16. What blows do athletes receive on their faces and all over their bodies! Nevertheless, through their desire for fame they endure every torture, and they undergo these things not only because they

[49] Vergil, Aeneid, i. 203.

are fighting but in order to be able to fight. Their very training means torture. So let us also win the way to victory in all our struggles, – for the reward is not a garland or a palm or a trumpeter who calls for silence at the proclamation of our names, but rather virtue, steadfastness of soul, and a peace that is won for all time, if fortune has once been utterly vanquished in any combat. You say, “I feel severe pain.”

17. What then; are you relieved from feeling it, if you endure it like a woman? Just as an enemy is more dangerous to a retreating army, so every trouble that fortune brings attacks us all the harder if we yield and turn our backs. “But the trouble is serious.” What? Is it for this purpose that we are strong, – that we may have light burdens to bear? Would you have your illness long-drawn-out, or would you have it quick and short? If it is long, it means a respite, allows you a period for resting yourself, bestows upon you the boon of time in plenty; as it arises, so it must also subside. A short and rapid illness will do one of two things: it will quench or be quenched. And what difference does it make whether it is not or I am not? In either case there is an end of pain.

18. This, too, will help – to turn the mind aside to thoughts of other things and thus to depart from pain. Call to mind what honourable or brave deeds you have done; consider the good side of your own life[50].Run over in your memory those things which you have particularly admired. Then think of all the brave men who have conquered pain: of him who continued to read his book as he allowed the cutting out of varicose veins; of him who did not cease

[50] Literally, perhaps, “the noble rôles which you have played.” Summers compares Ep. xiv. 13 ultimas partes Catonis – “the closing scenes of Cato’s life.”

to smile, though that very smile so enraged his torturers that they tried upon him every instrument of their cruelty. If pain can be conquered by a smile, will it not be conquered by reason?

19. You may tell me now of whatever you like – of colds, bad coughing-spells that bring up parts of our entrails, fever that parches our very vitals, thirst, limbs so twisted that the joints protrude in different directions; yet worse than these are the stake, the rack, the red-hot plates, the instrument that reopens wounds while the wounds themselves are still swollen and that drives their imprint still deeper[51]. Nevertheless there have been men who have not uttered a moan amid these tortures. “More yet!” says the torturer; but the victim has not begged for release. “More yet!” he says again; but no answer has come. “More yet!” the victim has smiled, and heartily, too. Can you not bring yourself, after an example like this, to make a mock at pain?

20. “But,” you object, “my illness does not allow me to be doing anything; it has withdrawn me from all my duties.” It is your body that is hampered by ill-health, and not your soul as well. It is for this reason that it clogs the feet of the runner and will hinder the handiwork of the cobbler or the artisan; but if your soul be habitually in practice, you will plead and teach, listen and learn, investigate and meditate. What more is necessary? Do you think that you are doing nothing if you possess self-control in your illness? You will be showing that a disease can be overcome, or at any rate endured.

21. There is, I assure you, a place for virtue even upon a bed of sickness. It is not only the sword and the battleline that prove the

[51] Cf. Ep. xiv. 4 f. and the crucibus adfixi, flamma usti, etc., of Tac. Ann. xv. 44.

soul alert and unconquered by fear; a man can display bravery even when wrapped in his bed-clothes. You have something to do: wrestle bravely with disease. If it shall compel you to nothing, beguile you to nothing, it is a notable example that you display. O what ample matter were there for renown, if we could have spectators of our sickness! Be your own spectator; seek your own applause.

22. Again, there are two kinds of pleasures. Disease checks the pleasures of the body, but does not do away with them. Nay, if the truth is to be considered, it serves to excite them; for the thirstier a man is, the more he enjoys a drink; the hungrier he is, the more pleasure he takes in food. Whatever falls to one's lot after a period of abstinence is welcomed with greater zest. The other kind, however, the pleasures of the mind, which are higher and less uncertain, no physician can refuse to the sick man. Whoever seeks these and knows well what they are, scorns all the blandishments of the senses.

23. Men say, "Poor sick fellow!" But why? Is it because he does not mix snow with his wine, or because he does not revive the chill of his drink – mixed as it is in a good-sized bowl – by chipping ice into it? Or because he does not have Lucrine[52] oysters opened fresh at his table? Or because there is no din of cooks about his dining-hall, as they bring in their very cooking apparatus along with their viands? For luxury has already devised this fashion – of having the kitchen accompany the dinner, so that the food may not grow luke-warm, or fail to be hot enough for a palate which has already become hardened.

[52] The lacus Lucrinus was a salt-water lagoon, near Baiae in Campania.

24. “Poor sick fellow!” – he will eat as much as he can digest. There will be no boar lying before his eyes[53], banished from the table as if it were a common meat; and on his sideboard there will be heaped together no breast-meat of birds, because it sickens him to see birds served whole. But what evil has been done to you? You will dine like a sick man, nay, sometimes like a sound man[54].

25. All these things, however, can be easily endured – gruel, warm water, and anything else that seems insupportable to a fastidious man, to one who is wallowing in luxury, sick in soul rather than in body – if only we cease to shudder at death. And we shall cease, if once we have gained a knowledge of the limits of good and evil; then, and then only, life will not weary us, neither will death make us afraid.

26. For surfeit of self can never seize upon a life that surveys all the things which are manifold, great, divine; only idle leisure is wont to make men hate their lives. To one who roams[55] through the universe, the truth can never pall; it will be the untruths that will cloy.

27. And, on the other hand, if death comes near with its summons, even though it be untimely in its arrival, though it cut one off in one’s prime, a man has had a taste of all that the longest life can give. Such a man has in great measure come to understand the universe. He knows that honourable things do not depend on time for their growth; but any life must seem short to those who

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[53] i.e., to be looked at; there are better dainties on the table.

[54] Sanus is used (1) as signifying “sound in body” and (2) as the opposite of insanus.

[55] Perhaps a reminiscence of Lucretius i. 74 omne immensum peragravit mente animoque.

measure its length by pleasures which are empty and for that reason unbounded.

28. Refresh yourself with such thoughts as these, and meanwhile reserve some hours for our letters. There will come a time when we shall be united again and brought together; however short this time may be, we shall make it long by knowing how to employ it. For, as Posidonius says[56]: "A single day among the learned lasts longer than the longest life of the ignorant."

29. Meanwhile, hold fast to this thought, and grip it close: yield not to adversity; trust not to prosperity; keep before your eyes the full scope of Fortune's power, as if she would surely do whatever is in her power to do. That which has been long expected comes more gently. Farewell.

Letter CVII On obedience to the universal will

Greetings from Seneca to his friend Lucilius.

1. Where is that common-sense of yours? Where that deftness in examining things? That greatness of soul? Have you come to be tormented by a trifle? Your slaves regarded your absorption in business as an opportunity for them to run away. Well, if your friends deceived you (for by all means let them have the name which we mistakenly bestowed upon them, and so call them, that they may incur more shame by not being such friends) – if your friends, I repeat, deceived you, all your affairs would lack something; as it is, you merely lack men who damaged your own endeavours and considered you burdensome to your neighbours.

[56] Seneca often quotes Posidonius, as does Cicero also. These words may have been taken from his Προτρεπτικά (or Λόγοι προτρεπτικοί), Exhortations, a work in which he maintained that men should make a close study of philosophy, in spite of the varying opinions of its expositors.

2. None of these things is unusual or unexpected. It is as nonsensical to be put out by such events as to complain of being spattered in the street or at getting befouled in the mud. The programme of life is the same as that of a bathing establishment, a crowd, or a journey: sometimes things will be thrown at you, and sometimes they will strike you by accident. Life is not a dainty business. You have started on a long journey; you are bound to slip, collide, fall, become weary, and cry out: "O for Death!" – or in other words, tell lies. At one stage you will leave a comrade behind you, at another you will bury someone, at another you will be apprehensive. It is amid stumblings of this sort that you must travel out this rugged journey.

3. Does one wish to die? Let the mind be prepared to meet everything; let it know that it has reached the heights round which the thunder plays. Let it know that it has arrived where – Grief and avenging Care have set their couch, And pallid sickness dwells, and drear Old Age[57]. With such messmates must you spend your days. Avoid them you cannot, but despise them you can. And you will despise them, if you often take thought and anticipate the future.

4. Everyone approaches courageously a danger which he has prepared himself to meet long before, and withstands even hardships if he has previously practised how to meet them. But, contrariwise, the unprepared are panic-stricken even at the most trifling things. We must see to it that nothing shall come upon us unforeseen. And since things are all the more serious when they are unfamiliar, continual reflection will give you the power, no matter what the evil may be, not to play the unschooled boy.

[57] Vergil, Aen. vi. 274 f.

5. “My slaves have run away from me!” Yes, other men have been robbed, blackmailed, slain, betrayed, stamped under foot, attacked by poison or by slander; no matter what trouble you mention, it has happened to many. Again, there are manifold kinds of missiles which are hurled at us. Some are planted in us, some are being brandished and at this very moment are on the way, some which were destined for other men graze us instead.

6. We should not manifest surprise at any sort of condition into which we are born, and which should be lamented by no one, simply because it is equally ordained for all. Yes, I say, equally ordained; for a man might have experienced even that which he has escaped. And an equal law consists, not of that which all have experienced, but of that which is laid down for all. Be sure to prescribe for your mind this sense of equity; we should pay without complaint the tax of our mortality.

7. Winter brings on cold weather; and we must shiver. Summer returns, with its heat; and we must sweat. Unseasonable weather upsets the health; and we must fall ill. In certain places we may meet with wild beasts, or with men who are more destructive than any beasts. Floods, or fires, will cause us loss. And we cannot change this order of things; but what we can do is to acquire stout hearts, worthy of good men, thereby courageously enduring chance and placing ourselves in harmony with Nature.

8. And Nature moderates this world-kingdom which you see, by her changing seasons: clear weather follows cloudy; after a calm, comes the storm; the winds blow by turns; day succeeds night; some of the heavenly bodies rise, and some set. Eternity consists of opposites.

9. It is to this law that our souls must adjust themselves, this they should follow, this they should obey. Whatever happens, assume that it was bound to happen, and do not be willing to rail at Nature. That which you cannot reform, it is best to endure, and to attend uncomplainingly upon the God under whose guidance everything progresses; for it is a bad soldier who grumbles when following his commander.

10. For this reason we should welcome our orders with energy and vigour, nor should we cease to follow the natural course of this most beautiful universe, into which all our future sufferings are woven. Let us address Jupiter, the pilot of this world-mass, as did our great Cleanthes in those most eloquent lines – lines which I shall allow myself to render in Latin, after the example of the eloquent Cicero. If you like them, make the most of them; if they displease you, you will understand that I have simply been following the practise of Cicero:

11. Lead me, O Master of the lofty heavens, My Father, whithersoever thou shalt wish. I shall not falter, but obey with speed. And though I would not, I shall go, and suffer, In sin and sorrow what I might have done In noble virtue. Aye, the willing soul Fate leads, but the unwilling drags along[58].

12. Let us live thus, and speak thus; let Fate find us ready and alert. Here is your great soul – the man who has given himself over to Fate; on the other hand, that man is a weakling and a degenerate who struggles and maligns the order of the universe and would rather reform the gods than reform himself. Farewell.

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[58] Cleanthes, Frag. 527 von Arnim. In Epictetus (Ench. 53) these verses are assigned to Cleanthes (omitting the last line); while St. Augustine (Civ. Dei. v. 8) quotes them as Seneca's: Annaei Senecae sunt, nisi fallor, hi versus. Wilamowitz and others follow the latter view.



IMMANUEL KANT
GROUNDWORK OF THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS [59]

And, in fact, we find that the more a cultivated reason applies itself with deliberate purpose to the enjoyment of life and happiness, so much the more does the man fail of true satisfaction. And from this circumstance there arises in many, if they are candid enough to confess it, a certain degree of misology, that is, hatred of reason, especially in the case of those who are most experienced in the use of it, because after calculating all the advantages they derive, I do not say from the invention of all the arts of common luxury, but even from the sciences (which seem to them to be after all only a luxury of the understanding), they find that they have, in fact, only brought more trouble on their shoulders, rather than gained in happiness; and they end by envying, rather than despising, the more common stamp of men who keep closer to the guidance of mere instinct and do not allow their reason much influence on their conduct. And this we must admit, that the judgement of those who would very much lower the lofty eulogies of the advantages which reason gives us in regard to the happiness and satisfaction of life, or who would even reduce them below zero, is by no means morose or ungrateful to the goodness with which

[59] Kant I. Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals /translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott. URL: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Groundwork_of_the_Metaphysics_of_Morals

the world is governed, but that there lies at the root of these judgements the idea that our existence has a different and far nobler end, for which, and not for happiness, reason is properly intended, and which must, therefore, be regarded as the supreme condition to which the private ends of man must, for the most part, be postponed.

For as reason is not competent to guide the will with certainty in regard to its objects and the satisfaction of all our wants (which it to some extent even multiplies), this being an end to which an implanted instinct would have led with much greater certainty; and since, nevertheless, reason is imparted to us as a practical faculty, i.e., as one which is to have influence on the will, therefore, admitting that nature generally in the distribution of her capacities has adapted the means to the end, its true destination must be to produce a will, not merely good as a means to something else, but good in itself, for which reason was absolutely necessary. This will then, though not indeed the sole and complete good, must be the supreme good and the condition of every other, even of the desire of happiness. Under these circumstances, there is nothing inconsistent with the wisdom of nature in the fact that the cultivation of the reason, which is requisite for the first and unconditional purpose, does in many ways interfere, at least in this life, with the attainment of the second, which is always conditional, namely, happiness. Nay, it may even reduce it to nothing, without nature thereby failing of her purpose. For reason recognizes the establishment of a good will as its highest practical destination, and in attaining this purpose is capable only of a satisfaction of its own proper kind, namely that from the attainment of an end, which

end again is determined by reason only, notwithstanding that this may involve many a disappointment to the ends of inclination.

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 over charge 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 favour 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 of 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 honour, which, if it is happily directed to that which is in fact of public utility and accordant with duty and consequently honourable, 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, be 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.

It is in this manner, undoubtedly, that we are to understand those passages of Scripture also in which we are commanded to love our neighbour, even our enemy. For love, as an affection, cannot be commanded, but beneficence for duty's sake may; even though we are not impelled to it by any inclination—nay, are even repelled by a natural and unconquerable aversion. This is practical love and not pathological – a love which is seated in the will, and not in the propensions of sense – in principles of action and not of tender sympathy; and it is this love alone which can be commanded.

The second 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 à priori principle, which is formal, and its à posteriori spring, which is material, as between two roads, and as it must be determined by something, it that it must be determined by the formal principle of volition when an action is done from duty, in which case every material principle has been withdrawn from it.

The third 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 favourable 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[1] 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. 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.

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 judgements perfectly coincides with this and always has in view the principle here suggested.

Let the question be, for example: May I when in distress make a promise with the intention not to keep it? I readily distinguish here between the two significations which the question may have: Whether it is prudent, or whether it is right, to make a false promise? The former may undoubtedly of be the case. I see clearly indeed that it is not enough to extricate myself from a present difficulty by means of this subterfuge, but it must be well considered whether there may not hereafter spring from this lie much greater inconvenience than that from which I now free myself, and as, with all my supposed cunning, the consequences cannot be so easily foreseen but that credit once lost may be much more injurious to me than any mischief which I seek to avoid at present, it should be considered whether it would not be more prudent to act herein according to a universal maxim and to make it a habit to promise nothing except with the intention of keeping it. But it is soon clear to me that such a maxim will still only be based on the fear of consequences. Now it is a wholly different thing to be truthful from duty and to be so from apprehension of injurious consequences. In the first case, the very notion of the action already implies a law for me; in the second case, I must first look about elsewhere to see what results may be combined with it which would affect myself. For to deviate from the principle of duty is beyond all doubt wicked; but to be unfaithful to my maxim of prudence may often be very advantageous to me, although to abide

by it is certainly safer. The shortest way, however, and an unerring one, to discover the answer to this question whether a lying promise is consistent with duty, is to ask myself, "Should I be content that my maxim (to extricate myself from difficulty by a false promise) should hold good as a universal law, for myself as well as for others? and should I be able to say to myself, "Every one may make a deceitful promise when he finds himself in a difficulty from which he cannot otherwise extricate himself?" Then I presently become aware that while I can will the lie, I can by no means will that lying should be a universal law. For with such a law there would be no promises at all, since it would be in vain to allege my intention in regard to my future actions to those who would not believe this allegation, or if they over hastily did so would pay me back in my own coin. Hence my maxim, as soon as it should be made a universal law, would necessarily destroy itself.

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, conformably 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. Here we cannot forbear admiration when we see how great an advantage the practical judgement 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 a 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 judgement 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 judgement 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 judgement 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?

Innocence is indeed a glorious thing; only, on the other hand, it is very sad that it cannot well maintain itself and is easily seduced. On this account even wisdom – which otherwise consists more in conduct than in knowledge – yet has need of science, not in order to learn from it, but to secure for its precepts admission and permanence. Against all the commands of duty which reason represents to man as so deserving of respect, he feels in himself a powerful counterpoise in his wants and inclinations, the entire satisfaction of which he sums up under the name of happiness. Now reason issues its commands unyieldingly, without promising anything to the inclinations, and, as it were, with disregard and contempt for these claims, which are so impetuous, and at the same time so plausible, and which will not allow themselves to be suppressed by any command. Hence there arises a natural dialectic,i.e., a disposition, to argue against these strict laws of

duty and to question their validity, or at least their purity and strictness; and, if possible, to make them more accordant with our wishes and inclinations, that is to say, to corrupt them at their very source, and entirely to destroy their worth – a thing which even common practical reason cannot ultimately call good.

Thus is the common reason of man compelled to go out of its sphere, and to take a step into the field of a practical philosophy, not to satisfy any speculative want (which never occurs to it as long as it is content to be mere sound reason), but even on practical grounds, in order to attain in it information and clear instruction respecting the source of its principle, and the correct determination of it in opposition to the maxims which are based on wants and inclinations, so that it may escape from the perplexity of opposite claims and not run the risk of losing all genuine moral principles through the equivocation into which it easily falls. Thus, when practical reason cultivates itself, there insensibly arises in it a dialetic which forces it to seek aid in philosophy, just as happens to it in its theoretic use; and in this case, therefore, as well as in the other, it will find rest nowhere but in a thorough critical examination of our reason.



HRYHORY SKOVORODA
LETTERS TO
MYKHAILO KOVALYNSKY[60]

[Kharkiv] July 9, 1762

My most coveted [friend] Mykhailo!

You are already leaving us. Well then, go where your devotion and beneficence call you, go with Christ, and return under his care. May Jesus grant that you find your cherished parents at home well and happy, at least that they should know no anxiety and may all be at peace!

And may the High Martyr of Israel keep watch over you and your dear brother so that no misfortune may befall you on the way! Rest when you are at home, but avoid excessive inactivity, because

ἐπὶ πᾶσι μέτρον ἄριστον –

"in everything moderation is best in all things."

[60] The complete correspondence of Hryhory Skovoroda. Philosopher and poet /translated by Eleonora Adams and Michael M . Naydan; edited by Liliana M. Naydan. URL: https://glagoslav.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/The-Complete-Correspondence-of-Hryhory-Skovoroda.pdf

Excess begets congestion, congestion – illness, and illness – melancholy, and he who suffers from this cannot be called healthy. There is no time that does not lend itself to the pursuit of beneficial knowledge, and if you occupy yourself with subjects useful for this life as well as for the hereafter, in moderation, but consistently, then learning becomes joy not work. Whoever is engrossed in education loves it, and whoever loves it never ceases to investigate even though on the surface he may appear idle. If one truly loves anything, then as long as the beloved object is with him, he does not realize the enjoyment he derives from it, but as soon as that object disappears, he immediately feels love's cruelest suffering. Why is this? Because if one does not love beneficial education with his heart and soul, then every effort will be in vain. After all, even during times of idleness, love studies and contemplates, and the further it gets away from the goals, the more it strives toward them. I am well aware of how much you love your preoccupation with education, and I do not at all mean to imply that you need to be encouraged to study because you show your enthusiasm for the field of knowledge more than sufficiently. This kind of prodding is particularly out of place, especially right now during vacation time. I write about it only to let you know how I feel, and I am the kind of person who never tires of conversation with friends. Note that people who love piety are particularly fond of young men and adolescents, pleasant, pure in heart, who were by nature gifted with auspicious talents. An isocrat usually calls them παῖδας θεῶν, or children of God.

That is why I direct my gratitude to your wonderful uncle, the Archbishop, the very reverend father Petro, for helping me to establish a friendship with you that I regard as good fortune for

me. And in order for you not to miss me during the time we are apart, I have decided to write a few devout Greek maxims for you *μνημόσυνον*, that is to say as a memento. Whenever you might feel a desire to talk to me, look at these sentences and you shall feel as if you are speaking with me; remember at the same time the kinds of conversations your friend likes to have.

Well then, let the first maxim be as follows:

1. *Κάλλιστον ἐφόδιον ἔν τῷ γήρατι ἡ σοφία*. "The best companion in old age is wisdom." or παιδεία, meaning knowledge, because man in old age is bereft of everything save knowledge.

2. *Σεμνὸς ἔρως ρετῆς*. "Sacred is love of virtue." Because one cannot disrespect him in whom one sees the temple of virtue, for wherever there is love of virtue there is dignity.

3. *Φίλους ἔχων, νομίζε θησαυροὺς ἔχειν*. "If you have friends, remember that you hold dominion over a treasure." Nothing, says Seneca, gives more joy than true friendship.

4. *Χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά*. "That which is beautiful is difficult."

5. *Ὀλίγη πρὸς κακότητα ὁδός*. "The path to evil is short." But take one expression from the Holy Scriptures. Paul in his Epistle to St. Thomas (Chap. 1, end) writes:

Ἔστι δὲ πορισμὸς μέγας ἡ εὐσέβεια μετὰ αὐταρκείας.

"A great achievement is piety with satisfaction."

It is characteristic for virtue to worship God and to love thy neighbor. *Αὐταρκεία* in Latin is called spiritual peace, in which man is satisfied with his fate. This is my memento to you: be happy with what you have. Stay well my friend, for whom I yearn most of all, my Mykhailo, and your wonderful little brother Hryts. May Christ help you day to day to grow up in virtue.

Your new friend Hryh[ory] Sk[ovoroda].

[Kharkiv] end of August—
beginning of September, 1762

My Mykhailo,

Rejoice in the Lord!

If you are not formally permitted to study the Greek language not only because you should not be overburdened, which happens as a result of unwise interference from certain people, then it is not time for you yet, as they say, to build an arsenal. But if you love me, then little by little, privately, you can study it, and you will learn it. Keep in mind that the best evidence of your affection for me will be your love for the Greek Muses, and if our friendship is dear to you, then be assured that it will last as long as you value integrity and Hellenic literature. Now then, be like the palm tree: the more it is restricted by a crag, the faster and more beautifully it strives to grow. This is the tree whose branches are placed in the hands of martyrs-victors, as can be seen on icons. Find an hour, and on a daily basis, but it must be on a daily basis, little by little, place into your soul, as if into your stomach, a word or a phrase, as though adding fuel to a fire, so that the soul can nourish itself and grow and not be stifled. The more slowly you learn, the more fruitful will be the study. Unhurried consistency accumulates more than expected. The help of a mentor, if there be need of it, is assured. Among your friends you have those who will prompt you, if you should be uncertain of something. If you decide to make use of my help, then nothing will bring me more pleasure. Even if I were not obliged by the services and kind deeds of your uncle, the very reverend Father Petro, then our friendship alone would be cause enough. Your friend Hryh[ory] Skovoroda

[Kharkiv, mid-September 1762]

Greetings, my most precious creature, most pleasant, Mykhailo

When I was leaving school at the usual time and began thinking about what I should do, suddenly there appeared before my eyes a person whom I think you know. What is his name? His name is Mykhailo! I am saying that you have suddenly started to appear in my soul. Whenever I meet with my Muses, I always see you in my thoughts, and I feel as if both of us are enjoying the enticements of the Muses at the same time and are walking together along the Helicon. I am convinced that you are enjoying the same things, the same enticements of the Camena. And in reality, for a complete and true friendship that ameliorates the harshness of life and energizes people, there must be between us not only a virtuous chastity and affinity of souls, but also a similarity of interests. And just for this reason many could not become my friends, because they did not study certain subjects or if they did, then these subjects were ones that were alien to my intellectual inclinations, even though in every other aspect they were like me. I admit to you my fondness for you: I would love you even if you were illiterate, I would love you – all else aside – for the quality of your soul and for your aspiration toward everything that is honorable; I would love you even if you were totally uneducated and unsophisticated. Now, however, when I see that you, like me, are enraptured with the literature of the Greeks (I do not need to tell you to what degree I value them) and the humanistic literature, which, when you leave aside Sicilian jokes, as they say, breathes beauty and wholesomeness into everything – then in my soul a love for you takes root and grows with every day, and there is nothing

more pleasant in life for me than speaking with you and others like you. But, I am being summoned.

Farewell, Mykhailo! Write three or four little poems for me and send them to me. What kind? You will ask. Whatever kind you like, because everything of yours is to my liking. It was good and devoted of you, my dear friend, to assign little Maksym to watch over your infirm little brother. Nevertheless, do not heed careless advice of chance people who recommend one or another kind of medicine. In no other field are there more experts among the populace as in medicine, and there is nothing about which people know less, than about curing illnesses. Aside from widely used, simple medicines, discard all else. Avoid bloodletting and purgatives, as you would poisonous snakes. And if you like, come see me, and we will discuss this today.

Very affectionately yours,

Hryh[ory] Savych.



SØREN AABYE KIERKEGAARD BETWEEN THE AESTHETICAL AND THE ETHICAL IN THE COMPOSITION OF PERSONALITY[61]

My Friend,

What I have so often said to you I say now once again, or rather I shout it: Either/or, aut aut. For a single aut adjoined as a rectification does not make the situation clear, since the question here at issue is so important that one cannot rest satisfied with a part of it, and in itself it is too coherent to be possessed partially. There are situations in life where it would be ridiculous or a species of madness to apply an either/or; but also, there are men whose souls are too dissolute (in the etymological sense of the word) to grasp what is implied in such a dilemma, whose personalities lack the energy to say with pathos. Either/or. Upon me these words have always made a deep impression, and they still do, especially when I pronounce them absolutely and without specific reference to any objects, for this use of them suggests the possibility of starting the most dreadful contrasts into action. They affect me like a magic formula of incantation, and my soul becomes exceeding

[61] Kierkegaard S. Equilibrium between the aesthetical and the ethical in the composition of personality. Either/Or. Vol. 2. /Translated by Walter Lowrie. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1944. P. 131–279.

serious, sometimes almost harrowed. I think of my early youth, when without clearly comprehending what it is to make a choice I listened with childish trust to the talk of my elders and the instant of choice was solemn and venerable, although in choosing I was only following the instructions of another person. I think of the occasions in my later life when I stood at the crossways, when my soul was matured in the hour of decision. I think of the many occasions in life less important but by no means indifferent to me, when it was a question of making a choice. For although there is only one situation in which either/or has absolute significance, namely, when truth, righteousness and holiness are lined up on one side, and lust and base propensities and obscure passions and perdition on the other; yet, it is always important to choose rightly, even as between things which one may innocently choose, it is important to test oneself, lest some day one might have to beat a retreat to the point from which one started, and might have reason to thank God if one had to reproach oneself for nothing worse than a waste of time. In common parlance I use these words as others use them, and it would indeed be a foolish pedantry to give up using them. But sometimes it occurs, nevertheless, that I become aware of using them with regard to things entirely indifferent. Then they lay aside their humble dress, I forget the insignificant thoughts they discriminated, they advance to meet me with all their dignity, in their official robes. As a magistrate in common life may appear in plain clothes and mingle without distinction in the crowd, so do these words mingle in common speech – when, however, the magistrate steps forward with authority he distinguishes himself from all. Like such a magistrate whom I am accustomed to see only on solemn occasions, these words appear

before me, and my soul always becomes serious. And although my life now has to a certain degree its either/or behind it, yet I know well that it may still encounter many a situation where the either/or will have its full significance. I hope, however, that these words may find me in a worthy state of mind when they check me on my path, and I hope that I may be successful in choosing the right course; at all events, I shall endeavor to make the choice with real earnestness, and with that I venture, at least, to hope that I shall the sooner get out of the wrong path.

And now as for you – this phrase is only too often on your lips, it has almost become a byword with you. What significance has it for you? None at all. You, according to your own expression, regard it as a wink of the eye, a snap of the fingers, a coup de main, an abracadabra. At every opportunity you know how to introduce it, nor is it without effect; for it affects you as strong drink affects a neurasthenic, you become completely intoxicated by what you call the higher madness. "It is the compendium," you say, "of all practical wisdom, but no one has ever inculcated it so pithily (like a god in the form of a puppet talking to suffering humanity) as that great thinker and true practical philosopher who said to a man who had insulted him by pulling off his hat and throwing it on the floor, 'If you pick it up, you'll get a thrashing; if you don't pick it up, you'll also get a thrashing; now you can choose' ". You take great delight in "comforting" people when they have recourse to you in critical situations. You listen to their exposition of the case and then say, "Yes, I perceive perfectly that there are two possibilities, one can either do this or that. My sincere opinion and my friendly counsel is as follows: Do it/or don't do it – you will regret both." But he who mocks others mocks himself, and your rejoinder is not a mere

nothing but a profound mockery of yourself, a sorry proof how limp your soul is, that your whole philosophy of life is concentrated in one single proposition, “I say merely either/or.” In case this really were your serious meaning, there would be nothing one could do with you, one must simply put up with you as you are and deplore the fact that melancholy [literally, heavy-mindedness] or light-mindedness had enfeebled your spirit. Now on the contrary, since one knows very well that such is not the case, one is not tempted to pity you but rather to wish that some day the circumstances of your life may tighten upon you the screws in its rack and compel you to come out with what really dwells in you, may begin the sharper inquisition of the rack which cannot be beguiled by nonsense and witticisms. Life is a masquerade, you explain, and for you this is inexhaustible material for amusement; and so far, no one has succeeded in knowing you; for every revelation you make is always an illusion, it is only in this way you are able to breathe and prevent people from pressing importunately upon you and obstructing your respiration. Your occupation consists in preserving your hidingplace, and that you succeed in doing, for your mask is the most enigmatical of a ll. 'In fact you are nothing; you are merely a relation to others, and what you are you are by virtue of this relation. To a fond shepherdess you hold out a languishing hand, and instantly you are masked in all possible bucolic sentimentality. A reverend spiritual father you deceive with a brotherly kiss, etc. You yourself are nothing, an enigmatic figure on whose brow is inscribed Either/or – “For this,” you say, “is my motto, and these words are not, as the grammarians believe, disjunctive conjunctions; no, they belong inseparably together and therefore ought to be written as one word, inasmuch as in their

union they constitute an interjection which I shout at mankind, just as boys shout 'Hep' after a Jew."

Now although nothing you say in that style has the slightest effect upon me, or, if it has any effect, it is at the utmost the effect of arousing a righteous indignation, nevertheless, for your own sake I will reply to you. Do you not know that there comes a midnight hour when every one has to throw off his mask? Do you believe that life will always let itself be mocked? Do you think you can slip away a little before midnight in order to avoid this? Or are you not terrified by it? I have seen men in real life who so long deceived others that at last tlieir true nature could not reveal itself. I have seen men who played hide and seek so long that at last madness through them obtruded disgustingly upon others their secret thoughts which hitherto they had proudly concealed. Or can you think of anything more frightful than that it might end with your nature being resolved into a multiplicity, that you really might become many, become, like those uphappy demoniacs, a legion, and you tlius would have lost the inmost and holiest thing of all in a man, the unifying power of personality? Truly, you should not jest with that which is not only serious but dreadful. In every man there is some thing which to a certain degree prevents him from becoming perfectly transparent to himself; and this may be the case in so high a degree, he may be so inexplicably woven into relationships of life which extend far beyond himself that he almost cannot reveal himself. But he who cannot reveal himself cannot love, and he who cannot love is the most unhappy man of all. My young friend, suppose there was no one who troubled himself to guess your riddle – what joy, then, would you have in it ? But above all, for your own sake, for the sake of your salvation – for I am

acquainted with no condition of soul which can better be described as perdition – stop this wild flight, this passion of annihilation which rages in you; for this is what you desire, you would annihilate everything, you would satiate the hunger of doubt at the expense of existence. To this end you cultivate yourself, to this end you harden your temper; for you are willing to admit that you are good for nothing, the only thing that gives you pleasure is to march seven times around existence and blow the trumpet and thereupon let the whole thing collapse, that your soul may be tranquilized, yea, attuned to sadness, that you may summon Echo forth – for Echo is heard only in emptiness.

However, I am not likely to get further with you along this path; moreover, my head is too weak, if y ou would put it t hat way, to be able to hold out, or, as I p refer to say, too strong to take pleasure in seeing everything grow dizzy before my eyes. I will therefore take up the matter from another side. Imagine a young man at the age when life really begins to have significance for him; he is wholesome, pure, joyful, intellectually gifted, himself rich in hope, the hope of every one who knows him; imagine (yea, it is h ard that I h ave to say this) that he was mistaken in you, that he believed you were a serious, tried and experienced man from whom one could confidently expect enlightenment upon life's riddles; imagine that he turned to you with the charming confidence which is the adornment of youth, with the claim not to be gainsaid which is youth's privilege – what would you answer him? Would you answer, "I say merely either/or"? That you would hardly do. Would you (as you are wont to express it when you would indicate your aversion to having other people vex you with their affairs of the heart), would you stick your head out of the window and say, "Try

the next house"? Or would you treat him as you do others who ask your advice or seek information from you, whom you dismiss as you do the collector of tithes by saying that you are only a lodger in life, not a householder and paterfamilias? No, you would not do this either. A young man with intellectual gifts is the sort of thing you prize only too highly. But in the case I suppose, your relation to the youth is not just what you would have wished, it was not an accidental encounter which brought you in contact with him, your irony was not tempted. Although he was the younger, you the older man, it was he, nevertheless, who by the noble quality of his youth made the instant serious. It is true, is it not, that you yourself would like to be young, would feel that there was something beautiful in being young but also something very serious, that it is by no means a matter of indifference how one employs one's youth, but that before one there lies a choice, a real either/or. You would feel that, after all, the important thing is not to cultivate one's mind but to mature one's personality. Your good nature, your sympathy, would be set in motion, in that spirit you would talk to him; you would fortify his soul, confirm him in the confidence he has in the world, you would assure him that there is a power in a man which is able to defy the whole world, you would insist that he take to heart the importance of employing time well. All this you can do, and when you will, you can do it handsomely.

But now mark well what I w ould say to you, young man – for though you are not young, one is always compelled to address you as such. Now what did you do in this case? You acknowledged, as ordinarily you are not willing to do, the importance of an either/or. And why? Because your soul was moved by love for the young man. And yet in a way you deceived him, for he will, perhaps, encounter

you at another time when it by no means suits your convenience to acknowledge this importance. Here you see one of the sorry consequences of the fact that a man's nature cannot harmoniously reveal itself. You thought you were doing the best for him, and yet perhaps you have harmed him; perhaps he would have been better able to maintain himself over against your distrust of life than to find repose in the subjective, deceitful trust you conveyed to him. Imagine that after the lapse of several years you again encountered him; he was lively, intellectual, daring in his thought, bold in his expression, but your ear easily detected doubt in his soul, you conceived a suspicion that he had acquired the questionable wisdom: I say merely either/or. It is true, is it not, that you would be sorry for him, would feel that he had lost something, and something very essential. But for yourself you will not sorrow, you are content with your ambiguous wisdom, yea, proud of it, so proud that you will not suffer another to share it, since you wish to be alone with it. And yet you find it deplorable in another connection, and it is your sincere opinion that it was deplorable for the young man to have reached the same wisdom. What a monstrous contradiction! Your whole nature contradicts itself. But you can only get out of this contradiction by an either/or, and I, who love you more sincerely than you loved this young man, I, who in my life have experienced the significance of choice, I congratulate you upon the fact that you are still so young, that even though you always will be sensible of some loss, yet, if y ou have, or rather if y ou will to have the requisite energy, you can win what is the chief thing in life, win yourself, acquire your own self. Now in case a man were able to maintain himself upon the pinnacle of the instant of choice, in case he could cease to be a man, in case

he were in his inmost nature only an airy thought, in case personality meant nothing more than to be a kobold, which takes part, indeed, in the movements but nevertheless remains unchanged; in case such were the situation, it would be foolish to say that it might ever be too late for a man to choose, for in a deeper sense there could be no question of a choice. The choice itself is decisive for the content of the personality, through the choice the personality immerses itself in the thing chosen, and when it does not choose it withers away in consumption. For an instant it is as if, for an instant it may seem as if the thing with regard to which a choice was made lay outside of the chooser, that he stands in no relationship to it, that he can preserve a state of indifference over against it. This is the instant of deliberation, but this, like the Platonic instant, has no existence, least of all in the abstract sense in which you would hold it fast, and the longer one stares at it the less it exists. That which has to be chosen stands in the deepest relationship to the chooser, and when it is a question of a choice involving a life problem the individual must naturally be living in the meantime, and hence, it comes about that the longer he postpones the choice the easier it is for him to alter its character, notwithstanding that he is constantly deliberating and deliberating and believes that thereby he is holding the alternatives distinctly apart. When life's either/or is regarded in this way one is not easily tempted to jest with it. One sees, then, that the inner drift of the personality leaves no time for thought experiments, that it constantly hastens onward and in one way or another posits this alternative or that, making the choice more difficult the next instant because what has thus been posited must be revoked. Think of the captain on his ship at the instant when it has to come

about. He will perhaps be able to say, “I can either do this or that’ ; b ut in case he is not a p retty poor navigator, he will be aware at the same time that the ship is all the while miing its usual headway, and that therefore it is only an instant when it is indifferent whether he does this or that. So it is with a man. If he forgets to take account of the headway, there comes at last an instant when there no longer is any question of an either/or, not because he has chosen but because he has neglected to choose, which is equivalent to saying, because others have chosen for him, because he has lost his self. You will perceive also in what I have just been saying how essentially my view of choice differs from yours (if you can properly be said to have any view), for yours differs precisely in the fact that it prevents you from choosing. For me the instant of choice is very serious, not so much on account of the rigorous cogitation involved in weighing the alternatives, not on account of the multiplicity of thoughts which attach themselves to every link in the chain, but rather because there is danger afoot, danger that the next instant it may not be equally in my power to choose, that something already has been lived which must be lived over again. For to think that for an instant one can keep one’s personality a blank, or that strictly speaking one can break off and bring to a halt the course of the personal life, is a delusion. The personality is already interested in the choice before one chooses, and when the choice is postponed the personality chooses unconsciously, or the choice is made by obscure powers within it. So when at last the choice is made one discovers (unless, as I remarked before, the personality has been completely volatilized) that there is something which must be done over again, something which must be revoked, and this is often very difficult. We read in

fairy tales about human beings whom mermaids and mermen enticed into their power by means of demoniac music. In order to break the enchantment it was necessary in the fairy tale“ for the person who was under the spell to play the same piece of music backwards without making a single mistake. This is very profound, but very difficult to perform, and yet so it is: the errors one has taken into oneself one must eradicate in this way, and every time one makes a mistake one must begin all over. Therefore, it is important to choose and to choose in time. You, on the contrary, have another method – for I know very well that the polemical side you turn towards the world is not your true nature. Yea, if to deliberate were the proper task for a human life, you would be pretty close to perfection. I will adduce an example. To fit your case the contrasts must be bold: either a parson/or an actor. Here is the dilemma. Now all your passionate energy is awakened, reflection with its hundred arms lays hold of the tliought of being a parson. You find no repose, day and night you think about it, you go to church three times every Sunday, pick up acquaintance with parsons, write sermons yourself, deliver them to yourself; for half a year you are dead to the whole world, you can now talk of the clerical calling with more insight and apparently with more experience than many who have been parsons for twenty years. When you encounter such men it arouses your indignation that they do not know how to get the thing off their chests with more eloquence. “Is this enthusiasm?” you say. “Why I who am not a parson, who have not consecrated myself to this calling, speak with the voice of angels as compared with them.” That, perhaps, is true enough, but nevertheless, you have not become a parson. Then you act in the same way with respect to the other task, and your

enthusiasm for art almost surpasses your clerical eloquence. Then you are ready to choose. However, one may be sure that in the prodigious thoughtproduction you were engaged in there must have been lots of waste products, many incidental reflections and observations. Hence, the instant you have to choose, life and animation enter into this waste mass, a new either/or presents itself – jurist, perhaps advocate, this has something in common with both the other alternatives. Now you are lost. For that same moment you are at once advocate enough to be able to prove the reasonableness of taking the third possibility into account. So your life drifts on. After you have wasted a y ear and a h alf on such deliberations, after you have with admirable energy exerted to the utmost the powers of your soul, you have not got one step further. You break the thread of thought, you become impatient, passionate, scolding and storming, and then you continue: “Either hairdresser/or bank teller; I say merely either/or.” What wonder, then, that this saying has become for you an offense and foolishness, that it seems, as you say, as if it were like the arms attached to the iron maiden whose embrace was the death penalty. You treat people superciliously, you make sport of them, and what you have become is what you most abhor: a critic, a universal critic in all faculties. Sometimes I c annot help smiling at you, and yet it ispitiful to see how your really excellent intellectual gifts are thus dissipated. But here again there is the same contradiction in your nature; for you see the ludicrous very clearly, and God help him who falls into your hands if his case is similar to yours. And yet the whole difference is that he perhaps becomes downcast and broken, while you on the contrary become light and erect and merrier than ever, making yourself and others blissful with the

gospel: vanitas vanitaium vanitas, hurrah! But this is no choice, it is what we call in Danish letting it go, or it is mediation like letting five count as an even number. Now you feel yourself free, you say to the world, farewell...

Therewith you have chosen... not to be sure, as you yourself will admit, the better part. But in reality you have not chosen at all, or it is in an improper sense of the word you have chosen. Your choice is an aesthetic choice, but an aesthetic choice is no choice. The act of choosing is essentially a proper and stringent expression of the ethical. Whenever in a stricter sense there is question of an either/or, one can always be sure that the ethical is involved. The only absolute either/or is the choice between good and evil, but that is also absolutely ethical. The aesthetic choice is either entirely immediate, or it loses itself in the multifarious. Thus, when a young girl follows the choice of her heart, this choice, however beautiful it may be, is in the strictest sense no choice, since it is entirely immediate. When a man deliberates aesthetically upon a multitude of life's problems, as you did in the foregoing, he does not easily get one either/or, but a whole multiplicity, because the determining factor in the choice is not accentuated, and because when one does not choose absolutely one chooses only for the moment, and therefore can choose something different the next moment. The ethical choice is therefore in a certain sense much easier, much simpler, but in another sense it is infinitely harder. He who would define his life task ethically has ordinarily not so considerable a selection to choose from; on the other hand, the act of choice has far more importance for him. If you will understand me aright, I should like to say that in making a choice it is not so much a question of choosing the right as of the energy, the earnestness,

the pathos with which one chooses. Thereby the personality announces its inner infinity, and thereby, in turn, the personality is consolidated. Therefore, even if a man were to choose the wrong, he will nevertheless discover, precisely by reason of the energy with which he chose, that he had chosen the wrong. For the choice being made with the whole inwardness of his personality, his nature is p urified and he himself brought into immediate relation to the eternal Power whose omnipresence interpenetrates the whole of existence. This transfiguration, this higher consecration, is never attained by that man who chooses merely aesthetically. The rythym in that man s soul, in spite of all its passion, is a *spiritus levisf*[62]

So, like a Cato I shout at you my either/or, and yet not like a Cato, for my soul has not yet acquired the resigned coldness which he possessed. But I know that only this incantation, if I have the strength for it, will be capable of rousing you, not to an activity of thought, for of that you have no lack, but to earnestness of spirit. Perhaps you will succeed without that in accomplishing much, perhaps even in astonishing the world (for I am not niggardly), and yet you will miss the highest thing, the only thing which truly has significance, perhaps you will gain the whole world and lose your own self.

What is it, then, that I distinguish in my either/or? Is it good and evil? No, I would only bring you up to the point where the choice between the evil and the good acquires significance for you. Everything hinges upon this. As soon as one can get a man to stand at the crossways in such a position that there is no recourse but to choose, he will choose the right. Hence, if it should chance that,

[62] Animus infirmus (in Latin).

while you are in the course of reading this somewhat lengthy dissertation, which again I send you in the form of a letter, you were to feel that the instant for choice had come, then throw the rest of this away, never concern yourself about it, you have lost nothing – but choose, and you shall see what validity there is in this act, yea, no young girl can be so happy in the choice of her heart as is a man who knows how to choose. So then, one either has to live aesthetically or one has to live ethically. In this alternative, asI h ave said, there is not yet in the strictest sense any question of a choice; for he who lives aesthetically does not choose, and he who after the ethical has manifested itself to him chooses the aesthetical is not living aesthetically, for he is sinning and is subject to ethical determinants even though his life may be described as unethical. Lo, this is, as it were, a *character indelebilis*[63] impressed upon the ethical, that though it modestly places itself on a level with the aesthetical, it is nevertheless that which makes the choice a choice. And this is the pitiful thing to one who contemplates human life, that so many live on in a quiet state of perdition; they outlive themselves, not in the sense that the content of life is successively unfolding and now is possessed in this expanded state, but they live their lives, as it were, outside of themselves, they vanish like shadows, their immortal soul is blown away, and they are not alarmed by the problem of its immortality, for they are already in a state of dissolution before they die. They do not live aesthetically, but neither has the ethical manifested itself in its entirety, so they have not exactly rejected it either, they therefore are not siiming, except insofar as it is sin not to be either

[63] Signum indelebile (in Latin).

one thing or the other; neither are they ever in doubt about their immortality, for he who deeply and sincerely is in doubt of it on his own behalf will surely find the right, and surely it is high time to utter a warning against the great-hearted, heroic objectivity with which many thinkers think on behalf of others and not on their own behalf. If one would call this which I here require selfishness, I would reply that this comes from the fact that people have no conception of what diis "self" is, and that it would be of very little use to a man if he were to gain the whole world and lose himself, and that it must necessarily be a poor proof which does not first of all convince the man who presents it.

My either/or does not in the first instance denote the choice between good and evil, it denotes the choice whereby one chooses good and evil/or excludes them. Here the question is under what determinants one would contemplate the whole of existence and would himself live. That the man who chooses good and evil chooses the good is indeed true, but this becomes evident only afterwards; for the aesthetical is not the evil but neutrality, and that is the reason why I a ffirmed that it is the ethical which constitutes the choice. It is, therefore, not so much a question of choosing between willing the good or the evil, as of choosing to will, but by this in turn the good and the evil are posited. He who chooses the ethical chooses the good, but here the good is entirely abstract, only its being is posited, and hence it does not follow by any means that the chooser cannot in turn choose the evil, in spite of the fact that he chose the good. Here you see again how important it is that a choice be made, and that the crucial thing is not deliberation but the baptism of the will which lifts up the choice into the ethical. The longer the time that elapses, the more difficult

it is to choose, for the soul is constantly attached to one side of the dilemma, and it becomes more and more difficult, therefore, to tear oneself loose. And yet this is necessary if o ne is to choose and is therefore of the utmost importance if a choice signifies something, and that it does Is hall show later.

You know that I h ave never pretended to be a philosopher, and least of all when I am conversing with you. Partly to tease you a bit, partly because it really is my dearest and most precious and also in a certain sense my most important position in life, I am accustomed to appear in the role of am arried man. I have not sacrificed my life for art and learning, what I have sacrificed myself for is i nsignificant in comparison with these things; I sacrifice myself for my profession, my wife, my children, or, more properly expressed, I do not sacrifice myself for them, but I find in them my satisfaction and joy. These are insignificant filings in comparison with what you live for; and yet, my young friend, take heed lest the greater things for which you really are sacrificing yourself might deceive you. Now although I am not a philosopher, yet I am compelled at this point to venture upon a little philosophic inquiry which I would beg you not so much to criticize as to take to heart. For the polemical result which resounds in all your songs of triumph over life has a strange resemblance to the pet theory of the newer philosophy, that the principle of contradiction is annulled. I know very well that the standpoint you occupy is to philosophy an abomination, and yet it seems to me that philosophy is guilty of the same error, and that the reason why this has not been noticed immediately is that philosophy is not even in as correct a position as you are. Your place is the domain of action, that of philosophy is contemplation. As soon as one would transport philosophy into

the practical domain it must reach the same result you reach, even though it does not express itself in the same way. You mediate contradictions in a higher madness, philosophy mediates them in a higher unity. You turn towards the future, for action is always futuristic. You say, "I can either do this or do that, but whichever of the two I do is equally mad, *ergo* I do nothing at all".

<…>

Thus, even the humblest individual has a dual existence. He also has a history, and this is not merely a product of his own free actions. The inward work, on the contrary, belongs to him and must belong to him unto all eternity; neither history nor world history can take that from him, it "follows him" either for joy or for sorrow. There rules in this inward world an absolute either/or, but with this world-philosophy has nothing to do. If I picture to myself an elderly man who looks back upon an eventful life, I admit that he can get a mediation out of it, for his history was intertwined with that of time; but in the most inward sense he gets no mediation. An either/or still separates enduringly that which was separated when he chose. If there is to be any talk of mediation, one might say that repentance is such; but repentance is no mediation, it does not look with pleasure upon that which is to be mediated, it consumes it with its wrath – but this resembles exclusion, the opposite of mediation. Here it is evident that I do not assume a radical evil, since I posit the validity of repentance. Repentance, it is true, is an expression for reconciliation, but it is also an absolutely irreconcilable expression.

But all this, perhaps, you concede – you who, nevertheless, in many ways make common cause with the philosophers… except insofar as you undertake on your own private account to make

game of them. You think perhaps that I as a married man may well be content with this concession and can make use of it in my household economy. Honestly speaking, I ask nothing more, but I should like to know which life is the highest, that of the philosopher, or that of the free man. In case the philosopher is merely a philosopher, completely lost in his profession, without knowing the blessed life of freedom, then he lacks a very important thing, he gains the whole world and loses himself. This never can happen to a man who lives for freedom, even though he were to lose ever so much.

For freedom, therefore, I am fighting (partly in this letter, partly and principally within myself), I a m fighting for the future, for either/or. That is the treasure I desire to bequeath to those whom I love in the world; yea, if my little son were at this instant of an age when he could thoroughly understand me, I would say to him, “I leave to thee no fortune, no title and dignities, but I know where there lies buried a treasure which suffices to make thee richer than the whole world, and this treasure belongs to thee, and thou shalt not even express thanks to me for it lest thou take hurt to thine own soul by owing everything to another. This treasure is deposited in thine own inner self: there is an either/or which makes a man greater than the angels”.

That which is p rominent in my either/or is the ethical. It is therefore not yet a question of the choice of something in particular, it is not a question of the reality of the thing chosen, but of the reality of the act of choice. This, however, is the decisive thing, and it is to an apprehension of t his I w ould strive to arouse you. Up to this point one man can be of help to another, but having reached this point the importance one man can have for another

becomes more subordinate. In the previous letter I remarked that the experience of having loved imparts to a man's nature a h armony which never is entirely lost; now I would say that the experience of choosing imparts to a man's nature a solemnity, a quiet dignity, which never is entirely lost. There are many who set great store upon having seen one or another distinguished world-historical personality face to face. This impression they never forget, it has given to their souls an ideal picture which ennobles their nature; and yet such an instant, however significant, is nothing in comparison with the instant of choice. So when all has become still around one, as solemn as a starlit night, when the soul is alone in the whole world, then there appears before one, not a distinguished man, but the eternal Power itself. Then has the soul beheld the loftiest sight that mortal eye can see and which never can be forgotten, then tlie personality receives the accolade of knighthood which ennobles it for an eternity. He does not become another man than he was before, but he becomes himself, consciousness is unified, and he is himself. As an heir, even though he were heir to the treasure of all the world, nevertheless does not possess his property before he has come of age, so even the richest personality is nothing before he has chosen himself, and on the other hand even what one might call the poorest personality is everything when he has chosen himself; for the great thing is not to be this or that but to be oneself, and this every one can be if he wills it.

That in a sense it is not a question of a something, you will see from the fact that what appears as the alternative is the aesthetical, the indifferent. And yet nevertheless there is here question of a choice, yea, of an absolute choice, for only by

choosing absolutely can one choose the ethical. By the absolute choice the ethical is always posited, but from this it does not follow by any means that the aesthetical is excluded. In the ethical the personality is concentrated in itself, so the aesthetical is absolutely excluded or is excluded as the absolute, but relatively it is still left. In choosing itself the personality chooses itself ethically and excludes absolutely the aesthetical, but since it is itself it chooses and since it does not become another being by choosing itself, the whole of the aesthetical comes back again in its relativity.

So the either/or I propose is in a sense absolute, for it is aquestion of choosing or not choosing. But since the choice is an absolute choice, so is the either/or absolute; in another sense, however, it is only by thic choice the either/or comes to evidence, for with that [the choice between choosing and not choosing] the choice between good and evil makes its appearance. This choice between good and evil which is posited in and with the first choice need not concern me here; I would merely constrain you to go on to that point where the necessity of choice is manifest, and thereupon would contemplate existence under ethical categories. I am not an ethical rigorist, an enthusiast for a formal, abstract freedom. If only the choice is p osited, all of the aesthetical returns again, and you will see that only then does existence become beautiful, that only in this way can a man succeed in saving his soul and gaining the whole world, can succeed in using the world without abusing it.

But what is it to live aesthetically, and what is it to live ethically? What is the aestlietical in a man, and what is the ethical? To this I would reply: the aesthetical in a man is that by which he is immediately what he is; the ethical is that whereby he becomes

what he becomes. He who lives in and by and of and for the aesthetical in him lives aesthetically.

It is not my intention to go more particularly into the investigation of all that is implied in this definition of the aesthetical. It also seems to me superfluous to enlighten you about what it is to live aesthetically – you who are such an expert practitioner in this mode of life that I might rather need your help. Nevertheless, I will sketch several of the stages of the aesthetic life in order that we may work ourselves up to the point where you properly belong. This to my mind is important lest you escape me too soon by one of your favorite side-leaps. Moreover, I have no doubt that in many ways I s hall be able to enlighten you about what it is to live aesthetically. Although I would send to you as the most reliable guide any man who wished to live aesthetically, I would not send him to you if, in a higher sense, he wished to perceive what it is to live aesthetically, for about that you could not enlighten him, precisely because you are enmeshed; only he can do that who stands on a higher level and lives ethically. For an instant you might perhaps be tempted to make to me the sophistical rejoinder that then I am unable to give a reliable elucidation of what it is to live ethically, since I myself am enmeshed in it. This, however, would only furnish me with an occasion for a further elucidation. The reason why the man who lives aesthetically can in a higher sense explain nothing, is that he constantly lives in the moment, yet all the time is conscious only in terms of a certain relativity and within certain bounds. It is by no means my intention to deny that to live aesthetically when such a life is at its highest may call for a multiplicity of intellectual gifts, yea, even that these must be intensively developed to an

uncommon degree; but nevertheless, they are enslaved, and transparency is lacking to them. Thus one often finds certain species of animals which possess far sharper and more intense senses than man, but they are bound to the instinct of the animal. I would fain take you as an example. I have never denied that you possess distinguished intellectual gifts, as you can see also from the fact that I have often reproached you f or abusing them. You are witty, ironical, a close observer, a dialectician, experienced in pleasure, you know how to calculate the instant, you are sentimental or heartless according to circumstances; but beneath all this you are constantly only in the moment, and therefore your life dissolves, and it is impossible for you to explain it. If then a man would learn the art of enjoyment, he is quite right in g oing to you, but if he wishes to understand your life, he goes to the wrong person. By coming to me perhaps he would sooner find what he seeks, in spite of the fact that I am by no means in p ossession of y our intellectual gifts. You are enmeshed and have, as it were, no time to tear yourself loose, I am not enmeshed, neither by my judgment of the aesthetical nor by my judgment of the ethical; for in the ethical I a m raised above the instant, ip I am in freedom – but it is a contradiction that one might be enmeshed by being in freedom.

Every man, however lowly his talents are, however subordinate his position in life, naturally feels the need of forming a life view, a conception of life's significance and of its purpose. The man who lives aesthetically does that too, and the universal expression which has been heard from age to age and in all stages is this: one must enjoy life. Naturally, there is great variety corresponding to the different conceptions of enjoyment, but in this

expression, that one is to enjoy oneself, all are agreed. *But he who says that he wants to enjoy life always posits a condition which either lies outside the individual or is in the individual in such a way that it is not posited by the individual himself.* With respect to this last sentence, I would beg you to hold fast the expressions I have used, for they are chosen deliberately. I believe that by these reflections I have now outlined, intelligibly enough at least for you, the territory of the aesthetical views of life. All of the stages have this in common, that what one lives for is that whereby one immediately is what one is; for reflection never grasps so high that it g rasps beyond this. It is only a very cursory indication I have furnished, but I had no desire to give more, it was not the various stages which were important to me, but only the movement which is imperatively necessary, and it is upon that I would beg you to fix your attention. So I assume that the man who lived for his health was, to use an expression of yours, just as hale when he died as ever he was; that the above-mentioned noble couple danced at their golden wedding, and that a whisper of admiration passed through the hall just as it did when they danced on the day of their nuptials; I assume that the rich man's gold mines were inexhaustible, that honors and dignities followed the happy man's pilgrimage through life; I assume that the young girl got the man she loved, that the man of mercantile talent harnessed with his trade connections all quarters of the globe and held the purses of all the world in his purse, that the mechanical talent succeeded in connecting heaven and earth – I assume that Nero never yawned, but that new pleasures surprised him every instant, that the cunning Epicurean could find delight in himself every instant, that the Cynic constantly had conditions to cast away in order to rejoice in his

lightness – this I assume, and so all these people were happy. That, surely, you will not afiirm, and the reason for it I shall explain later on; but this you will willingly concede, that many people would think them happy, and that one or another would imagine he said something very clever when he added that what they lacked was that they did not appreciate it. I will now make the opposite movement. Nothing of all this comes to pass. What then? Why, then, they despair. You will do no such thing, you will say perhaps that it is not worthwhile. Why it is that you will not admit despair I shall explain later on. Here I only require you to acknowledge that a great many men would find it natural to despair. Let us see now why they despair. Is it because they discovered that what they built their life upon was transient? But is that, then, a reason for despairing ? Has any essential change occurred in that upon which they built their life? Is it an essential change in the transitory that it shows itself to be transitory? Or is it not rather something accidental and unessential in the case of what is transitory that it does not show itself to be such? Nothing has happened which could occasion a change. So if they despair, it must be because they were in despair beforehand. The only difference is that they did not know it. But this is an entirely fortuitous difference. So it appears that every aesthetic view of life is despair, and that every one who lives aesthetically is in despair, whether he knows it or not. But when one knows it (and you indeed know it), a higher form of existence is an imperative requirement. With only a f ew words I w ill explain myself further with respect to my judgment about the young girl and her love. You know that in my capacity as a married man it is my custom on every occasion to maintain against you, both orally and in writing, the reality of love, and therefore, to prevent any

misunderstanding, I will also give expression to my thought here. Perhaps a man who is shrewd in a finite sense would become a little dubious about such a love, he would perhaps perceive its fragility and m opposing it would express his paltry wisdom by the proverb, “Love me little, love me long” – as if his worldly wisdom were not still more fragile or at least far more paltry than her love! You will easily perceive that I could not express my disapproval of it in that way. It is very repulsive to me to carry on a thought experiment in the domain of love. I have only loved once and am still indescribably happy in this love. It is repulsive to me to think of being loved by any other person than the one to whom I am joined and in any other way than that by which she makes me so happy. But I will make the venture. Suppose, then (however it may have come about), that I have become the object of such a love. It would not make me happy, and I would never accept it – not because I s hould disdain it, for God knows that I would rather have a murder on my conscience than to have disdained a maiden’s love – but for her own sake I would not permit it. So far as in me lieth, I desire to be loved by everybody, by my wife I desire to be loved as dearly as one person can love another and it would pain me if I were not so loved, but I do not desire more, I will not permit any one to take harm to her soul by loving me; I should love her too truly to permit her to abase herself. To a proud mind there is something seductive in being loved thus, and there are men who understand the art of infatuating a girl so that she forgets everything else but them – let them look to it how they justify this. Such a girl is for the most part punished severely enough, but the despicable thing is to let this occur. Observe that it is for this reason I said and still say that the young girl was equally in despair

whether she got the loved one or not, for in fact it was an accidental circumstance if the man she loved was so upright that he would help her out of her heart's delusion, and even though the means he employed to this end were never so hard, I would affirm, nevertheless, that he acted towards her uprightly, sincerely, faithfully, chivalrously. So the aesthetic view of life has proved itself to be despair. It might therefore seem to be in place to undertake the movement which brings to evidence the ethical. However, there still remains one stage, an aesthetic life view which is the most refined and superior of them all, into which I must inquire with the greatest care, for what I have to say applies to you. You can follow with composure everything I have set forth hitherto, and in a way it is not to you I have been speaking, and it would be of little use to talk in this fashion to you or to explain to you that life is vanity. That you know very well and in your way have sought to adjust yourself. The reason why I have expounded this is that I desire to protect my rear and would prevent you from suddenly leaping back. This last life view is despair itself. It is an aesthetic life view, for the personality remains in its immediacy; it is the last aesthetic life view, for to a certain degree it is conscious of its own nullity. There is a diSerence, however, between despair and despair. If I imagine an artist, a painter, for example, who becomes blind, he then perhaps will despair if there is nothing deeper in him. He despairs then over this particular thing, and if his sight were restored to him again, his despair would cease. Such is not the case with you, you are far too intellectually gifted for that, and your soul is in a certain sense too deep for this to befall you. Nor in outward respects has any such misfortune happened to you. You still have in your power all the factors requisite for an aesthetic life

view, you have wealth and independence, your health is unimpaired, your mind still vigorous, nor have you yet become unhappy for the fact that a girl would not love you. And yet you are in despair. It is not despair about any actual thing but a despair in thought. Your thought has hurried on ahead, you have seen through the vanity of all things, but you have got no further. Occasionally you plunge into pleasure, and every instant you are devoting yourself to it you make the discovery in your consciousness that it is vanity. So you are constantly beyond yourself, tliat is, in despair. This is the reason why your life lies between two prodigious contradictions; sometimes you have enormous energy, sometimes an indolence just as great.

<…>

Behold, my young friend, this life of y ours is d espair. Hide this if y ou will from others, from yourself you cannot hide it, it is despair. And yet in another sense this life is not despair. You are too frivolous to despair, and you are too melancholy not to come in touch with despair. You are like a woman in childbirth, and yet you are constantly deferring the moment and remain constantly in pain. If a woman in her travail were to get the idea that she might give birth to a monster, or were to ponder within herself what it really was she would bring forth, her case would be similar to yours. Her effort to check the course of nature would be unavailing, but yours is indeed possible, for that to which a man gives birth in a spiritual sense is a nisus formativus of the will, and that is in a man’s own power. What is it then you fear? You are not about to give birth to another human being, you are merely to give birth to yourself. And yet, as I know well, there is a seriousness in this which perturbs the whole soul: to become conscious of oneself in

one's eternal validity is more significant than everything else in the world. It is as though you were caught and ensnared and could nevermore, either in time or eternity, make your escape, it is as though you lost your own self, as though you ceased to be, it is as though the next instant you would regret it and yet it could not be undone. It is a serious and significant moment when for an eternity one attaches oneself to an eternal power, when one receives oneself as a person whose memory no lapse of time shall efface, when in an eternal and unfailing sense one becomes aware of oneself as the person one is. And yet one can leave it alone! So here there is an either/or. Let me talk to you as I n ever would do if anybody else were listening, partly because I can claim no right to speak to you thus, and partly because I am speaking only of future possibilities. If you will not harken to this, if you will continue to divert your soul with the trumpery of wit and the vanity of *esprit*, then do so, leave your home, travel abroad, go to Paris, devote yourself to journalism, sue for the smile of effete women, cool their hot blood with the coldness of your wit, let it be the proud theme of your life's labor to drive away the boredom of an idle woman or the gloomy thoughts of an enfeebled voluptuary, forget that you were a child, that there was piety in your soul and innocence in your thought, silence every higher voice in your breast, doze your life away in the glittering inanity of society, forget that there is an immortal spirit within you, and when wit grows mute there is water enough in the pond and gunpowder in the store and traveling companionship at every time of day. But if you cannot do this, if you will not (and this you neither can nor will), then collect yourself, quell every rebellious thought which would presume to commit high treason against your better nature, despise all the pettiness which would

envy your intellectual gifts and itself desires them in order to put them to a still worse use, despise the hypocritical virtue which unwillingly bears life's burdens and yet would be honored because it bears them; but do not for this cause despise life, respect every honest effort, every unassuming endeavor which modestly hides itself, and above all have a little more reverence for woman; believe me, it is from her comes salvation, as surely as hardening comes from man. I am a married man and to that extent I am partial, but it is my conviction that if it was a woman that ruined man, it was woman also that has fairly and honestly made reparation and still does so; out of a hundred men who go astray in the world ninety and nine are saved by women and one by immediate divine grace. And as I am also of the opinion that it is the nature of man to go astray in one way or another, and that to a man it applies as truly as to a woman that he ought to abide in the pure and innocent peace of immediacy; you can easily see that in my opinion woman [when she restores a man to this state] makes due requital for the harm she has done.

What then must you do ? A nother perhaps would say, "Get married. Then you will have something else to think about". Yes, that you will, but the question remains whether this will be any advantage to you, and whatever you may think of the other sex, you think at all events too chivalrously to wish to marry for that reason; and moreover, if you are unable to sustain yourself, you will hardly get another person who is capable of sustaining you. Or one might say, "Look for a job, throw yourself into the life of affairs, that is a distraction, and you will forget your melancholy. Get to work. That's the best thing". Perhaps you will succeed in getting to the point where your melancholy seems as if it were forgotten, but

forgotten it is not; occasionally it will break out and will be more dreadful than ever, it will then perhaps be capable of doing what it could never do before, it may take you off your guard. Furthermore, however you may think of life and its affairs, you will nevertheless think too chivalrously of yourself to choose a profession for that reason, for that, after all, is a kind of falsehood, like marrying for the same reason. What then must you do? I have only one answer: despair.

I am a married man, my soul clings firmly and wisely to my wife, to my children, to this life which I shall always extol for its beauty. So when I counsel you to despair, it is not a fantastical youth who would whirl you away in the maelstrom of the passions, nor a mocking demon who shouts this comfort to the shipwrecked, but I shout it to you, not as a comfort, not as a condition in which you are to remain, but as a deed which requires all the power and seriousness and concentration of the soul, just as surely as it is my conviction, my victory over the world, that every man who has not tasted the bitterness of despair has missed the significance of life, however beautiful and joyous his life might be. By despairing you do not delude the world in which you live, you are not lost to it because you have overcome it, as surely as I can affirm of myself that I am a proper married man, in spite of the fact that I, too, have despaired.

So when I view your life in this aspect I will not declare you fortunate, for at the instant of despair it is truly of the utmost importance for a man not to be mistaken about his life; this is j ust as dangerous for him as for a woman in travail to go amiss. He who despairs over one particular thing incurs the danger that his despair may not be genuine and profound, that it may be a

delusion, a sorrow only for a particular loss. It is not thus you are to despair, for no particular thing has been taken from you, you still possess everything you had. If the despairing man makes a mistake, if he believes that the misfortune lies in his multifarious surroundings, then his despair is not genuine and it will lead him to hate the world and not to love it, for true as it is that the world is a burden to you because it is as if it would be to you something else than it can be, it is also just as true that when in despair you have found yourself you will love the world because it is what it is. If it is a fault or guilt or a troubled conscience which brings a man to despair, he will perhaps have difficulty in regaining his joyfulness. So, then, despair with all your soul and with all your mind; the longer you put it off, the harder the conditions become, and the demand remains the same. I shout this to you, like the woman who offered to sell to Tarquin a collection of b ooks and when he would not give the sum she demanded burned one-third of them and demanded the same sum, and when again he would not give the sum she demanded burned another third of them and demanded the same sum, until finally he gave the original sum for the last third. It is on beautiful terms despair is offered to you, and yet there are more beautiful terms. Imagine a young man as talented as you are. Let him love a girl, love her as dearly as himself. Let him once ponder in a quiet hour upon what it is he has constructed his life and upon what she can construct hers. Love they have in common, and yet he will feel that there are differences. She possesses, perhaps, the gift of beauty, but this has no importance for him, and after all, it is so fragile; she has, perhaps, the joyful temper of youth, but that joy has no great significance for him, but he possesses the power of the mind and

feels the might of it. He desires to love her in truth, and it never occurs to him to attribute this power to her, and her meek soul does not demand it, and yet there is a difference, and he will feel that this must be done away if he is to love her in truth. Then he will let his soul sink into despair. It is not for his own sake he despairs but for hers, and yet it is for his own sake too, for he loves her as dearly as himself. Then will despair devour everything till he finds himself in his eternal validity, but then he has also found her, and no knight can return more happily and gladly from the most perilous adventures than does he from this fight with flesh and blood and the vain differences of the finite, for he who despairs finds the eternal man, and in that we are all equal. The foolish thought of wishing to dull his mind or neglect its culture will not occur to him as a way of bringing about equality; he will preserve the gifts of the mind, but in his inmost heart he knows of himself that he who possesses these gifts is one who possesses them not. Or imagine a profoundly religious temperament, a man who from a true and sincere love for mankind cast himself into the ocean of despair till he found the absolute, the point where it is indifferent whether a forehead is squat or is arched as high as heaven, the point which is not indifference but absolute validity.

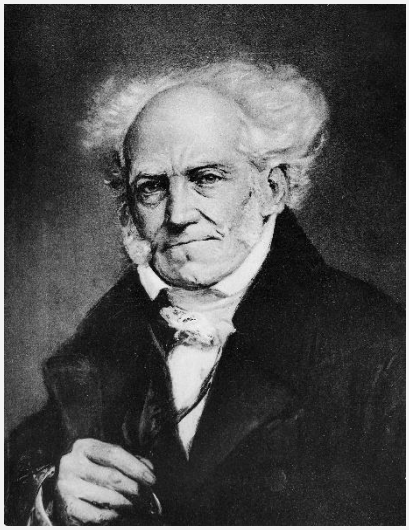
You have sundry good ideas, many whimsical notions, and a great quantity of follies – retain them all if you will, though I do not require you to. But one idea you have which I would beg you to hold fast, an idea which assures me that my mind is akin to yours. You have often said that you would rather be anything but a poet, since as a rule a poetexistence is a human sacrifice. For my part, I would not deny that there have lived poets who had found themselves before they began to write poetry or who found

themselves by poetizing, but on the other hand, it is also certain that a poet-existence as such lies in the obscurity which it due to the fact that a beginning of despair was not carried through, that the soul keeps on shivering with despair and the spirit cannot attain its true transformation. This poetic ideal is always a sickly ideal, for the true ideal is always the real. So when the spirit is not allowed to soar up into the eternal world of spirit it remains midway and rejoices in the pictures reflected in the clouds and weeps that they are so transitory. A poet-existence is therefore, as such, an unhappy existence, it is higher than finiteness and yet not infiniteness. The poet sees the ideals, but he must flee away from the world in order to rejoice in them, he cannot bear about in the midst of life's confusion these divine images within him, cannot tranquilly pursue his course unaffected by the caricatures of these ideals which appear on all sides, not to speak of having strength to clothe himself in them. The poet's life is, therefore, often an object of paltry compassion on the part of men who think themselves secure because they have remained in finiteness. You said once in a moment of despondency that doubtless there were some people who had privately cast up their accounts with you and were willing to be quits on the following terms: you were to be recognized as a clever pate, and in requital for that you were to sink out of sight and be no efficient member of society. Yes, it is undeniable, there is such paltriness in the world which would triumph in this way over everything which projects even an inch above the ordinary level. However, do not let it disturb you, do not defy it, do not show your contempt for it – in this instance I would say as you are wont to say, "It's not worth the trouble". But if you do not wish to be a poet, there is no other way for you except that which I have

indicated: despair! So then choose despair, for even despair is a choice; for one can doubt without choosing to, but one cannot despair without choosing. And when a man despairs he chooses again – and what is it he chooses. He chooses himself, not in his immediacy, not as this fortuitous individual, but he chooses himself in his eternal validity. This point I shall endeavor to illuminate with application to you. In modern philosophy there has been more than enough talk about speculation beginning with doubt, but on the other hand, as far as I h ave been able to concern myself occasionally with such reflections, I have sought in vain for illumination upon the point of difference between doubt and despair. I will here attempt to throw light upon this distinction, in the hope that it will serve to orient you and put you in the correct position. I am far from presuming to claim any real competence as a philosopher, I have not your virtuosity in playing with the categories, but what in the deepest sense is the significance of life must be comprehensible also to a simpler man. Doubt is a despair of thought, despair is a doubt of the personality; hence it is I hold so stoutly to the category of choice, which is my solution, the nerve in my life view – and such a thing as a life view I have, even though I do not by any means presume to have a system. Doubt is the inward movement in thought itself, and in doubting I behave as impersonally as possible. Now I assume that thought, by carrying doubt through, finds the absolute and rests in it – rests in it, therefore, not as a consequence of choice but in consequence of the same necessity in consequence of which it doubted. For doubt itself is determined by necessity, and so, likewise, is rest. This is the lofty characteristic of doubt for which it has so often been extolled and praised by people who hardly know what they are saying. But the

fact that it is determined by necessity shows that the whole personality is not engaged in the movement. Hence, there is a good deal of truth in it when a man says, “I would willingly believe, but I cannot, I must doubt”. Hence, one often sees that a doubter has in himself a positive content which lives apart from all communication with thought, that he may be an exceedingly conscientious person who has no doubt whatever about the validity of duty and the rule of his behavior, no doubt whatever about a multitude of sympathetic feelings and moods. On the other hand, in our age especially, one sees men who have despair in their hearts but yet have conquered doubt. This has struck me particularly in considering certain of the philosophers of Germany. Their thought is tranquilized, the objective logical thought is brought to rest in its corresponding objectivity, and yet they are in despair, even though they find distraction in objective thinking; for a man can find distraction in many ways, and tliere is hardly any anaesthetic so powerful as abstract thinking, because here it is a question of behaving as objectively as possible.

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ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER
THE WISDOM OF LIFE[64]

INTRODUCTION

In these pages I shall speak of The Wisdom of Life in the common meaning of the term, as the art, namely, of ordering our lives so as to obtain the greatest possible amount of pleasure and success; an art the theory of which may be called Eudaemonology, for it teaches us how to lead a happy existence. Such an existence might perhaps be defined as one which, looked at from a purely objective point of view, or, rather, after cool and mature reflection – for the question necessarily involves subjective considerations, – would be decidedly preferable to non-existence; implying that we should cling to it for its own sake, and not merely from the fear of death; and further, that we should never like it to come to an end.

Now whether human life corresponds, or could possibly correspond, to this conception of existence, is a question to which, as is well-known, my philosophical system returns a negative answer. On the eudaemonistic hypothesis, however, the question

[64] Schopenhauer A. The Wisdom Of Life / Translated By T. Bailey Saunders. URL: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/10741/10741-h/10741-h.htm#link2HCH0001

must be answered in the affirmative; and I have shown, in the second volume of my chief work (ch. 49), that this hypothesis is based upon a fundamental mistake. Accordingly, in elaborating the scheme of a happy existence, I have had to make a complete surrender of the higher metaphysical and ethical standpoint to which my own theories lead; and everything I shall say here will to some extent rest upon a compromise; in so far, that is, as I take the common standpoint of every day, and embrace the error which is at the bottom of it. My remarks, therefore, will possess only a qualified value, for the very word eudaemonology is a euphemism. Further, I make no claims to completeness; partly because the subject is inexhaustible, and partly because I should otherwise have to say over again what has been already said by others.

CHAPTER I. – DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT

Aristotle divides the blessings of life into three classes – those which come to us from without, those of the soul, and those of the body. Keeping nothing of this division but the number, I observe that the fundamental differences in human lot may be reduced to three distinct classes:

(1) What a man is: that is to say, personality, in the widest sense of the word; under which are included health, strength, beauty, temperament, moral character, intelligence, and education.

(2) What a man has: that is, property and possessions of every kind.

(3) How a man stands in the estimation of others: by which is to be understood, as everybody knows, what a man is in the eyes of his fellowmen, or, more strictly, the light in which they regard him. This is shown by their opinion of him; and their opinion is in

its turn manifested by the honor in which he is held, and by his rank and reputation.

The differences which come under the first head are those which Nature herself has set between man and man; and from this fact alone we may at once infer that they influence the happiness or unhappiness of mankind in a much more vital and radical way than those contained under the two following heads, which are merely the effect of human arrangements. Compared with genuine personal advantages, such as a great mind or a great heart, all the privileges of rank or birth, even of royal birth, are but as kings on the stage, to kings in real life. The same thing was said long ago by Metrodorus, the earliest disciple of Epicurus, who wrote as the title of one of his chapters, The happiness we receive from ourselves is greater than that which we obtain from our surroundings{1} And it is an obvious fact, which cannot be called in question, that the principal element in a man's well-being, – indeed, in the whole tenor of his existence, – is what he is made of, his inner constitution. For this is the immediate source of that inward satisfaction or dissatisfaction resulting from the sum total of his sensations, desires and thoughts; whilst his surroundings, on the other hand, exert only a mediate or indirect influence upon him. This is why the same external events or circumstances affect no two people alike; even with perfectly similar surroundings every one lives in a world of his own. For a man has immediate apprehension only of his own ideas, feelings and volitions; the outer world can influence him only in so far as it brings these to life. The world in which a man lives shapes itself chiefly by the way in which he looks at it, and so it proves different to different men; to one it is barren, dull, and superficial; to another rich,

interesting, and full of meaning. On hearing of the interesting events which have happened in the course of a man's experience, many people will wish that similar things had happened in their lives too, completely forgetting that they should be envious rather of the mental aptitude which lent those events the significance they possess when he describes them; to a man of genius they were interesting adventures; but to the dull perceptions of an ordinary individual they would have been stale, everyday occurrences.

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So the first and most essential element in our life's happiness is what we are, – our personality, if for no other reason than that it is a constant factor coming into play under all circumstances: besides, unlike the blessings which are described under the other two heads, it is not the sport of destiny and cannot be wrested from us;k – and, so far, it is endowed with an absolute value in contrast to the merely relative worth of the other two. The consequence of this is that it is much more difficult than people commonly suppose to get a hold on a man from without. But here the all-powerful agent, Time, comes in and claims its rights, and before its influence physical and mental advantages gradually waste away. Moral character alone remains inaccessible to it. In view of the destructive effect of time, it seems, indeed, as if the blessings named under the other two heads, of which time cannot directly rob us, were superior to those of the first. Another advantage might be claimed for them, namely, that being in their very nature objective and external, they are attainable, and every one is presented with the possibility, at least, of coming into possession of them; whilst what is subjective is not open to us to acquire, but

making its entry by a kind of *divine right*, it remains for life, immutable, inalienable, an inexorable doom.

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The only thing that stands in our power to achieve, is to make the most advantageous use possible of the personal qualities we possess, and accordingly to follow such pursuits only as will call them into play, to strive after the kind of perfection of which they admit and to avoid every other; consequently, to choose the position, occupation and manner of life which are most suitable for their development.

Imagine a man endowed with herculean strength who is compelled by circumstances to follow a sedentary occupation, some minute exquisite work of the hands, for example, or to engage in study and mental labor demanding quite other powers, and just those which he has not got, – compelled, that is, to leave unused the powers in which he is pre-eminently strong; a man placed like this will never feel happy all his life through. Even more miserable will be the lot of the man with intellectual powers of a very high order, who has to leave them undeveloped and unemployed, in the pursuit of a calling which does not require them, some bodily labor, perhaps, for which his strength is insufficient. Still, in a case of this kind, it should be our care, especially in youth, to avoid the precipice of presumption, and not ascribe to ourselves a superfluity of power, which is not there.

CHAPTER II. PERSONALITY, OR WHAT A MAN IS

We have already seen, in general, that what a man is contributes much more to his happiness than what he has, or how he is regarded by others. What a man is, and so what he has in his own person, is always the chief thing to consider; for his

individuality accompanies him always and everywhere, and gives its color to all his experiences. In every kind of enjoyment, for instance, the pleasure depends principally upon the man himself. Every one admits this in regard to physical, and how much truer it is of intellectual, pleasure. When we use that English expression, "to enjoy one's self," we are employing a very striking and appropriate phrase; for observe – one says, not "he enjoys Paris," but "he enjoys himself in Paris." To a man possessed of an ill-conditioned individuality, all pleasure is like delicate wine in a mouth made bitter with gall. Therefore, in the blessings as well as in the ills of life, less depends upon what befalls us than upon the way in which it is met, that is, upon the kind and degree of our general susceptibility. What a man is and has in himself, – in a word personality, with all it entails, is the only immediate and direct factor in his happiness and welfare. All else is mediate and indirect, and its influence can be neutralized and frustrated; but the influence of personality never. This is why the envy which personal qualities excite is the most implacable of all, – as it is also the most carefully dissembled.

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The ordinary man places his life's happiness in things external to him, in property, rank, wife and children, friends, society, and the like, so that when he loses them or finds them disappointing, the foundation of his happiness is destroyed. In other words, his centre of gravity is not in himself; it is constantly changing its place, with every wish and whim. If he is a man of means, one day it will be his house in the country, another buying horses, or entertaining friends, or traveling, - a life, in short, of general luxury, the reason being that he seeks his pleasure in

things outside him. Like one whose health and strength are gone, he tries to regain by the use of jellies and drugs, instead of by developing his own vital power, the true source of what he has lost. Before proceeding to the opposite, let us compare with this common type the man who comes midway between the two, endowed, it may be, not exactly with distinguished powers of mind, but with somewhat more than the ordinary amount of intellect. He will take a dilettante interest in art, or devote his attention to some branch of science – botany, for example, or physics, astronomy, history, and find a great deal of pleasure in such studies, and amuse himself with them when external forces of happiness are exhausted or fail to satisfy him any more. Of a man like this it may be said that his centre of gravity is partly in himself. But a dilettante interest in art is a very different thing from creative activity; and an amateur pursuit of science is apt to be superficial and not to penetrate to the heart of the matter. A man cannot entirely identify himself with such pursuits, or have his whole existence so completely filled and permeated with them that he loses all interest in everything else. It is only the highest intellectual power, what we call genius, that attains to this degree of intensity, making all time and existence its theme, and striving to express its peculiar conception of the world, whether it contemplates life as the subject of poetry or of philosophy. Hence, undisturbed occupation with himself, his own thoughts and works, is a matter of urgent necessity to such a man; solitude is welcome, leisure is the highest good, and everything else is unnecessary, nay, even burdensome.

This is the only type of man of whom it can be said that his centre of gravity is entirely in himself; which explains why it is that

people of this sortand – they are very rare – no matter how excellent their character may be, do not show that warm and unlimited interest in friends, family, and the community in general, of which others are so often capable; for if they have only themselves they are not inconsolable for the loss of everything else. This gives an isolation to their character, which is all the more effective since other people never really quite satisfy them, as being, on the whole, of a different nature: nay more, since this difference is constantly forcing itself upon their notice they get accustomed to move about amongst mankind as alien beings, and in thinking of humanity in general, to *say* they instead of *we*.

The wealth of the soul is the only true wealth, for with all other riches comes a bane even greater than they. The man of inner wealth wants nothing from outside but the negative gift of undisturbed leisure, to develop and mature his intellectual faculties, that is, to enjoy his wealth; in short, he wants permission to be himself, his whole life long, every day and every hour. If he is destined to impress the character of his mind upon a whole race, he has only one measure of happiness or unhappiness – to succeed or fail in perfecting his powers and completing his work. All else is of small consequence. Accordingly, the greatest minds of all ages have set the highest value upon undisturbed leisure, as worth exactly as much as the man himself. *Happiness appears to consist in leisure*, says Aristotle; and Diogenes Laertius reports that *Socrates praised leisure as the fairest of all possessions*. So, in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle concludes that a life devoted to philosophy is the happiest; or, as he says in the *Politics*, *the free exercise of any power, whatever it may be, is happiness.* This again, tallies with what Goethe says in *Wilhelm Meister: The man who is*

born with a talent which he is meant to use, finds his greatest happiness in using it.

But to be in possession of undisturbed leisure, is far from being the common lot; nay, it is something alien to human nature, for the ordinary man's destiny is to spend life in procuring what is necessary for the subsistence of himself and his family; he is a son of struggle and need, not a free intelligence. So people as a rule soon get tired of undisturbed leisure, and it becomes burdensome if there are no fictitious and forced aims to occupy it, play, pastime and hobbies of every kind. For this very reason it is full of possible danger, and difficilis in otio quies is a true saying,—it is difficult to keep quiet if you have nothing to do. On the other hand, a measure of intellect far surpassing the ordinary, is as unnatural as it is abnormal. But if it exists, and the man endowed with it is to be happy, he will want precisely that undisturbed leisure which the others find burdensome or pernicious; for without it he is a Pegasus in harness, and consequently unhappy. If these two unnatural circumstances, external, and internal, undisturbed leisure and great intellect, happen to coincide in the same person, it is a great piece of fortune; and if the fate is so far favorable, a man can lead the higher life, the life protected from the two opposite sources of human suffering, pain and boredom, from the painful struggle for existence, and the incapacity for enduring leisure (which is free existence itself) – evils which may be escaped only by being mutually neutralized.

But there is something to be said in opposition to this view. Great intellectual gifts mean an activity pre-eminently nervous in its character, and consequently a very high degree of susceptibility to pain in every form. Further, such gifts imply an intense

temperament, larger and more vivid ideas, which, as the inseparable accompaniment of great intellectual power, entail on its possessor a corresponding intensity of the emotions, making them incomparably more violent than those to which the ordinary man is a prey. Now, there are more things in the world productive of pain than of pleasure. Again, a large endowment of intellect tends to estrange the man who has it from other people and their doings; for the more a man has in himself, the less he will be able to find in them; and the hundred things in which they take delight, he will think shallow and insipid. Here, then, perhaps, is another instance of that law of compensation which makes itself felt everywhere. How often one hears it said, and said, too, with some plausibility, that the narrow-minded man is at bottom the happiest, even though his fortune is unenviable. I shall make no attempt to forestall the reader's own judgment on this point…

CHAPTER III. – PROPERTY, OR WHAT A MAN HAS

Epicurus divides the needs of mankind into three classes, and the division made by this great professor of happiness is a true and a fine one. First come natural and necessary needs, such as, when not satisfied, produce pain, – food and clothing, victus et amictus, needs which can easily be satisfied. Secondly, there are those needs which, though natural, are not necessary, such as the gratification of certain of the senses. I may add, however, that in the report given by Diogenes Laertius, Epicurus does not mention which of the senses he means; so that on this point my account of his doctrine is somewhat more definite and exact than the original. These are needs rather more difficult to satisfy. The third class consists of needs which are neither natural nor necessary, the need

of luxury and prodigality, show and splendor, which never come to an end, and are very hard to satisfy.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to define the limits which reason should impose on the desire for wealth; for there is no absolute or definite amount of wealth which will satisfy a man. The amount is always relative, that is to say, just so much as will maintain the proportion between what he wants and what he gets; for to measure a man's happiness only by what he gets, and not also by what he expects to get, is as futile as to try and express a fraction which shall have a numerator but no denominator. A man never feels the loss of things which it never occurs to him to ask for; he is just as happy without them; whilst another, who may have a hundred times as much, feels miserable because he has not got the one thing he wants. In fact, here too, every man has an horizon of his own, and he will expect as much as he thinks it is possible for him to get. If an object within his horizon looks as though he could confidently reckon on getting it, he is happy; but if difficulties come in the way, he is miserable. What lies beyond his horizon has no effect at all upon him. So it is that the vast possessions of the rich do not agitate the poor, and conversely, that a wealthy man is not consoled by all his wealth for the failure of his hopes. Riches, one may say, are like sea-water; the more you drink the thirstier you become; and the same is true of fame. The loss of wealth and prosperity leaves a man, as soon as the first pangs of grief are over, in very much the same habitual temper as before; and the reason of this is, that as soon as fate diminishes the amount of his possessions, he himself immediately reduces the amount of his claims. But when misfortune comes upon us, to reduce the amount of our claims is just what is most painful; once

that we have done so, the pain becomes less and less, and is felt no more; like an old wound which has healed. Conversely, when a piece of good fortune befalls us, our claims mount higher and higher, as there is nothing to regulate them; it is in this feeling of expansion that the delight of it lies. But it lasts no longer than the process itself, and when the expansion is complete, the delight ceases; we have become accustomed to the increase in our claims, and consequently indifferent to the amount of wealth which satisfies them.

I do not by any means think that I am touching upon a subject which is not worth my while to mention when I recommend people to be careful to preserve what they have earned or inherited. For to start life with just as much as will make one independent, that is, allow one to live comfortably without having to work – even if one has only just enough for oneself, not to speak of a family—is an advantage which cannot be over-estimated; for it means exemption and immunity from that chronic disease of penury, which fastens on the life of man like a plague; it is emancipation from that forced labor which is the natural lot of every mortal. Only under a favorable fate like this can a man be said to be born free, to be, in the proper sense of the word, sui juris, master of his own time and powers, and able to say every morning, This day is my own. And just for the same reason the difference between the man who has a hundred a year and the man who has a thousand, is infinitely smaller than the difference between the former and a man who has nothing at all. But inherited wealth reaches its utmost value when it falls to the individual endowed with mental powers of a high order, who is resolved to pursue a line of life not compatible with the making of money; for he is then doubly endowed by fate and

can live for his genius; and he will pay his debt to mankind a hundred times, by achieving what no other could achieve, by producing some work which contributes to the general good, and redounds to the honor of humanity at large. Another, again, may use his wealth to further philanthropic schemes, and make himself well-deserving of his fellowmen. But a man who does none of these things, who does not even try to do them, who never attempts to learn the rudiments of any branch of knowledge so that he may at least do what he can towards promoting it—such a one, born as he is into riches, is a mere idler and thief of time, a contemptible fellow. He will not even be happy, because, in his case, exemption from need delivers him up to the other extreme of human suffering, boredom, which is such martyrdom to him, that he would have been better off if poverty had given him something to do. And as he is bored he is apt to be extravagant, and so lose the advantage of which he showed himself unworthy. Countless numbers of people find themselves in want, simply because, when they had money, they spent it only to get momentary relief from the feeling of boredom which oppressed them.

CHAPTER IV. – POSITION, OR A MAN'S PLACE IN THE ESTIMATION OF OTHERS

By a peculiar weakness of human nature, people generally think too much about the opinion which others form of them; although the slightest reflection will show that this opinion, whatever it may be, is not in itself essential to happiness. Therefore it is hard to understand why everybody feels so very pleased when he sees that other people have a good opinion of him, or say anything flattering to his vanity. If you stroke a cat, it will purr; and, as inevitably, if you praise a man, a sweet expression of delight

will appear on his face; and even though the praise is a palpable lie, it will be welcome, if the matter is one on which he prides himself. If only other people will applaud him, a man may console himself for downright misfortune or for the pittance he gets from the two sources of human happiness already discussed: and conversely, it is astonishing how infallibly a man will be annoyed, and in some cases deeply pained, by any wrong done to his feeling of self-importance, whatever be the nature, degree, or circumstances of the injury, or by any depreciation, slight, or disregard.

If the feeling of honor rests upon this peculiarity of human nature, it may have a very salutary effect upon the welfare of a great many people, as a substitute for morality; but upon their happiness, more especially upon that peace of mind and independence which are so essential to happiness, its effect will be disturbing and prejudicial rather than salutary. Therefore it is advisable, from our point of view, to set limits to this weakness, and duly to consider and rightly to estimate the relative value of advantages, and thus temper, as far as possible, this great susceptibility to other people's opinion, whether the opinion be one flattering to our vanity, or whether it causes us pain; for in either case it is the same feeling which is touched. Otherwise, a man is the slave of what other people are pleased to think,—and how little it requires to disconcert or soothe the mind that is greedy of praise.

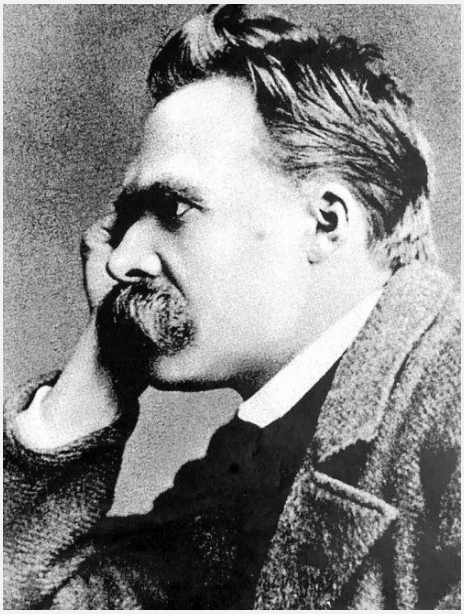
Therefore it will very much conduce to our happiness if we duly compare the value of what a man is in and for himself with what he is in the eyes of others. Under the former conies everything that fills up the span of our existence and makes it what it is, in short, all the advantages already considered and summed up

under the heads of personality and property; and the sphere in which all this takes place is the man's own consciousness. On the other hand, the sphere of what we are for other people is their consciousness, not ours; it is the kind of figure we make in their eyes, together with the thoughts which this arouses.{1} But this is something which has no direct and immediate existence for us, but can affect us only mediately and indirectly, so far, that is, as other people's behavior towards us is directed by it; and even then it ought to affect us only in so far as it can move us to modify what we are in and for ourselves. Apart from this, what goes on in other people's consciousness is, as such, a matter of indifference to us; and in time we get really indifferent to it, when we come to see how superficial and futile are most people's thoughts, how narrow their ideas, how mean their sentiments, how perverse their opinions, and how much of error there is in most of them; when we learn by experience with what depreciation a man will speak of his fellow, when he is not obliged to fear him, or thinks that what he says will not come to his ears. And if ever we have had an opportunity of seeing how the greatest of men will meet with nothing but slight from half-a-dozen blockheads, we shall understand that to lay great value upon what other people say is to pay them too much honor.

At all events, a man is in a very bad way, who finds no source of happiness in the first two classes of blessings already treated of, but has to seek it in the third, in other words, not in what he is in himself, but in what he is in the opinion of others. For, after all, the foundation of our whole nature, and, therefore, of our happiness, is our physique, and the most essential factor in happiness is health, and, next in importance after health, the

ability to maintain ourselves in independence and freedom from care. There can be no competition or compensation between these essential factors on the one side, and honor, pomp, rank and reputation on the other, however much value we may set upon the latter. No one would hesitate to sacrifice the latter for the former, if it were necessary. We should add very much to our happiness by a timely recognition of the simple truth that every man's chief and real existence is in his own skin, and not in other people's opinions; and, consequently, that the actual conditions of our personal life,—health, temperament, capacity, income, wife, children, friends, home, are a hundred times more important for our happiness than what other people are pleased to think of us: otherwise we shall be miserable. And if people insist that honor is dearer than life itself, what they really mean is that existence and well-being are as nothing compared with other people's opinions. Of course, this may be only an exaggerated way of stating the prosaic truth that reputation, that is, the opinion others have of us, is indispensable if we are to make any progress in the world; but I shall come back to that presently. When we see that almost everything men devote their lives to attain, sparing no effort and encountering a thousand toils and dangers in the process, has, in the end, no further object than to raise themselves in the estimation of others; when we see that not only offices, titles, decorations, but also wealth, nay, even knowledge{1} and art, are striven for only to obtain, as the ultimate goal of all effort, greater respect from one's fellowmen,—is not this a lamentable proof of the extent to which human folly can go? To set much too high a value on other people's opinion is a common error everywhere; an error, it may be, rooted in human nature itself, or the result of civilization, and social arrangements

generally; but, whatever its source, it exercises a very immoderate influence on all we do, and is very prejudicial to our happiness. We can trace it from a timorous and slavish regard for what other people will say, up to the feeling which made Virginius plunge the dagger into his daughter's heart, or induces many a man to sacrifice quiet, riches, health and even life itself, for posthumous glory. Undoubtedly this feeling is a very convenient instrument in the hands of those who have the control or direction of their fellowmen; and accordingly we find that in every scheme for training up humanity in the way it should go, the maintenance and strengthening of the feeling of honor occupies an important place. But it is quite a different matter in its effect on human happiness, of which it is here our object to treat; and we should rather be careful to dissuade people from setting too much store by what others think of them. Daily experience shows us, however, that this is just the mistake people persist in making; most men set the utmost value precisely on what other people think, and are more concerned about it than about what goes on in their own consciousness, which is the thing most immediately and directly present to them. They reverse the natural order, – regarding the opinions of others as real existence and their own consciousness as something shadowy; making the derivative and secondary into the principal, and considering the picture they present to the world of more importance than their own selves. By thus trying to get a direct and immediate result out of what has no really direct or immediate existence, they fall into the kind of folly which is called vanity – the appropriate term for that which has no solid or instrinsic value. Like a miser, such people forget the end in their eagerness to obtain the means.



FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE ON THE USE AND ABUSE OF HISTORY FOR LIFE[65]

Observe the herd which is grazing beside you. It does not know what yesterday or today is. It springs around, eats, rests, digests, jumps up again, and so from morning to night and from day to day, with its likes and dislikes closely tied to the peg of the moment, and thus neither melancholy nor weary. To witness this is hard for man, because he boasts to himself that his human race is better than the beast and yet looks with jealousy at its happiness. For he wishes only to live like the beast, neither weary nor amid pains, and he wants it in vain, because he does not will it as the animal does. One day the man demands of the beast: “Why do you not talk to me about your happiness and only gaze at me?”

The beast wants to answer, too, and say: “That comes about because I always immediately forget what I wanted to say.” But by

[65] Nietzsche F. On the Use and Abuse of History for Life. /translated by Ian C. Johnston URL: https://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEENietzscheAbuseTableAll.pdf

then the beast has already forgotten this reply and remains silent, so that the man wonders on once more.

But he also wonders about himself, that he is not able to learn to forget and that he always hangs onto past things. No matter how far or how fast he runs, this chain runs with him. It is something amazing: the moment, in one sudden motion there, in one sudden motion gone, before nothing, afterwards nothing, nevertheless comes back again as a ghost and disturbs the tranquillity of each later moment. A leaf is continuously released from the roll of time, falls out, flutters away – and suddenly flutters back again into the man's lap. For the man says, “I remember,” and envies the beast, which immediately forgets and sees each moment really perish, sink back in cloud and night, and vanish forever… By contrast, the human being resists the large and ever increasing burden of the past, which pushes him down or bows him over. It makes his way difficult, like an invisible and dark burden which he can for appearances' sake even deny, and which he is only too happy to deny in his interactions with his peers, in order to awaken their envy. Thus, it moves him, as if he remembered a lost paradise, to see the grazing herd or, something more closely familiar, the child, which does not yet have a past to deny and plays in blissful blindness between the fences of the past and the future.

Nonetheless this game must be upset for the child. He will be summoned all too soon out of his forgetfulness. For he learns to understand the expression “It was,” that password with which struggle, suffering, and weariness come over human beings, so as to remind him what his existence basically is—a never completed past tense. If death finally brings the longed for forgetting, it nevertheless thereby destroys present existence and thus

impresses its seal on the knowledge that existence is only an uninterrupted living in the past [*Gewesensein*], something which exists for the purpose of self-denial, selfdestruction, and self-contradiction.

If happiness or if, in some sense or other, a reaching out for new happiness is what holds the living onto life and pushes them forward into life, then perhaps no philosopher has more justification than the cynic. For the happiness of the beast, like that of the complete cynic, is the living proof of the rightness of cynicism. The smallest happiness, if only it is uninterrupted and creates happiness, is incomparably more happiness than the greatest which comes only as an episode, as it were, like a mood, as a fantastic interruption between nothing but boredom, cupidity, and deprivation. However, with the smallest and with the greatest good fortune, happiness becomes happiness in the same way: through forgetting or, to express the matter in a more scholarly fashion, through the capacity, for as long as the happiness lasts, to sense things unhistorically. The person who cannot set himself down on the crest of the moment, forgetting everything from the past, who is not capable of standing on a single point, like a goddess of victory, without dizziness or fear, will never know what happiness is.

<....>

In what an unnatural, artificial, and definitely unworthy position must the truly naked goddess Philosophy, the most sincere of all sciences, be in a time which suffers from universal education. She remains in such a world of compulsory external uniformity the learned monologue of a solitary stroller, an individual's accidental hunting trophy, a hidden parlor secret, or a

harmless prattle between academic old men and children. No one is allowed to venture on fulfilling the law of philosophy on his own. No one lives philosophically, with that simple manly truth, which acted forcefully on a man in ancient times, wherever he was, and which thus drove him to behave as Stoic if he had once promised to be true to the Stoa.

All modern philosophy is political and police-like, restricted to the appearance of learning through the ruling powers, churches, academies, customs, and human cowardice. It sticks around with sighs of “If only” or with the knowledge “There was once.” Philosophy is wrong to be at the heart of historical education, if it wants to be more than an inner repressed knowledge without effect. If the modern human being were, in general, only courageous and decisive, if he were in even his hostility not just an inner being, he would banish philosophy. Thus, he contents himself by modestly covering up her nudity. Yes, people think, write, print, speak, and learn philosophically; to this extent almost everything is allowed. Only in action, in so-called living, are things otherwise. There only one thing is always allowed, and everything else is simply impossible. So historical education wills it. Are they still human beings, we ask ourselves then, or perhaps only thinking, writing, and speaking machines?

Of Shakespeare Goethe once said, “No one hated the material costume more than he. He understood really well the inner costume of human beings, and here all people are alike. People say he presented the Romans excellently. I do not find that. They are nothing but inveterate Englishmen, but naturally they are human beings, people from the ground up, and the Roman toga suits them well enough.” Now, I ask if it might be possible to lead out our

contemporary men of letters, men of the people, officials, and politicians as Romans. It will not work, because they are not human beings, but only physical compendia and, as it were, concrete abstractions. If they should have character and their own style, this is buried so deep that it has no power at all to struggle out into the daylight. If they should be human beings, then they are that only for the man “who tests the kidneys.” For everyone else they are something other, not human beings, not gods, not animals, but historically educated pictures, completely and utterly education, picture, form, without demonstrable content, unfortunately only bad form and, in addition, uniform. And in this sense may my claim may be understood and considered: History is borne only by strong personalities; the weak personalities it obliterates completely. It comes down to this: history bewilders feeling and sensing where these are not strong enough to measure the past against themselves. Anyone who does not dare any longer to trust himself but who involuntarily turns to history for his feeling and seeks advice by asking “What should I feel here?” in his timidity gradually becomes an actor and plays a role, usually in fact many roles. Therefore, he plays each badly and superficially. Gradually the congruence between the man and his historical sphere fails. We see no forward young men associating with the Romans, as if they were their equals. They rummage around and dig away in the remnants of the Greek poets, as if these corpora [bodies] were also ready for their post-mortem examination and were vilia [worthless things], whatever their own literary corpora might be. If we assume there is a concern with Democritus, then the question always on my lips is this: Why then just Democritus? Why not Heraclitus? Or Philo? Or Bacon? Or Descartes? and so on

to one's heart's content. And in that case, why then just a philosopher? Why not a poet, an orator? And why particularly a Greek? Why not an Englishman, a Turk? Is the past then not large enough to find something, so that you do not make yourself so ridiculous on your own.

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But let us leave this weakness. Let us rather turn to a much praised strength of the modern person, with the truly awkward question whether, on account of his well known “Objectivity,” he has a right to call himself strong, that is, just, and just to a higher degree than the people of other times. Is it true that this objectivity originates from a heightened need and demand for justice? Or does it, as an effect with quite different causes, merely create the appearance that justice might be its real cause? Does this objectivity perhaps tempt one to a detrimental and too flattering bias concerning the virtues of modern man? Socrates considered it an illness close to insanity to imagine oneself in possession of a virtue and not to possess it. Certainly such conceit is more dangerous than the opposite delusion, suffering from a mistake or vice. For through the latter delusion it is perhaps still possible to become better. The former conceit, however, makes a person or a time daily worse, and, in this case, less just.

True, no one has a higher claim on our admiration than the man who possesses the drive and the power for justice. For in such people are united and hidden the highest and rarest virtues, as in a bottomless sea that receives streams from all sides and absorbs them into itself. The hand of the just man authorized to sit in judgment no longer trembles when it holds the scales. Unsparingly he puts on weight after weight against himself. His eye does not

become dim if he sees the pan in the scales rise and fall, and his voice rings out neither hard nor broken when he delivers the verdict. If he were a cold demon of knowledge, then he would spread out around him the ice-cold atmosphere of a terrifyingly superhuman majesty, which we would have to fear and not to revere. But since he is a human being and yet has tried to rise above venial doubt to a strong certainty, above a patient leniency to an imperative "You must," above the rare virtue of magnanimity to the rarest virtue of all justice, since he now is like this demon, but from the very beginning without being anything other than a poor human being, and above all, since in each moment he has to atone for his humanity and be tragically consumed by an impossible virtue, all this places him on a lonely height, as the example of the human race most worthy of reverence. For he wills truth, not as cold knowledge without consequences, but as the ordering and punishing judge, truth not as a selfish possession of the individual but as the sacred entitlement to shift all the boundary stones of egotistical possessions, in a word, truth as the Last Judgment and not at all something like the captured trophy desired by the individual hunter. Only insofar as the truthful man has the unconditional will to be just is the striving after truth, which is so thoughtlessly glorified, something great. In the vision of the duller person a large number of different sorts of drives (like curiosity, the flight from boredom, resentment, vanity, playfulness), which have nothing at all to do with the truth, blend in with that striving for truth which has its roots in justice. In fact, the world seems to be full of people who "serve the truth." But the virtue of justice is very seldom present, even more rarely recognized, and almost always hated to the death; whereas, the

crowd of the apparently virtuous are honored as they march in with a great public display. Few people serve truthfulness, because only a few have the purity of will to be just. Moreover, even of these, the fewest have the strength to be able to be just. It is certainly not enough only to have the will for justice. And the most horrible sufferings have come directly from the drive for justice without the power of judgment among human beings. For this reason the general welfare would require nothing more than to scatter the seeds of the power of judgment as widely as possible, so that the fanatic remained distinguishable from the judge and blind desire to be a judge distinguishable from the conscious power to be able to judge. But where would one find a means of cultivating the power of judgment! Thus, when there is talk of truth and justice, people remain in an eternal wavering hesitation whether a fanatic or a judge is talking. Hence, we should forgive those who welcome benevolently the “servers of the truth” who possess neither the will nor the power to judge and who set themselves the task of searching for pure with no attention to consequences or, more clearly, of searching for a barren truth. There are many trivial truths; there are problems that never require effort, let alone any selfsacrifice, in order for one to judge them correctly. In this field of the trivial and the safe, a person indeed succeeds in becoming a cold demon of knowledge nonetheless. When, especially in favorable times, whole cohorts of learned people and researchers are turned into such demons, it always remains unfortunately possible that the time in question suffers from a lack of strong and great righteousness, in short, of the most noble kernel of the so-called drive to the truth.

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Imagining this reign of youth, I cry out “Land, land! Enough and more than enough of the passionate seeking and the wandering passage on the dark alien seas!” Now finally a coast reveals itself. Whatever it may be, we must land on it. The worst emergency port is better than returning to staggering in hopeless infinite skepticism. If now we only hold on to the land, we will later find the good havens and ease the approach for those who come later. This journey was dangerous and exciting. How far we are now from the calm contemplation with which we first saw our ship set out to sea. By investigating the dangers of history, we have found ourselves exposed to all these dangers as strongly as possible. We ourselves bear the traces of that illness which has come over humanity in recent times as a result of an excess of history. For example, this very treatise shows its modern character, the character of the weak personality (which I will not conceal from myself) in the intemperance of its criticism, the immaturity of its humanity, the frequent transitions from irony to cynicism, from pride to skepticism. Nevertheless I trust in the inspiring power which, rather than my genius, controls the vessel: I trust in youth, that it has led me correctly when it requires from me now a protest against the historical education of young modern people and if the protester demands that human beings above all learn to live and to use history only in the service of the life which he has learned. People must be young to understand this protest. In fact, among the contemporary gray-haired types of our present youth, one can hardly be young enough still to feel what is here essentially being protested against.

To help people understand this point I will use an example. In Germany it is not much longer than a hundred years ago that a

natural instinct for what people call poetry arose in a few young people. Do people think that the previous generations up to that time would never have spoken of that art, inwardly strange and unnatural to them? We know the opposite is true: they thought about “poetry” with loving passion, wrote and argued about it with words, words, and more words. The appearance of that revival of words for living was not the immediate death of those word makers. In a certain sense they are still alive, because if, as Gibbon says, for a world to go under takes not just time but plenty of time, then in Germany, the “land of gradual change,” for a false idea to be destroyed takes more than time; it takes a great deal of time.

Today there are perhaps a hundred people more than a hundred years ago who know what poetry is; perhaps one hundred years from now there will be another hundred people more who in the meantime have also learned what culture is and that the Germans up to this point have had no culture, no matter how much they may talk and boast about it. For them the very general contentment of the Germans with their “culture” would seem just as incredible and stupid as the formerly acknowledged classicism of Gottsched or the appraisal of Ramler as a German Pindar seem to us. They will perhaps judge that this culture has been only a sort of knowledge about culture and, in addition, a completely false and superficial knowledge. I say false and superficial because people endured the contradiction of life and knowledge, for they did not see anything characteristic of a truly cultured people: that the culture can only grow up and blossom forth out of living. By contrast, with the Germans culture is put up like a paper flower or poured out like a sugar drink. Therefore it must always remain untruthful and infertile.

The German education of the young, however, begins directly from this false and barren idea of culture. Its end goal, imagined in all purity and loftiness, is not at all the freely educated man, but the scholar, the scientific person, indeed, the scientific person who is useful as early as possible, the person who sets himself apart from life in order to recognize it clearly. The product of this education, considered in a correct empirically general way, is the historically and aesthetically educated Philistine, the precocious and freshly wise chatterer about state, church, and art, the sensorium for thousands of sensations, the inexhaustible stomach which nevertheless does not know what an honest hunger and thirst are. The fact that an education with this goal and result is an unnatural education is felt only by the person who has not yet completed it; it is felt only by the instinct of the young, because they still have the instinct of nature, which is first artificially and powerfully broken through that education.

But the person who wants to break this education in its turn must assist the young in expressing themselves. He must shine the bright light of ideas to illuminate their unconscious resistance and turn that into a conscious and loudly uttered consciousness. How is he to reach such a strange goal?

Above all through the fact that he destroys a superstition, the faith in the necessity of that method of education. People think that there would be no other possibility than our contemporary highly tiresome reality. Just let someone examine the essential literature of the higher schooling and education system in the last decades exactly on this point. For all the varieties of proposals and for all the intensity of the opposition, the examiner will to his astonishment realize how uniform the thinking is about the entire

purpose of education, how thoughtlessly people assume that the present result, the “educated person,” as the term is now understood, is a necessary and reasonable fundamental basis for that wider education. That monotonous orthodoxy would sound something like this: the young person has to begin with a knowledge of culture, not at first with a knowledge of life, and even less with life and experience themselves. Moreover, this knowledge about culture as historical knowledge is poured over or stirred into the youth; that is, his head is filled up with a monstrous number of ideas derived from extremely indirect knowledge of past times and peoples, not from the immediate contemplation of living. His desire to experience something for himself and to feel growing in him a coordinated and living system of his own experiences—such a desire is narcotized and, as it were, made drunk through the opulent deceptions about matters of fact, as if it were possible in a few years to sum up in oneself thehighest and most remarkable expe riences of all times, especially of the greatest ages. It is precisely this insane procedure which leads our young developing artists into the halls of culture and galleries instead of into the workshop of a master and, above all, into the extraordinary workshops of the extraordinarymaster craftswoman Nature. Yes, as if people were able to predict their ideas and arts, their actual life's work, as cursory strollers in the history of past times. Yes, as if life itself were not a craft which must be learned continuously from the basic material and practiced without special treatment, if it is not to allow bunglers and chatterers to be produced!

Plato considered it necessary that the first generation of his new society (in the perfect state) would be brought up with the help of a powerful necessary lie. The children were to learn to believe

that they had all already lived a long time dreaming under the earth, where they had been properly kneaded and formed by nature's master worker. It was impossible to have any effect against this work of the gods. It is to stand as an inviolable law of nature that the person who is born a philosopher has gold in his body, the person who is born as a guard has only silver, and the person who is born as a worker has iron and bronze. Since it is not possible to mix these metals, Plato explains, then it should not be possible to overthrow or mix up the order of classes. The faith in the aeterna veritas [eternal truth] of this order is the basis of the new education and thus of the new state. The modern German similarly believes now in the aeterna veritas of his education, of his style of culture. Nevertheless, this faith would collapse, as the Platonic state would have collapsed, if in opposition to the necessary lie there was set up a necessary truth: the German has no culture, because he can have nothing whatsoever on the basis of his education. He wants the flowers without roots and stalk. So he wants them in vain. That is the simple truth, unpleasant and gross, a correct necessary truth.

In this necessary truth, however, our first generation must be educated. Certainly they suffer from it with the greatest difficulty, for they must educate themselves through it, in fact, divided against themselves, to new habits and a new nature derived out of old and previous nature and habits, so that they might be able to say with the ancient Spaniards: “Defienda me Dios de my,” God, defend me from myself, that is, from the nature already instilled into me.

They must taste that truth drop by drop, as if sampling a bitter and powerful medicine. Each individual of this generation

must overcome himself, to judge for himself what he might more easily endure as a general judgment concerning an entire age: we are without education, even more, we are ruined for living, for correct and simple seeing and hearing, for the fortunate grasping of what is closest at hand and natural, and we have up to this moment not yet even the basis of a culture, because we ourselves are not convinced that we have a genuine life within us. Fractured and fallen apart, in everything carved up mechanically into an inner and an outer half, saturated with ideas like dragons' teeth producing dragon ideas, thus suffering from the sickness of words and without trust in any unique sensation which is not yet franked with words, as such a non-living and yet uncannily lively factory of ideas and words, I still perhaps have the right to say about myself cogito, ergo sum [I am thinking; therefore, I am], but not vivo, ergo cogito [I am living; therefore, I am thinking]. That empty “Being”, not that full and green “Living” is ensured for me. My original feeling only guarantees me that I am a thinking thing, not that I am a living essence, that I am not animal, but at most a cogital. First give me life; then I will make a culture out of it for you!—so shouts each individual of this first generation, and all these individuals will recognize each other from this call. Who will present this life to them? No god and no human being: only their own youth unleashes this life, and with it you will liberate life for yourself. For it only lay hidden in a prison. It has not yet withered away and died – inquire of yourself! But this unbridled life is sick and must be healed. It is ailing from many ills. Not only does it suffer from the memory of its fetters; it suffers from what is here our principal concern, from the historical sickness. The excess of history has seized the plastic force of life. It understands no more

to make use of the past as a powerful nourishment. The evil is fearsome, and nevertheless if youth did not have the clairvoyant gift of nature, then no one would know that that is an evil and that a paradise of health has been lost. This same youth surmises, however, also with the powerful healing instinct of this same nature, how this paradise can be won back. It knows the juices for wounds and the medicines to combat the historical sickness, to combat the excess of the historical. What are they called?

Now, people should not be surprised: they are the names of poisons: the antidotes against the historical are called the unhistorical and the superhistorical. With these names we turn back to the start of our examination and to its close.

With the phrase “the unhistorical” I designate the art and the power of being able to forget and to enclose oneself in a horizon with borders; “superhistorical” I call the powers which divert the gaze from what is developing back to what gives existence an eternal and unchanging character, to art and religion. Science (for it is science which would talk about poisons) sees in that force, in these powers opposing forces, for it maintains that only the observation of things is true and right, the scientific way of considering things, which everywhere sees what has come into being as something historical and never as something eternally living. Science lives in an inner contradiction against the eternalizing powers of art and religion just as much as it hates forgetfulness, the death of knowledge, when it seeks to remove all limitations of horizons and to hurl human beings into an infinite sea without frontiers, a sea of light waves of acknowledged becoming. If he only could live there! As the cities collapse in an earthquake and become desolate and the human being, trembling

and in haste, erects his house on volcanic ground, so life breaks apart and becomes weak and dispirited when the earthquake of ideas which science arouses takes from a person the basis of all his certainty and rest, his faith in the eternally permanent. Is life to rule over knowledge now, over science, or is knowledge to rule over life? Which of the two forces is the higher and the decisive one? No one will have any doubt: life is the higher, the ruling power, for knowledge which destroyed life would in the process have destroyed itself. Knowledge presupposes life and has the same interest in preserving life which every being has in its own continuing existence. So science needs a higher supervision and control. A doctrine of a healthy life is positioned close beside science, and a principle of this doctrine of health would sound like this: the unhistorical and the super-historical are the natural counter-measures against the excess cancerous growth of history on life, against the historical sickness. It is probable that we, the historically ill, also have to suffer from the counter measures. But the fact that we suffer from them is no proof against the correctness of the course of treatment we have chosen.

And here I recognize the mission of that youth, that first generation of fighters and dragon slayers, which brings forth a more fortunate and more beautiful culture and humanity, without having more of this future happiness and future beauty than a promise-filled premonition. These youth will suffer from the evil and the counter-measures simultaneously, and nevertheless they believe they may boast of a more powerful health and in general a more natural nature than their previous generations, the educated “Men” and “Old Men” of the present. However, their mission is to shake the ideas which this present holds about “health” and

“culture” and to develop contempt and hatred against such hybrid monstrous ideas. The most strongly guaranteed mark of their own stronger health is to be precisely the fact that they, I mean these youth, themselves can use no idea, no party slogan from the presently circulating currency of words and ideas, as a designation of their being, but are convinced only by a power acting in it, a power which fights, eliminates, and cuts into pieces, and by an always heightened sense of life in every good hour. People may dispute the fact that these youth already have culture, but for what young person would this be a reproach? People may speak against their crudeness and immoderation, but they are not yet old and wise enough to be content; above all they do not need to feign any ready-made culture to defend and enjoy all the comforts and rights of youth, especially the privilege of a braver spontaneous honesty and the rousing consolation of hope.

Of these hopeful people I know that they understand all these generalities at close hand and in their own most personal experience will translate them into a personally thought-out teaching for themselves. The others may for the time being perceive nothing but covered over bowls, which could also really be empty, until, surprised one day, they see with their own eyes that the bowls are full and that attacks, demands, living impulses, passions lay mixed in and impressed into these generalities, which could not lie hidden in this way for a long time. I refer these doubters to time, which brings all things to light, and, in conclusion, I turn my attention to that society of those who hope, in order to explain to them in an allegory the progress and outcome of their healing, their salvation from the historical sickness, and thus their own history, up to the point where they will be again healthy enough to

undertake a new history and to make use of the past under the mastery of life in a threefold sense, that is, monumental, or antiquarian, or critical. At that point of time they will be less knowledgeable than the "educated" of the present, for they will have forgotten a good deal and even have lost the pleasure of looking for what those educated ones above all wish to know, in general still in order to look back. Their distinguishing marks, from the point of view of those educated ones, are precisely their "lack of education," their indifference and reserve with respect to many famous men, even with respect to many good things. But they have become, at this final point of their healing, once again men and have ceased to be human-like aggregates – that is something! There are still hopes! Are you not laughing at that in your hearts, you hopeful ones! And, you will ask, How do we come to that end point? The Delphic god shouts out to you, at the very start of your trek to that goal, his aphorism: "Know thyself." It is a difficult saying; for that god "hides nothing and announces nothing, but only points the way," as Heraclitus has said. But what direction is he indicating to you?

There were centuries when the Greeks found themselves in a danger similar to the one in which we find ourselves, that is, the danger of destruction from being swamped by what is foreign and past, from "history." The Greeks never lived in proud isolation; their "culture" was for a long time much more a chaos of foreign, Semitic, Babylonian, Lydian, and Egyptian forms and ideas, and their religion a real divine struggle of the entire Orient, something similar to the way "German culture" and religion are now a self-struggling chaos of all foreign lands and all prehistory. Nevertheless Hellenic culture did not become an aggregate, thanks

to that Apollonian saying. The Greeks learned gradually to organize the chaos because, in accordance with the Delphic teaching, they directed their thoughts back to themselves, that is, to their real needs, and let the apparent needs die off. So they seized possession of themselves again. They did not remain long the over-endowed heirs and epigones of the entire Orient. After an arduous battle with themselves, through the practical interpretation of that saying, they became the most fortunate enrichers and increasers of the treasure they had inherited and the firstlings and models for all future national cultures.

This is a parable for every individual among us. He must organize the chaos in himself by recalling in himself his own real needs. His honesty, his better and more genuine character must now and then struggle against what will be constantly repeated, relearned, and imitated. He begins then to grasp that culture can still be something other than a decoration of life, that is, basically always only pretense and disguise; for all ornamentation covers over what is decorated. So the Greek idea of culture reveals itself to him, in opposition to the Roman, the idea of culture as a new and improved Physis [nature], without inner and outer, without pretense and convention, culture as a unanimity of living, thinking, appearing, and willing. Thus, he learns out of his own experience that it was the higher power of moral nature through which the Greeks attained their victory over all other cultures and that each increase of truthfulness must also be a demand in preparation for true culture. This truthfulness may also occasionally seriously harm the idea of culture esteemed at the time; it even may be able to assist a totally decorative culture to collapse.



ERICH FROMM
MAN FOR HIMSELF. AN INQUIRY INTO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ETHICS
PART III. 1. THE HUMAN SITUATION[66]

That I am a man, this I share with other men.
That I see and hear and that
I eat and drink is what all animals do likewise.
But that I am I is only mine and
belongs to me and to nobody else;
to no other man not to an angel not to God –
except inasmuch as I am one with Him.
Master Eckhart

One individual represents the human race. He is one specific example of the human species. He is "he" and he is "all"; he is an individual with his peculiarities and in this sense unique, and at the same time he is representative of all characteristics of the human race. His individual personality is determined by the peculiarities of human existence common to all men. Hence the discussion of the human situation must precede that of personality.

[66] Fromm E. Man for Himself. An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics. Part III. 1. The Human Situation. URL: https://edarcipelago.com/classici/erichfromm/man%20for%20himself%20-%20erich%20fromm.pdf

a. Man's Biological Weakness

The first element which differentiates human from animal existence is a negative one: the relative absence in man of instinctive regulation in the process of adaptation to the surrounding world. The mode of adaptation of the animal to its world remains the same throughout; if its instinctual equipment is no longer fit to cope successfully with a changing environment the species will die out. The animal can adapt itself to changing conditions by changing itself – autoplastically; not by changing its environment – alloplastically. In this fashion it lives harmoniously, not in the sense of absence of struggle but in the sense that its inherited equipment makes it a fixed and unchanging part of its world; it either fits in or dies out.

The less complete and fixed the instinctual equipment of animals, the more developed is the brain and therefore the ability to learn. The emergence of man can be defined as occurring at the point in the process of evolution where instinctive adaptation has reached its minimum. But he emerges with new qualities which differentiate him from the animal: his awareness of himself as a separate entity, his ability to remember the past, to visualize the future, and to denote objects and acts by symbols; his reason to conceive and understand the world; and his imagination through which he reaches far beyond the range of his senses. Man is the most helpless of all animals, but this very biological weakness is the basis for his strength, the prime cause for the development of his specifically human qualities.

b. The Existential and the Historical Dichotomies in Man

Self-awareness, reason, and imagination have disrupted the "harmony" which characterizes animal existence. Their emergence

has made man into an anomaly, into the freak of the universe. He is part of nature, subject to her physical laws and unable to change them, yet he transcends the rest of nature. He is set apart while being a part; he is homeless, yet chained to the home he shares with all creatures. Cast into this world at an accidental place and time, he is forced out of it, again accidentally. Being aware of himself, he realizes his powerlessness and the limitations of his existence. He visualizes his own end: death. Never is he free from the dichotomy of his existence: he cannot rid himself of his mind, even if he should want to; he cannot rid himself of his body as long as he is alive – and his body makes him want to be alive.

Reason, man's blessing, is also his curse; it forces him to cope everlastingly with the task of solving an insoluble dichotomy. Human existence is different in this respect from that of all other organisms; it is in a state of constant and unavoidable disequilibrium. Man's life cannot "be lived" by repeating the pattern of his species; he must live. Man is the only animal that can be bored, that can be discontented, that can feel evicted from paradise. Man is the only animal for whom his own existence is a problem which he has to solve and from which he cannot escape. He cannot go back to the prehuman state of harmony with nature; he must proceed to develop his reason until he becomes the master of nature, and of himself.

The emergence of reason has created a dichotomy within man which forces him to strive everlastingly for new solutions. The dynamism of his history is intrinsic to the existence of reason which causes him to develop and, through it, to create a world of his own in which he can feel at home with himself and his fellow men. Every stage he reaches leaves him discontented and

perplexed, and this very perplexity urges him to move toward new solutions. There is no innate “drive for progress” in man; it is the contradiction in his existence that makes him proceed on the way he set out. Having lost paradise, the unity with nature, he has become the eternal wanderer (Odysseus, Oedipus, Abraham, Faust); he is impelled to go forward and with everlasting effort to make the unknown known by filling in with answers the blank spaces of his knowledge. He must give account to himself of himself, and of the meaning of his existence. He is driven to overcome this inner split, tormented by a craving for “absoluteness,” for another kind of harmony which can lift the curse by which he was separated from nature, from his fellow men, and from himself.

This split in man’s nature leads to dichotomies which I call existential25 because they are rooted in the very existence of man; they are contradictions which man cannot annul but to which he can react in various ways, relative to his character and his culture.

The most fundamental existential dichotomy is that between life and death. The fact that we have to die is unalterable for man. Man is aware of this fact, and this very awareness profoundly influences his life. But death remains the very opposite of life and is extraneous to, and incompatible with, the experience of living. All knowledge about death does not alter the fact that death is not a meaningful part of life and that there is nothing for us to do but to accept the fact of death; hence, as far as our life is concerned, defeat. “All that man has will he give for his life” and “the wise man,” as Spinoza says, “thinks not of death but of life.” Man has tried to negate this dichotomy by ideologies, e.g., the Christian

concept of immortality, which, by postulating an immortal soul, denies the tragic fact that man's life ends with death.

That man is mortal results in another dichotomy: while every human being is the bearer of all human potentialities, the short span of his life does not permit their full realization under even the most favorable circumstances. Only if the life span of the individual were identical with that of mankind could he participate in the human development which occurs in the historical process. Man's life, beginning and ending at one accidental point in the evolutionary process of the race, conflicts tragically with the individual's claim for the realization of all of his potentialities. Of this contradiction between what he could realize and what he actually does realize he has, at least, a dimperception. Here, too, ideologies tend to reconcile or deny the contradiction by assuming that the fulfillment of life takes place after death, or that one's own historical period is the final and crowning achievement of mankind. Still another maintains that the meaning of life is not to be found in its fullest unfolding but in social service and social duties; that the development, freedom, and happiness of the individual is subordinate to or even irrelevant in comparison with the welfare of the state, the community, or whatever else may symbolize eternal power, transcending the individual.

Man is alone and he is related at the same time. He is alone inasmuch as he is a unique entity, not identical with anyone else, and aware of his self as a separate entity. He must be alone when he has to judge or to make decisions solely by the power of his reason. And yet he cannot bear to be alone, to be unrelated to his fellow men. His happiness depends on the solidarity he feels with his fellow men, with past and future generations.

Radically different from existential dichotomies are the many historical contradictions in individual and social life which are not a necessary part of human existence but are man made and soluble, soluble either at the time they occur or at a later period of human history. The contemporary contradiction between an abundance of technical means for material satisfaction and the incapacity to use them exclusively for peace and the welfare of the people is soluble; it is not a necessary contradiction but one due to man's lack of courage and wisdom. The institution of slavery in ancient Greece may be an example of a relatively insoluble contradiction, the solution of which could be achieved only at a later period of history when the material basis for the equality of man was established.

The distinction between existential and historical dichotomies is significant because their confusion has far-reaching implications. Those who were interested in upholding the historical contradictions were eager to prove that they were existential dichotomies and thus unalterable. They tried to convince man that "what must not be cannot be" and that he had to resign himself to the acceptance of his tragic fate. But this attempt to confuse these two types of contradictions was not sufficient to keep man from trying to solve them. It is one of the peculiar qualities of the human mind that, when confronted with a contradiction, it cannot remain passive. It is set in motion with the aim of resolving the contradiction. All human progress is due to this fact. If man is to be prevented from reacting to his awareness of contradictions by action, the very existence of these contradictions must be denied. To harmonize, and thus negate contradictions is the function of rationalizations in individual life and of ideologies (socially

patterned rationalizations) in social life. However, if man's mind could be satisfied only by rational answers, by the truth, these ideologies would remain ineffective. But it is also one of his peculiarities to accept as truth the thoughts shared by most of the members of his culture or postulated by powerful authorities. If the harmonizing ideologies are supported by consensus or authority, man's mind is appeased although he himself is not entirely set at rest.

Man can react to historical contradictions by annulling them through his own action; but he cannot annul existential dichotomies, although he can react to them in different ways. He can appease his mind by soothing and harmonizing ideologies. He can try to escape from his inner restlessness by ceaseless activity in pleasure or business. He can try to abrogate his freedom and to turn himself into an instrument of powers outside himself, submerging his self in them. But he remains dissatisfied, anxious, and restless. There is only one solution to his problem: to face the truth, to acknowledge his fundamental aloneness and solitude in a universe indifferent to his fate, to recognize that there is no power transcending him which can solve his problem for him. Man must accept the responsibility for himself and the fact that only by using his own powers can he give meaning to his life. But meaning does not imply certainty; indeed, the quest for certainty blocks the search for meaning. Uncertainty is the very condition to impel man to unfold his powers. If he faces the truth without panic he will recognize that there is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers, by living productively; and that only constant vigilance, activity, and effort can keep us from failing in the one task that matters – the full development of

our powers within the limitations set by the laws of our existence. Man will never cease to be perplexed, to wonder, and to raise new questions. Only if he recognizes the human situation, the dichotomies inherent in his existence and his capacity to unfold his powers, will he be able to succeed in his task: to be himself and for himself and to achieve happiness by the full realization of those faculties which are peculiarly his – of reason, love, and productive work.

After having discussed the existential dichotomies inherent in man's existence we can return to the statement made in the beginning of this chapter that the discussion of the human situation must precede that of personality. The more precise meaning of this statement can be made apparent by stating that psychology must be based on an anthropological-philosophical concept of human existence.

The most striking feature in human behavior is the tremendous intensity of passions and strivings which man displays. Freud more than anyone else recognized this fact and attempted to explain it in terms of the mechanistic naturalistic thinking of his time. He assumed that those passions which were not the obvious expressions of the instinct of self-preservation and of the sexual instinct (or as he formulated it later of Eros and the Death instinct) were nevertheless only more indirect and complicated manifestations of these instinctual-biological drives. But brilliant as his assumptions were they are not convincing in their denial of the fact that a large part of man's passionate strivings cannot be explained by the force of his instincts. Even if man's hunger and thirst and his sexual strivings are completely satisfied "he" is not satisfied. In contrast to the animal his most

compelling problems are not solved then, they only begin. He strives for power, or for love, or for destruction, he risks his life for religious, for political, for humanistic ideals, and these strivings are what constitutes and characterizes the peculiarity of human life. Indeed, “man does not live by bread alone.”

In contrast to Freud’s mechanistic-naturalistic explanation this statement has been interpreted to mean that man has an intrinsic religious need which cannot be explained by his natural existence but must be explained by something transcending him and which is derived from supernatural powers.

However, the latter assumption is unnecessary since the phenomenon can be explained by the full understanding of the human situation.

The disharmony of man’s existence generates needs which far transcend those of his animal origin. These needs result in an imperative drive to restore a unity and equilibrium between himself and the rest of nature. He makes the attempt to restore this unity and equilibrium in the first place in thought by constructing an all-inclusive mental picture of the world which serves as a frame of reference from which he can derive an answer to the question of where he stands and what he ought to do. But such thought systems are not sufficient. If man were only a disembodied intellect his aimwould be achieved by a comprehensive thought-system. But since he is an entity endowed with a body as well as a mind he has to react to the dichotomy of his existence not only in thinking but also in the process of living, in his feelings and actions. He has to strive for the experience of unity and oneness in all spheres of his being in order to find a new equilibrium. Hence any satisfying system of orientation implies not only intellectual elements but

elements of feeling and sense to be realized in action in all fields of human endeavor. Devotion to an aim, or an idea, or a power transcending man such as God, is an expression of this need for completeness in the process of living.

The answers given to man's need for an orientation and for devotion differ widely both in content and in form. There are primitive systems such as animism and totemism in which natural objects or ancestors represent answers to man's quest for meaning. There are non-theistic systems like Buddhism, which are usually called religious although in their original form there is no concept of God. There are philosophical systems, like Stoicism, and there are the monotheistic religious systems which give an answer to man's quest for meaning in reference to the concept of God. In discussing these various systems, we are hampered by a terminological difficulty. We could call them all religious systems were it not for the fact that for historical reasons the word "religious" is identified with a theistic system, a system centered around God, and we simply do not have a word in our language to denote that which is common to both theistic and non-theistic systems—that is, to all systems of thought which try to give an answer to the human quest for meaning and to man's attempt to make sense of his own existence. For lack of a better word I therefore call such systems "frames of orientation and devotion."

The point, however, I wish to emphasize is that there are many other strivings which are looked upon as entirely secular which are nevertheless rooted in the same need from which religious and philosophical systems spring. Let us consider what we observe in our time: We see in our own culture millions of people devoted to the attainment of success and prestige. We have seen

and still see in other cultures fanatical devotion of adherents to dictatorial systems of conquest and domination. We are amazed at the intensity of those passions which is often stronger than even the drive for self-preservation. We are easily deceived by the secular contents of these aims and explain them as outcomes of sexual or other quasi—biological strivings. But is it not apparent that the intensity and fanaticism with which these secular aims are pursued is the same as we find in religions; that all these secular systems of orientation and devotion differ in content but not in the basic need to which they attempt to offer answers? In our culture the picture is so particularly deceptive because most people "believe" in monotheism while their actual devotion belongs to systems which are, indeed, much closer to totemism and worship of idols than to any form of Christianity.

But we must go one step further. The understanding of the "religious" nature of these culturally patterned secular strivings is the key to the understanding of neuroses and irrational strivings. We have to consider the latter as answers – individual answers – to man's quest for orientation and devotion. A person whose experience is determined by "his fixation to his family," who is incapable of acting independently is in fact a worshiper of a primitive ancestor cult, and the only difference between him and millions of ancestor worshipers is that his system is private and not culturally patterned. Freud recognized the connection between religion and neurosis and explained religion as a form of neurosis, while we arrive at the conclusion that a neurosis is to be explained as a particular form of religion differing mainly by its individual, non-patterned characteristics. The conclusion to which we are led with regard to the general problem of human motivation is that

while the need for a system of orientation and devotion is common to all men, the particular contents of the systems which satisfy this need differ. These differences are differences in value; the mature, productive, rational person will choose a system which permits him to be mature, productive and rational. The person who has been blocked in his development must revert to primitive and irrational systems which in turn prolong and increase his dependence and irrationality. He will remain on the level which mankind in its best representatives has already overcome thousands of years ago.

Because the need for a system of orientation and devotion is an intrinsic part of human existence we can understand the intensity of this need. Indeed, there is no other more powerful source of energy in man. Man is not free to choose between having or not having "ideals," but he is free to choose between different kinds of ideals, between being devoted to the worship of power and destruction and being devoted to reason and love. All men are "idealists" and are striving for something beyond the attainment of physical satisfaction. They differ in the kinds of ideals they believe in. The very best but also the most satanic manifestations of man's mind are expressions not of his flesh but of this "idealism," of his spirit. Therefore a relativistic view which claims that to have some ideal or some religious feeling is valuable in itself is dangerous and erroneous. We must understand every ideal including those which appear in secular ideologies as expressions of the same human need and we must judge them with respect to their truth, to the extent to which they are conducive to the unfolding of man's powers and to the degree to which they are a real answer to man's need for equilibrium and harmony in his world. We repeat then

that the understanding of human motivation must proceed from the understanding of the human situation.

ERICH FROMM
MAN FOR HIMSELF. AN INQUIRY INTO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ETHICS
PART III. 2. PERSONALITY. (B) PRODUCTIVE LOVE AND THINKING[67]

Human existence is characterized by the fact that man is alone and separated from the world; not being able to stand the separation, he is impelled to seek for relatedness and oneness. There are many ways in which he can realize this need, but only one in which he, as a unique entity, remains intact; only one in which his own powers unfold in the very process of being related. It is the paradox of human existence that man must simultaneously seek for closeness and for independence; for oneness with others and at the same time for the preservation of his uniqueness and particularity. As we have shown, the answer to this paradox – and to the moral problem of man – is *productiveness*.

One can be productively related to the world by acting and by comprehending. Man *produces things*, and in the process of creation he exercises his powers over matter. Man *comprehends the world*, mentally and emotionally, through love and through reason.

[67] Fromm E. Man for Himself. An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics. Part III. 2. Personality. (b) Productive love and thinking. URL: https://edarcipelago.com/classici/erichfromm/man%20for%20himself%20-%20erich%20fromm.pdf

His power of reason enables him to penetrate through the surface and to grasp the essence of his object by getting into active relation with it. His power of love enables him to break through the wall which separates him from another person and to comprehend him. Although love and reason are only two different forms of comprehending the world and although neither is possible without the other, they are expressions of different powers, that of emotion and that of thinking, and hence must be discussed separately.

The concept of productive love is very different indeed from what is frequently called love. There is hardly any word which is more ambiguous and confusing than the word "love." It is used to denote almost every feeling short of hate and disgust. It comprises everything from the love for ice cream to the love for a symphony, from mild sympathy to the most intense feeling of closeness. People feel they love if they have "fallen for" somebody. They call their dependence love, and their possessiveness too. They believe, in fact, that nothing is easier than to love, that the difficulty lies only in finding the right object, and that their failure to find happiness in love is due to their bad luck in not finding the right partner. But contrary to all this confused and wishful thinking, love is a very specific feeling; and while every human being has a capacity for love, its realization is one of the most difficult achievements. Genuine love is rooted in productiveness and may properly be called, therefore, "productive love." Its essence is the same whether it is the mother's love for the child, our love for man, or the erotic love between two individuals. (That it is also the same with regard to love for others and love for ourselves we shall discuss later.). Although the objects of love differ and consequently the intensity and quality of love itself differ, certain basic elements may be said

to be characteristic of all forms of productive love. These are *care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge.*

Care and responsibility denote that love is an activity and not a passion by which one is overcome, nor an affect which one is "affected by." The element of care and responsibility in productive love has been admirably described in the book of Jonah. God has told Jonah to go to Nineveh, to warn its inhabitants that they will be punished unless they mend their evil ways. Jonah runs away from his mission because he is afraid that the people in Nineveh will repent and that God will forgive them. He is a man with a strong sense of order and law, but without love. However, in his attempt to escape he finds himself in the belly of a whale, symbolizing the state of isolation and imprisonment which his lack of love and solidarity has brought upon him. God saves him, and Jonah goes to Nineveh. He preaches to the inhabitants as God had told him, and the very thing he was afraid of happens. The men of Nineveh repent their sins, mend their ways, and God forgives them and decides not to destroy the city. Jonah is intensely angry and disappointed; he wanted "justice" to be done, not mercy. At last he finds some comfort by the shade of a tree which God had made to grow for him to protect him from the sun. But when God makes the tree wilt Jonah is depressed and angrily complains to God. God answers: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd for the which thou has not labored neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night. And should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand people that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" God's answer to Jonah is to be understood symbolically. God explains to Jonah that the essence of love is to

"labor" for something and "to make something grow," that love and labor are inseparable. One loves that for which one labors, and one labors for that which one loves.

The story of Jonah implies that love cannot be divorced from *responsibility*. Jonah does not feel responsible for the life of his brothers. He, like Cain, could ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Responsibility is not a duty imposed upon one from the outside, but is my response to a request which I feel to be my concern. Responsibility and response have the same root, *respondere* = "to answer"; to be responsible means to be ready to respond.

Motherly love is the most frequent and most readily understood instance of productive love; its very essence is care and responsibility. During the birth of the child the mother's body "labors" for the child and after birth her love consists in her effort to make the child grow. Motherly love does not depend on conditions which the child has to fulfill in order to be loved; it is unconditional, based only upon the child's request and the mother's response.51 No wonder that motherly love has been a symbol of the highest form of love in art and religion. The Hebrew term indicating God's love for man and man's love for his neighbor is rachamim, the root of which is *rechem* = womb.

But not so evident is the connection of care and responsibility with individual love; it is believed that to fall in love is already the culmination of love, while actually it is the beginning and only an opportunity for the achievement of love. It is believed that love is the result of a mysterious quality by which two people are attracted to each other, an event which occurs without effort. Indeed, man's loneliness and his sexual desires make it easy to fall in love and there is nothing mysterious about it, but it is a gain which is as

quickly lost as it has been achieved. One is not loved accidentally; one's own power to love produces love – just as being interested makes one interesting. People are concerned with the question of whether they are attractive while they forget that the essence of attractiveness is their own capacity to love. To love a person productively implies to care and to feel responsible for his life, not only for his physical existence but for the growth and development of all his human powers. To love productively is incompatible with being passive, wit being an onlooker at the loved person's life; it implies labor and care and the responsibility for his growth. In spite of the universalistic spirit of the monotheistic Western religions and of the progressive political concepts that are expressed in the idea "that all men are created equal," love for mankind has not become a common experience. Love for mankind is looked upon as an achievement which, at best, follows love for an individual or as an abstract concept to be realized only in the future. But love for man cannot be separated from the love for one individual. To love one person productively means to be related to his human core, to him as representing mankind. Love for one individual, in so far as it is divorced from love for man, can refer only to the superficial and to the accidental; of necessity it remains shallow. While it may be said that love for man differs from motherly love inasmuch as the child is helpless and our fellow men are not, it may also be said that even this difference exists only in relative terms. All men are in need of help and depend on one another. Human solidarity is the necessary condition for the unfolding of any one individual.

Care and responsibility are constituent elements of love, but without respect for and knowledge of the beloved person, love deteriorates into domination and possessiveness. Respect is not

fear and awe; it denotes, in accordance with the root of the word (*respicere* = to look at), the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his individuality and uniqueness. To respect a person is not possible without knowing him; care and responsibility would be blind if they were not guided by the knowledge of the person's individuality.

A preliminary approach to the understanding of *productive thinking* may be made by examining the difference between reason and intelligence. Intelligence is man's tool for attaining practical goals with the aim of discovering those aspects of things the knowledge of which is necessary for manipulating them. The goal itself or, what is the same, the premises on which "intelligent" thinking rests are not questioned, but are taken for granted and may or may not be rational in themselves. This particular quality of intelligence can be seen clearly in an extreme case, in that of the paranoid person. His premise, for instance, that all people are in conspiracy against him, is irrational and false, but his thought processes built upon this premise can in themselves show a remarkable amount of intelligence. In his attempt to prove his paranoid thesis he connects observations and makes logical constructions which are often so cogent that it is difficult to prove the irrationality of his premise. The application of mere intelligence to problems is, of course, not restricted to such pathological phenomena. Most of our thinking is necessarily concerned with the achievement of practical results, with the quantitative and "superficial" aspects of phenomena without inquiring into the validity of implied ends and premises and without attempting to understand the nature and quality of phenomena.

Reason involves a third dimension, that of depth, which reaches to the essence of things and processes. While reason is not divorced from the practical aims of life (and I shall show presently in what sense this is true), it is not a mere tool for immediate action. Its function is to know, to understand, to grasp, to relate oneself to things by comprehending them. It penetrates through the surface of things in order to discover their essence, their hidden relationships and deeper meanings, their "reason." It is, as it were, not two-dimensional but "perspectivistic," to use Nietzsche's term; i.e., it grasps all conceivable perspectives and dimensions, not only the practically relevant ones. Being concerned with the essence of things does not mean being concerned with something "behind" things, but with the essential, with the generic and the universal, with the most general and pervasive traits of phenomena, freed from their superficial and accidental (logically irrelevant) aspects.

We can now proceed to examine some more specific characteristics of productive thinking. In productive thinking the subject is not indifferent to his object but is affected by and concerned with it. The object is not experienced as something dead and divorced from oneself and one's life, as something about which one thinks only in a self-isolated fashion; on the contrary, the subject is intensely interested in his object, and the more intimate this relation is, the more fruitful is his thinking. It is this very relationship between him and his object which stimulates his thinking in the first place. To him a person or any phenomenon becomes an object of thought because it is an object of interest, relevant from the standpoint of his individual life or that of human existence. A beautiful illustration of this point is the story of Buddha's discovery of the "fourfold truth." Buddha saw a dead

man, a sick man, and an old man. He, a young man, was deeply affected by the inescapable fate of man, and his reaction to his observation was the stimulus for thinking which resulted in his theory of the nature of life and the ways of man's salvation. His reaction was certainly not the only possible one. A modern physician in the same situation might react by starting to think of how to combat death, sickness, and age, but his thinking would also be determined by his total reaction to his object.

In the process of productive thinking the thinker is motivated by his interest for the object; he is affected by it and reacts to it; he cares and responds. But productive thinking is also characterized by objectivity, by the respect the thinker has for his object, by his ability to see the object as it is and not as he wishes it to be. This polarity between objectivity and subjectivity is characteristic of productive thinking as it is of productiveness in general.

To be objective is possible only if we respect the things we observe; that is, if we are capable of seeing them in their uniqueness and their interconnectedness. This respect is not essentially different from the respect we discussed in connection with love; inasmuch as I want to understand something I must be able to see it as it exists according to its own nature; while this is true with regard to all objects of thought, it constitutes a special problem for the study of human nature.

Another aspect of objectivity must be present in productive thinking about living and nonliving objects: that of seeing the totality of a phenomenon. If the observer isolates one aspect of the object without seeing the whole, he will not properly understand even the one aspect he is studying. This point has been emphasized as the most important element in productive thinking by

Wertheimer. “Productive processes,” he writes, “are often of this nature: in the desire to get a real understanding, requestioning and investigation start. A certain region in the field becomes crucial, is focused; but it does not become isolated. A new, deeper structural view of the situation develops, involving changes in the functional meaning, the grouping, etc., of the items. Directed by what is required by the structure of a situation for a crucial region, one is led to a reasonable prediction, which – like the other parts of the structure—calls for verification, direct, or indirect. Two directions are involved: getting a whole consistent picture, and seeing what the structure of the whole requires for the parts.”

Objectivity requires not only seeing the object as it is but also seeing oneself as one is, i.e., being aware of the particular constellation in which one finds oneself as an observer related to the object of observation. Productive thinking, then, is determined by the nature of the object and the nature of the subject who relates himself to his object in the process of thinking. This twofold determination constitutes objectivity, in contrast to false subjectivity in which the thinking is not controlled by the object and thus degenerates into prejudice, wishful thinking, and phantasy. But objectivity is not, as it is often implied in a false idea of “scientific” objectivity, synonymous with detachment, with absence of interest and care. How can one penetrate the veiling surface of things to their causes and relationships if one does not have an interest that is vital and sufficiently impelling for so laborious a task? How could the aims of inquiry be formulated except by reference to the interests of man? Objectivity does not mean detachment, it means respect; that is, the ability not to distort and to falsify things, persons, and oneself. But does not the

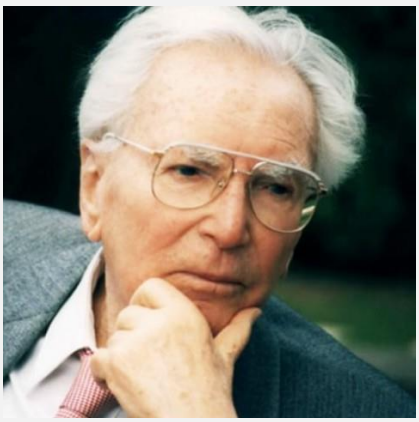
subjective factor in the observer, his interests, tend to distort his thinking for the sake of arriving at desired results? Is not the lack of personal interest the condition of scientific inquiry? The idea that lack of interest is a condition for recognizing the truth is fallacious. There hardly has been any significant discovery or insight which has not been prompted by an interest of the thinker. In fact, without interests, thinking becomes sterile and pointless. What matters is not whether or not there is an interest, but what kind of interest there is and what its relation to the truth will be. All productive thinking is stimulated by the interest of the observer. It is never an interest per se which distorts ideas, but only those interests which are incompatible with the truth, with the discovery of the nature of the object under observation.

The statement that productiveness is an intrinsic human faculty contradicts the idea that man is lazy by nature and that he has to be forced to be active. This assumption is an old one. When Moses asked Pharaoh to let the Jewish people go so that they might "serve God in the desert," his answer was: "You are lazy, nothing but lazy." To Pharaoh, slave labor meant doing things; worshiping God was laziness. The same idea was adopted by all those who wanted to profit from the activity of others and had no use for productiveness, which they could not exploit.

Our own culture seems to offer evidence for the very opposite. For the last few centuries Western man has been obsessed by the idea of work, by the need for constant activity. He is almost incapable of being lazy for any length of time. This contrast, however, is only apparent. Laziness and compulsive activity are not opposites but are two symptoms of the disturbance of man's proper functioning. In the neurotic individual we often find the inability to

work as his main symptom; in the so-called adjusted person, the inability to enjoy ease and repose. Compulsive activity is not the opposite of laziness but its complement; the opposite of both is productiveness.

The crippling of productive activity results in either inactivity or overactivity. Hunger and force can never be conditions of productive activity. On the contrary, freedom, economic security, and an organization of society in which work can be the meaningful expression of man's faculties are the factors conducive to the expression of man's natural tendency to make productive use of his powers. Productive activity is characterized by the rhythmic change of activity and repose. Productive work, love, and thought are possible only if a person can be, when necessary, quiet and alone with himself. To be able to listen to oneself is a prerequisite for the ability to listen to others; to be at home with oneself is the necessary condition for relating oneself to others.



VIKTOR E. FRANKL

MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING[68]

THE WILL TO MEANING

Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a "secondary rationalization" of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning. There are some authors who contend that meanings and values are "nothing but defence mechanisms, reaction formations and sublimations." But as for myself, I would not be willing to live merely for the sake of my "defence mechanisms," nor would I be ready to die merely for the sake of my "reaction formations." Man, however, is able to live and even to die for the sake of his ideals and values!

A public-opinion poll was conducted a few years ago in France. The results showed that 89 percent of the people polled admitted that man needs "something" for the sake of which to live. Moreover, 61 percent conceded that there was something, or someone, in their own lives for whose sake they were even ready to

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[68] [68] Frankl Viktor E. Man's Search for Meaning. Part one. /translated by Ilse Lasch; preface by gordon W. Allport. URL: https://antilogicalism.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/mans-search-for-meaning.pdf

die. I repeated this poll at my hospital department in Vienna among both the patients and the personnel, and the outcome was practically the same as among the thousands of people screened in France; the difference was only 2 percent.

Another statistical survey, of 7,948 students at forty-eight colleges, was conducted by social scientists from Johns Hopkins University. Their preliminary report is part of a two-year study sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health. Asked what they considered "very important" to them now, 16 percent of the students checked "making a lot of money"; 78 percent said their first goal was "finding a purpose and meaning to my life." Of course, there may be some cases in which an individual's concern with values is really a camouflage of hidden inner conflicts; but, if so, they represent the exceptions from the rule rather than the rule itself. In these cases we have actually to deal with pseudovalues, and as such they have to be unmasked. Unmasking, however, should stop as soon as one is confronted with what is authentic and genuine in man, e.g., man's desire for a life that is as meaningful as possible. If it does not stop then, the only thing that the "unmasking psychologist" really unmasks is his own "hidden motive"—namely, his unconscious need to debase and depreciate what is genuine, what is genuinely human, in man.

EXISTENTIAL FRUSTRATION

Man's will to meaning can also be frustrated, in which case logotherapy speaks of "existential frustration." The term "existential" may be used in three ways: to refer to (1) existence itself, i.e., the specifically human mode of being; (2) the meaning of existence; and (3) the striving to find a concrete meaning in personal existence, that is to say, the will to meaning.

Existential frustration can also result in neuroses. For this type of neuroses, logotherapy has coined the term "noogenic neuroses" in contrast to neuroses in the traditional sense of the word, i.e., psychogenic neuroses. Noogenic neuroses have their origin not in the psychological but rather in the "noological" (from the Greek noos meaning mind) dimension of human existence. This is another logotherapeutic term which denotes anything pertaining to the specifically human dimension.

NOOGENIC NEUROSES

Noogenic neuroses do not emerge from conflicts between drives and instincts but rather from existential problems. Among such problems, the frustration of the will to meaning plays a large role. It is obvious that in noogenic cases the appropriate and adequate therapy is not psychotherapy in general but rather logotherapy; a therapy, that is, which dares to enter the specifically human dimension.

Let me quote the following instance: A high-ranking American diplomat came to my office in Vienna in order to continue psychoanalytic treatment which he had begun five years previously with an analyst in New York. At the outset I asked him why he thought he should be analyzed, why his analysis had been started in the first place. It turned out that the patient was discontented with his career and found it most difficult to comply with American foreign policy. His analyst, however, had told him again and again that he should try to reconcile himself with his father; because the government of the U.S. as well as his superiors were "nothing but" father images and, consequently, his dissatisfaction with his job was due to the hatred he unconsciously harboured toward his father. Through an analysis lasting five years, the patient had been

prompted more and more to accept his analyst's interpretations until he finally was unable to see the forest of reality for the trees of symbols and images. After a few interviews, it was clear that his will to meaning was frustrated by his vocation, and he actually longed to be engaged in some other kind of work. As there was no reason for not giving up his profession and embarking on a different one, he did so, with most gratifying results. He has remained contented in this new occupation for over five years, as he recently reported. I doubt that, in this case, I was dealing with a neurotic condition at all, and that is why I thought that he did not need any psychotherapy, nor even logotherapy, for the simple reason that he was not actually a patient. Not every conflict is necessarily neurotic; some amount of conflict is normal and healthy. In a similar sense suffering is not always a pathological phenomenon; rather than being a symptom of neurosis, suffering may well be a human achievement, especially if the suffering grows out of existential frustration. I would strictly deny that one's search for a meaning to his existence, or even his doubt of it, in every case is derived from, or results in, any disease. Existential frustration is in itself neither pathological nor pathogenic. A man's concern, even his despair, over the worthwhileness of life is an existential distress but by no means a mental disease. It may well be that interpreting the first in terms of the latter motivates a doctor to bury his patient's existential despair under a heap of tranquilizing drugs. It is his task, rather, to pilot the patient through his existential crises of growth and development.

Logotherapy regards its assignment as that of assisting the patient to find meaning in his life. Inasmuch as logotherapy makes him aware of the hidden logos of his existence, it is an analytical

process. To this extent, logotherapy resembles psychoanalysis. However, in logotherapy's attempt to make something conscious again it does not restrict its activity to instinctual facts within the individual's unconscious but also cares for existential realities, such as the potential meaning of his existence to be fulfilled as well as his will to meaning. Any analysis, however, even when it refrains from including the noological dimension in its therapeutic process, tries to make the patient aware of what he actually longs for in the depth of his being. Logotherapy deviates from psychoanalysis insofar as it considers man a being whose main concern consists in fulfilling a meaning, rather than in the mere gratification and satisfaction of drives and instincts, or in merely reconciling the conflicting claims of id, ego and superego, or in the mere adaptation and adjustment to society and environment.

NOO-DYNAMICS

To be sure, man's search for meaning may arouse inner tension rather than inner equilibrium. However, precisely such tension is an indispensable prerequisite of mental health. There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life. There is much wisdom in the words of Nietzsche: "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how." I can see in these words a motto which holds true for any psychotherapy. In the Nazi concentration camps, one could have witnessed that those who knew that there was a task waiting for them to fulfil were most apt to survive. The same conclusion has since been reached by other authors of books on concentration camps, and also by psychiatric investigations into Japanese, North Korean and North Vietnamese prisoner-ofwar camps.

As for myself, when I was taken to the concentration camp of Auschwitz, a manuscript of mine ready for publication was confiscated[69]. Certainly, my deep desire to write this manuscript anew helped me to survive the rigors of the camps I was in. For instance, when in a camp in Bavaria I fell ill with typhus fever, I jotted down on little scraps of paper many notes intended to enable me to rewrite the manuscript, should I live to the day of liberation. I am sure that this reconstruction of my lost manuscript in the dark barracks of a Bavarian concentration camp assisted me in overcoming the danger of cardiovascular collapse.

Thus it can be seen that mental health is based on a certain degree of tension, the tension between what one has already achieved and what one still ought to accomplish, or the gap between what one is and what one should become. Such a tension is inherent in the human being and therefore is indispensable to mental well-being. We should not, then, be hesitant about challenging man with a potential meaning for him to fulfil. It is only thus that we evoke his will to meaning from its state of latency. I consider it a dangerous misconception of mental hygiene to assume that what man needs in the first place is equilibrium or, as it is called in biology, "homeostasis," i.e., a tensionless state. What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task. What he needs is not the discharge of tension at any cost but the call of a potential meaning waiting to be fulfilled by him. What man needs is not homeostasis but what I call "nod-dynamics," i.e., the

[69] It was the first version of my first book, the English translation of which was published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, in 1955, under the title The Doctor and the Soul: An Introduction to Logotherapy.

existential dynamics in a polar field of tension where one pole is represented by a meaning that is to be fulfilled and the other pole by the man who has to fulfil it. And one should not think that this holds true only for normal conditions; in neurotic individuals, it is even more valid. If architects want to strengthen a decrepit arch, they increase the load which is laid upon it, for thereby the parts are joined more firmly together. So if therapists wish to foster their patients' mental health, they should not be afraid to create a sound amount of tension through a reorientation toward the meaning of one's life.

Having shown the beneficial impact of meaning orientation, I turn to the detrimental influence of that feeling of which so many patients complain today, namely, the feeling of the total and ultimate meaninglessness of their lives. They lack the awareness of a meaning worth living for. They are haunted by the experience of their inner emptiness, a void within themselves; they are caught in that situation which I have called the "existential vacuum".

THE EXISTENTIAL VACUUM

The existential vacuum is a widespread phenomenon of the twentieth century. This is understandable; it may be due to a twofold loss which man has had to undergo since he became a truly human being. At the beginning of human history, man lost some of the basic animal instincts in which an animal's behaviour is imbedded and by which it is secured. Such security, like Paradise, is closed to man forever; man has to make choices. In addition to this, however, man has suffered another loss in his more recent development inasmuch as the traditions which buttressed his behaviour are now rapidly diminishing. No instinct tells him. what he has to do, and no tradition tells him what he ought to do;

sometimes he does not even know what he wishes to do. Instead, he either wishes to do what other people do (conformism) or he does what other people wish him to do (totalitarianism).

A statistical survey recently revealed that among my European students, 25 percent showed a more-or-less marked degree of existential vacuum. Among my American students it was not 25 but 60 percent.

The existential vacuum manifests itself mainly in a state of boredom. Now we can understand Schopenhauer when he said that mankind was apparently doomed to vacillate eternally between the two extremes of distress and boredom. In actual fact, boredom is now causing, and certainly bringing to psychiatrists, more problems to solve than distress. And these problems are growing increasingly crucial, for progressive automation will probably lead to an enormous increase in the leisure hours available to the average worker. The pity of it is that many of these will not know what to do with all their newly acquired free time.

Let us consider, for instance, "Sunday neurosis," that kind of depression which afflicts people who become aware of the lack of content in their lives when the rush of the busy week is over and the void within themselves becomes manifest. Not a few cases of suicide can be traced back to this existential vacuum. Such widespread phenomena as depression, aggression and addiction are not understandable unless we recognize the existential vacuum underlying them. This is also true of the crises of pensioners and aging people.

Moreover, there are various masks and guises under which the existential vacuum appears. Sometimes the frustrated will to meaning is vicariously compensated for by a will to power,

including the most primitive form of the will to power, the will to money. In other cases, the place of frustrated will to meaning is taken by the will to pleasure. That is why existential frustration often eventuates in sexual compensation. We can observe in such cases that the sexual libido becomes rampant in the existential vacuum.

An analogous event occurs in neurotic cases. There are certain types of feedback mechanisms and vicious-circle formations which I will touch upon later. One can observe again and again, however, that this symptomatology has invaded an existential vacuum wherein it then continues to flourish. In such patients, what we have to deal with is not a noogenic neurosis. However, we will never succeed in having the patient overcome his condition if we have not supplemented the psychotherapeutic treatment with logo-therapy. For by filling the existential vacuum, the patient will be prevented from suffering further relapses. Therefore, logotherapy is indicated not only in noogenic cases, as pointed out above, but also in psychogenic cases, and sometimes even the somatogenic (pseudo-) neuroses. Viewed in this light, a statement once made by Magda B. Arnold is justified: "Every therapy must in some way, no matter how restricted, also be logotherapy."[70]

Let us now consider what we can do if a patient asks what the meaning of his life is.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

I doubt whether a doctor can answer this question in general terms. For the meaning of life differs from man to man, from day

[70] Magda B. Arnold and John A. Gasson, The Human Person, Ronald Press, New York, 1954, p. 618.

to day and from hour to hour. What matters, therefore, is not the meaning of life in general but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment. To put the question in general terms would be comparable to the question posed to a chess champion: "Tell me, Master, what is the best move in the world?" There simply is no such thing as the best or even a good move apart from a particular situation in a game and the particular personality of one's opponent. The same holds for human existence. One should not search for an abstract meaning of life. Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life to carry out a concrete assignment which demands fulfilment. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus, everyone's task is as unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it.

As each situation in life represents a challenge to man and presents a problem for him to solve, the question of the meaning of life may actually be reversed. Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather he must recognize that it is he who is asked. In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond by being responsible. Thus, logotherapy sees in responsibleness the very essence of human existence.

THE ESSENCE OF EXISTENCE

This emphasis on responsibleness is reflected in the categorical imperative of logotherapy, which is: "Live as if you were living already for the second time and as if you had acted the first time as wrongly as you are about to act now!" It seems to me that there is nothing which would stimulate a man's sense of responsibleness more than this maxim, which invites him to imagine first that the present is past and, second, that the past

may yet be changed and amended. Such a precept confronts him with life's finiteness as well as the finality of what he makes out of both his life and himself.

Logotherapy tries to make the patient fully aware of his own responsibleness; therefore, it must leave to him the option for what, to what, or to whom he understands himself to be responsible. That is why a logotherapist is the least tempted of all psychotherapists to impose value judgments on his patients, for he will never permit the patient to pass to the doctor the responsibility of judging.

It is, therefore, up to the patient to decide whether he should interpret his life task as being responsible to society or to his own conscience. There are people, however, who do not interpret their own lives merely in terms of a task assigned to them but also in terms of the taskmaster who has assigned it to them.

Logotherapy is neither teaching nor preaching. It is as far removed from logical reasoning as it is from moral exhortation. To put it figuratively, the role played by a logotherapist is that of an eye specialist rather than that of a painter. A painter tries to convey to us a picture of the world as he sees it; an ophthalmologist tries to enable us to see the world as it really is. The logotherapist's role consists of widening and broadening the visual field of the patient so that the whole spectrum of potential meaning becomes conscious and visible to him.

By declaring that man is responsible and must actualize the potential meaning of his life, I wish to stress that the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. I have termed this constitutive characteristic "the self-transcendence of human existence." It denotes the fact that being human always points, and

is directed, to something, or someone, other than oneself—be it a meaning to fulfil or another human being to encounter. The more one forgets himself – by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love – the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself. What is called selfactualization is not an attainable aim at all, for the simple reason that the more one would strive for it, the more he would miss it. In other words, self-actualization is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence.

Thus far we have shown that the meaning of life always changes, but that it never ceases to be. According to logotherapy, we can discover this meaning in life in three different ways: (1) by creating a work or doing a deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering. The first, the way of achievement or accomplishment, is quite obvious. The second and third need further elaboration.

The second way of finding a meaning in life is by experiencing something – such as goodness, truth and beauty – by experiencing nature and culture or, last but not least, by experiencing another human being in his very uniqueness; – by loving him.

THE MEANING OF LOVE

Love is the only way to grasp another human being in the innermost core of his personality. No one can become fully aware of the very essence of another human being unless he loves him. By his love he is enabled to see the essential traits and features in the beloved person; and even more, he sees that which is potential in him, which is not yet actualized but yet ought to be actualized. Furthermore, by his love, the loving person enables the beloved person to actualize these potentialities. By making him aware of

what he can be and of what he should become, he makes these potentialities come true.

In logotherapy, love is not interpreted as a mere epiphenomenon[71] of sexual drives and instincts in the sense of a so-called sublimation. Love is as primary a phenomenon as sex. Normally, sex is a mode of expression for love. Sex is justified, even sanctified, as soon as, but only as long as, it is a vehicle of love. Thus love is not understood as a mere side-effect of sex; rather, sex is a way of expressing the experience of that ultimate togetherness which is called love. The third way of finding a meaning in life is by suffering.

THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

We must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed. For what then matters is to bear witness to the uniquely human potential at its best, which is to transform a personal tragedy into a triumph, to turn one's predicament into a human achievement. When we are no longer able to change a situation – just think of an incurable disease such as inoperable cancer – we are challenged to change ourselves.

Let me cite a clear-cut example: Once, an elderly general practitioner consulted me because of his severe depression. He could not overcome the loss of his wife who had died two years before and whom he had loved above all else. Now, how could I help him? What should I tell him? Well, I refrained from telling him anything but instead confronted him with the question, "What would have happened, Doctor, if you had died first, and your wife

[71] A phenomenon that occurs as the result of a primary phenomenon.

would have had to survive you?" "Oh," he said, "for her this would have been terrible; how she would have suffered!" Whereupon I replied, "You see, Doctor, such a suffering has been spared her, and it was you who have spared her this suffering – to be sure, at the price that now you have to survive and mourn her". He said no word but shook my hand and calmly left my office. In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice.

Of course, this was no therapy in the proper sense since, first, his despair was no disease; and second, I could not change his fate; I could not revive his wife. But in that moment I did succeed in changing his attitude toward his unalterable fate inasmuch as from that time on he could at least see a meaning in his suffering. It is one of the basic tenets of logotherapy that man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life. That is why man is even ready to suffer, on the condition, to be sure, that his suffering has a meaning.

But let me make it perfectly clear that in no way is suffering necessary to find meaning. I only insist that meaning is possible even in spite of suffering – provided, certainly, that the suffering is unavoidable. If it were avoidable, however, the meaningful thing to do would be to remove its cause, be it psychological, biological or political. To suffer unnecessarily is masochistic rather than heroic. Edith Weisskopf-Joelson, before her death professor of psychology at the University of Georgia, contended, in her article on logotherapy, that "our current mental-hygiene philosophy stresses the idea that people ought to be happy, that unhappiness is a symptom of maladjustment. Such a value system might be responsible for the fact that the burden of unavoidable

unhappiness is increased by unhappiness about being unhappy".[72] And in another paper she expressed the hope that logotherapy "may help counteract certain unhealthy trends in the present-day culture of the United States, where the incurable sufferer is given very little opportunity to be proud of his suffering and to consider it ennobling rather than degrading" so that "he is not only unhappy, but also ashamed of being unhappy".[73]

There are situations in which one is cut off from the opportunity to do one's work or to enjoy one's life; but what never can be ruled out is the unavoidability of suffering. In accepting this challenge to suffer bravely, life has a meaning up to the last moment, and it retains this meaning literally to the end. In other words, life's meaning is an unconditional one, for it even includes the potential meaning of unavoidable suffering.

Let me recall that which was perhaps the deepest experience I had in the concentration camp. The odds of surviving the camp were no more than one in twenty-eight, as can easily be verified by exact statistics. It did not even seem possible, let alone probable, that the manuscript of my first book, which I had hidden in my coat when I arrived at Auschwitz, would ever be rescued. Thus, I had to undergo and to overcome the loss of my mental child. And now it seemed as if nothing and no one would survive me; neither a physical nor a mental child of my own! So I found myself

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[72] "Some Comments on a Viennese School of Psychiatry," The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 51 (1955), pp.701-703.

[73] "Logotherapy and Existential Analysis," Ada Psychotherapeutica,6 (1958), pp.193-204.

confronted with the question whether under such circumstances my life was ultimately void of any meaning.

Not yet did I notice that an answer to this question with which I was wrestling so passionately was already in store for me, and that soon thereafter this answer would be given to me. This was the case when I had to surrender my clothes and in turn inherited the worn-out rags of an inmate who had already been sent to the gas chamber immediately after his arrival at the Auschwitz railway station. Instead of the many pages of my manuscript, I found in a pocket of the newly acquired coat one single page torn out of a Hebrew prayer book, containing the most important Jewish prayer, Shema Yisrael. How should I have interpreted such a "coincidence" other than as a challenge to live my thoughts instead of merely putting them on paper?

A bit later, I remember, it seemed to me that I would die in the near future. In this critical situation, however, my concern was different from that of most of my comrades. Their question was, "Will we survive the camp? For, if not, all this suffering has no meaning." The question which beset me was, "Has all this suffering, this dying around us, a meaning? For, if not, then ultimately there is no meaning to survival; for a life whose meaning depends upon such a happenstance – as whether one escapes or not – ultimately would not be worth living at all".



PAUL TILLICH
THE COURAGE TO BE[74]

CHAPTER 2. BEING, NONBEING, AND ANXIETY

Types of anxiety

The three types of anxiety and the nature of man

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I suggest that we distinguish three types of anxiety according to the three directions in which nonbeing threatens being. Nonbeing threatens man's ontic self-affirmation, relatively in terms of fate, absolutely in terms of death. It threatens man's spiritual self-affirmation, relatively in terms of emptiness, absolutely in terms of meaninglessness. It threatens man's moral self-affirmation, relatively in terms of guilt, absolutely in terms of condemnation. The awareness of this threefold threat is anxiety appearing in three forms, that of fate and death (briefly, the anxiety of death), that of emptiness and loss of meaning (briefly, the anxiety of meaninglessness), that of guilt and condemnation (briefly, the anxiety of condemnation). In all three forms anxiety is existential in the sense that it belongs to existence as such and not to an abnormal state of mind as in neurotic (and psychotic) anxiety. The nature of neurotic anxiety and its relation to existential anxiety will

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[74] Tillich P. The courage to be. 1952. URL: https://psychxspirit.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Paul-Tillich-The-Courage-to-Be-Yale-University-Press-2000.pdf

be discussed in another chapter. We shall deal now with the three forms of existential anxiety, first with their reality in the life of the individual, then with their social manifestations in special periods of Western history. However, it must be stated that the difference of types does not mean mutual exclusion. In the first chapter we have seen for instance that the courage to be as it appears in the ancient Stoics conquers not only the fear of death but also the threat of meaninglessness. In Nietzsche we find that in spite of the predominance of the threat of meaninglessness, the anxiety of death and condemnation is passionately challenged. In all representatives of classical Christianity death and sin are seen as the allied adversaries against which the courage of faith has to fight. The three forms of anxiety (and of courage) are immanent in each other but normally under the dominance of one of them.

The anxiety of fate and death

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The anxiety of fate and death is most basic, most universal, and inescapable. All attempts to argue it away are futile. All attempts to argue it away are futile. Even if the so-called arguments for the "immortality of the soul" had argumentative power (which they do not have) they would not convince existentially. <…> Man as man in every civilization is anxiously aware of the threat of nonbeing and needs the courage to affirm himself in spite of it.

The anxiety of death is the permanent horizon within which the anxiety of fate is at work. For the threat against man's ontic self-affirmation is not only the absolute threat of death but also the relative threat of fate. Certainly the anxiety of death overshadows all concrete anxieties and gives them their ultimate seriousness. They have, however, a certain independence and, ordinarily, a

more immediate impact than the anxiety of death. The term "fate" for this whole group of anxieties stresses one element which is common to all of them: their contingent character, their unpredictability, the impossibility of showing their meaning and purpose. One can describe this in terms of the categorical structure of our experience. Onecan show the contingency of our temporal being, the fact that we exist in this and no other period of time, beginning in a contingent moment, ending in a contingent moment, filled with experiences which are contingent themselves with respect to quality and quantity. One can show the contingency of our spatial being (our finding ourselves in this and no other place, and the strangeness of this place in spite of its familiarity); the contingent character of ourselves and the place from which we look at our world; and the contingent character of the reality at which we look, that is, our world. Both could be different: this is their contingency and this produces the anxiety about our spatial existence. One can show the contingency of the causal interdependence of which one is a part, both with respect to the past and to the present, the vicissitudes coming from our world and the hidden forces in the depths of our own self. Contingent does not mean causally undetermined but it means that the determining causes of our existence have no ultimate necessity. They are given, and they cannot be logically derived. Contingently we are put into the whole web of causal relations. Contingently we are determined by them in every moment and thrown out by them in the last moment.

The anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness

Nonbeing threatens man as a whole, and therefore threatens his spiritual as well as his ontic self-affirmation. Spiritual

selfaffirmation occurs in every moment in which man lives creatively in the various spheres of meaning. Creative, in this context, has the sense not of original creativity as performed by the genius but of living spontaneously, in action and reaction, with the contents of one's cultural life. In order to be spiritually creative one need not be what is called a creative artist or scientist or statesman, but one must be able to participate meaningfully in their original creations. Such a participation is creative insofar as it changes that in which one participates, even if in very small ways. <…>

Such an experience presupposes that the spiritual life is taken seriously, that it is a matter of ultimate concern. And this again presupposes that in it and through it ultimate reality becomes manifest. A spiritual life in which this is not experienced is threatened by nonbeing in the two forms in which it attacks spiritual self-affirmation: emptiness and meaninglessness.

We use the term meaninglessness for the absolute threat of nonbeing to spiritual self-affirmation, and the term emptiness for the relative threat to it. They are no more identical than are the threat of death and fate. But in the background of emptiness lies meaninglessness as death lies in the background of the vicissitudes of fate.

The anxiety of meaninglessness is anxiety about the loss of an ultimate concern, of a meaning which gives meaning to all meanings. This anxiety is aroused by the loss of a spiritual center, of an answer, however symbolic and indirect, to the question of the meaning of existence.

The anxiety of emptiness is aroused by the threat of nonbeing to the special contents of the spiritual life. A belief breaks down

through external events or inner processes: one is cut off from creative participation in a sphere of culture, one feels frustrated about something which one had passionately affirmed, one is driven from devotion to one object to devotion to another and again on to another, because the meaning of each of them vanishes and the creative eros is transformed into indifference or aversion. Everything is tried and nothing satisfies. The contents of the tradition, however excellent, however praised, however loved once, lose their power to give content today. And present culture is even less able to provide the content. Anxiously one turns away from all concrete contents and looks for an ultimate meaning, only to discover that it was precisely the loss of a spiritual center which took away the meaning from the special contents of the spiritual life. But a spiritual center cannot be produced intentionally, and the attempt to produce it only produces deeper anxiety. The anxiety of emptiness drives us to the abyss of meaninglessness.

Emptiness and loss of meaning are expressions of the threat of nonbeing to the spiritual life. This threat is implied in man's finitude and actualized by man's estrangement. It can be described in terms of doubt, its creative and its destructive function in man's spiritual life. Man is able to ask because he is separated from, while participating in, what he is asking about. In every question an element of doubt, the awareness of not having, is implied.

In systematic questioning systematic doubt is effective; e.g. of the Cartesian type. This element of doubt is a condition of all spiritual life. The threat to spiritual life is not doubt as an element but the total doubt. If the awareness of not having has swallowed the awareness of having, doubt has ceased to be methodological asking and has become existential despair. On the way to this

situation the spiritual life tries to maintain itself as long as possible by clinging to affirmations which are not yet undercut, be they traditions, autonomous convictions, or emotional preferences. And if it is impossible to remove the doubt, one courageously accepts it without surrendering one's convictions. One takes the risk of going astray and the anxiety of this risk upon oneself. In this way one avoids the extreme situation – till it becomes unavoidable and the despair of truth becomes complete.

Then man tries another way out: Doubt is based on man's separation from the whole of reality, on his lack of universal participation, on the isolation of his individual self. So he tries to break out of this situation, to identify himself with something transindividual, to surrender his separation and self-relatedness. He flees from his freedom of asking and answering for himself to a situation in which no further questions can be asked and the answers to pre- vious questions are imposed on him authoritatively. In order to avoid the risk of asking and doubting he sur- renders the right to ask and to doubt. He surrenders him-self in order to save his spiritual life. He "escapes from his freedom" (Fromm) in order to escape the anxiety of meaninglessness. Now he is no longer lonely, not in exis- tential doubt, not in despair. He "participates" and affirms by participation the contents of his spiritual life. Meaning is saved, but the self is sacrificed. And since the conquest of doubt was a matter of sacrifice, the sacrifice of the free- dom of the self, it leaves a mark on the regained certitude: a fanatical self-assertiveness. Fanaticism is the correlate to spiritual self-surrender: it shows the anxiety which it was supposed to conquer, by attacking with disproportionate violence those who disagree and who demonstrate by their disagreement elements in

the spiritual life of the fanatic which he must suppress in himself. Because he must suppress them in himself he must suppress them in others. His anxiety forces him to persecute dissenters. The weakness of the fanatic is that those whom he fights have a secret hold upon him; and to this weakness he and his group finally succumb.

It is not always personal doubt that undermines and empties a system of ideas and values. It can be the fact that they are no longer understood in their original power of expressing the human situation and of answering existential human questions. (This is largely the case with the doctrinal symbols of Christianity.) Or they lose their meaning because the actual conditions of the present period are so different from those in which the spiritual contents were created that new creations are needed. (This was largely the case with artistic expression before the industrial revolution.) In such circumstances a slow process of waste of the spiritual contents occurs, unnoticeable in the beginning, realized with a shock as it progresses, producing the anxiety of meaninglessness at its end.

Ontic and spiritual self-affirmation must be distin- guished but they cannot be separated. Man's being includes his relation to meanings. He is human only by understanding and shaping reality, both his world and himself, according to meanings and values. His being is spiritual even in the most primitive expressions of the most primitive human being. In the "first" meaningful sentence all the richness of man's spiritual life is potentially present. Therefore the threat to his spiritual being is a threat to his whole being. The most revealing expression of this fact is the desire to throw away one's ontic existence rather than stand the despair of emptiness and

meaninglessness. The death instinct is not an ontic but a spiritual phenomenon. Freud identified this reaction to the meaninglessness of the never-ceasing and never-satisfied libido with man's essential nature. But it is only an expression of his existential self-estrangement and of the disintegration of his spiritual life into meaninglessness. If, on the other hand, the ontic self-affirmation is weakened by nonbeing, spiritual indifference and emptiness can be the consequence, producing a circle of ontic and spiritual negativity. Nonbeing threatens from both sides, the ontic and the spiritual; if it threatens the one side it also threatens the other.

The anxiety of guilt and condemnation

Nonbeing threatens from a third side; it threatens man's moral self-affirmation. Man's being, ontic as well as spiritual, is not only given to him but also demanded of him. He is responsible for it; literally, he is required to answer, if he is asked, what he has made of himself. He who asks him is his judge, namely he himself, who, at the same time, stands against him. This situation produces the anxiety which, in relative terms, is the anxiety of guilt; in bsolute terms, the anxiety of self-rejection or condemnation. Man is essentially "finite freedom"; freedom not in the sense of indeterminacy but in the sense of being able to determine himself through decisions in the center of his being. Man, as finite freedom, is free within the contingencies of his finitude. But within these limits he is asked to make of himself what he is supposed to become, to fulfill his destiny. In every act of moral self-affirmation man contributes to the fulfillment of his destiny, to the actualization of what he potentially is. It is the task of ethics to describe the nature of this fulfillment, in philosophical or

theological terms. But however the norm is formulated man has the power of acting against it, of contradicting his essential being, of losing his destiny. And under the conditions of man's estrangement from himself this is an actuality. Even in what he considers his best deed nonbeing is present and prevents it from being perfect. A profound ambiguity between good and evil permeates everything he does, because it permeates his personal being as such. Nonbeing is mixed with being in his moral self-affirmation as it is in his spiritual and ontic self-affirmation. The awareness of this ambiguity is the feeling of guilt. The judge who is oneself and who stands against oneself, he who "knows with" (conscience) everything we do and are, gives a negative judgment, experienced by us as guilt. The anxiety of guilt shows the same complex characteristics as the anxiety about ontic and spiritual nonbeing. It is present in every moment of moral self-awareness and can drive us toward complete self-rejection, to the feeling of being condemned – not to an external punishment but to the despair of having lost our destin.

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Nonbeing in a moral respect must be distinguished but cannot be separated from ontic and spiritual nonbeing. The anxiety of the one type is immanent in the anxieties of the other types. The famous words of Paul about "sin as the sting of death" point to the immanence of the anxiety of guilt within the fear of death. And the threat of fate and death has always awakened and increased the consciousness of guilt. The threat of moral nonbeing was experienced in and through the threat of ontic nonbeing. The contingencies of fate received moral interpretation: fate executes the negative moral judgment by attacking and perhaps destroying

the ontic foundation of the morally rejected personality. The two forms of anxiety provoke and augment each other. In the same way spiritual and moral nonbeing are interdependent. Obedience to the moral norm, i.e. to one's own essential being, excludes emptiness and meaninglessness in their radical forms. If the spiritual contents have lost their power the self-affirmation of the moral personality is a way in which meaning can be rediscovered. The simple call to duty can save from emptiness, while the disintegration of the moral consciousness is an almost irresistible basis for the attack of spiritual nonbeing. On the other hand, existential doubt can undermine moral self-affirmation by throwing into the abyss of skepticism not only every moral principle but the meaning of moral self-affirmation as such. In this case the doubt is felt as guilt, while at the same time guilt is undermined by doubt.

The meaning of despair

The three types of anxiety are interwoven in such a way that one of them gives the predominant color but all of them participate in the coloring of the state of anxiety. All of them and their underlying unity are existential, i.e. they are implied in the existence of man as man, his finitude, and his estrangement. They are fulfilled in the situation of despair to which all of them contribute. Despair is an ultimate or "boundaryline" situation. One cannot go beyond it. Its nature is indicated in the etymology of the word despair: without hope. No way out into the future appears. Nonbeing is felt as absolutely victorious. But there is a limit to its victory; nonbeing is felt as victorious, and feeling presupposes being. Enough being left to feel the irresistible power of nonbeing, and this is the despair within the despair. The pain of despair is

that a being is aware of itself as unable to affirm itself because of the power of nonbeing. Consequently it wants to surrender this awareness and its presupposition, the being which is aware. It wants to get rid of itself – and it cannot. Despair appears in the form of reduplication, as the desperate attempt to escape despair. If anxiety were only the anxiety of fate and death, voluntary death would be the way out of despair. The courage demanded would be the courage not to be. The final form of ontic self-affirmation would be the act of ontic self-negation.

But despair is also the despair about guilt and condemnation. And there is no way of escaping it, even by ontic self-negation. Suicide can liberate one from the anxiety of fate and death – as the Stoics knew. But it cannot liberate from the anxiety of guilt and condemnation, as the Christians know. This is a highly paradoxical statement, as paradoxical as the relation of the moral sphere to ontic existence generally. But it is a true statement, verified by those who have experienced fully the despair of condemnation. It is impossible to express the inescapable character of condemnation in ontic terms, that is in terms of imaginings about the "immortality of the soul." For every ontic statement must use the categories of finitude, and "immortality of the soul" would be the endless prolongation of finitude and of the despair of condemnation (a self-contradictory concept, for "finis" means "end"). The experience, therefore, that suicide is no way of escaping guilt must be understood in terms of the qualitative character of the moral demand, and of the qualitative character of its rejection. Guilt and condemnation are qualitatively, not quantitatively, infinite. They have an infinite weight and cannot be removed by a finite act of ontic self-negation. This makes despair desperate, that is,

inescapable. There is "No Exit" from it (Sartre). The anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness participates in both the ontic and the moral element in despair. Insofar as it is an expression of finitude it can be removed by ontic self-negation: This drives radical skepticism to suicide. Insofar as it is a consequence of moral disintegration it produces the same paradox as the moral element in despair: there is no ontic exit from it. This frustrates the suicidal trends in emptiness and meaninglessness. One is aware of their futility.

In view of this character of despair it is understandable that all human life can be interpreted as a continuous attempt to avoid despair. And this attempt is mostly successful. Extreme situations are not reached frequently and perhaps they are never reached by some people. The purpose of an analysis of such a situation is not to record ordinary human experiences but to show extreme possibilities in the light of which the ordinary situations must be understood. We are not always aware of our having to die, but in the light of the experience of our having to die our whole life is experienced differently. In the same way the anxiety which is despair is not always present. Rut the rare occasions in which it is present determine the interpretation of existence as a whole.

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CHAPTER 3. PATHOLOGICAL ANXIETY, VITALITY, AND COURAGE

The nature of pathological anxiety

We have discussed three forms of existential anxiety, an anxiety which is given with human existence itself. Nonexistential anxiety, which is the result of contingent occurrences in human life, has been mentioned only in passing. It is now time to deal with

it systematically. An ontology of anxiety and courage such as is developed in this book naturally cannot attempt to present a psychotherapeutic theory of neurotic anxiety. Many theories are under discussion today; and some of the leading psychotherapists, notably Freud himself, have developed different interpretations. There is, however, one common denominator in all the theories: anxiety is the awareness of unsolved conflicts between structural elements of the personality, as for instance conflicts between unconscious drives and repressive norms, between different drives trying to dominate the center of the personality, between imaginary worlds and the experience of the real world, between trends toward greatness and perfection and the experience of one's smallness and imperfection, between the desire to be accepted by other people or society or the universe and the experience of being rejected, between the will to be and the seemingly intolerable burden of being which evokes the open or hidden desire not to be. All these conflicts, whether unconscious, subconscious, or conscious, whether unadmitted or admitted, make themselves felt in sudden or lasting stages of anxiety. Usually one of these explanations of anxiety is considered the fundamental one. A search for the basic anxiety, not in cultural but in psychological terms, is made by practical and theoretical analysts. But in most of these attempts a criterion of what is basic and what is derived seems to be lacking. Each of these explanations points to actual symptoms and fundamental structures. But because of the variety of the observed material the elevation of one part of it to central significance is usually not convincing. There is still another reason for the psychotherapeutic theory of anxiety being in a confused state in spite of all its brilliant insights. It is the lack of a clear distinction

between existential and pathological anxiety, and between the main forms of existential anxiety. This cannot be made by depth-psychological analysis alone; it is a matter of ontology. Only in the light of an ontological understanding of human nature can the body of material provided by psychology and sociology be organized into a consistent and comprehensive theory of anxiety.

Pathological anxiety is a state of existential anxiety under special conditions. The general character of these conditions depends on the relation of anxiety to selfaffirmation and courage. We have seen that anxiety tends to become fear in order to have an object with which courage can deal. Courage does not remove anxiety. Since anxiety is existential, it cannot be removed. But courage takes the anxiety of nonbeing into itself. Courage is selfaffirmation "in spite of," namely in spite of nonbeing. He who acts courageously takes, in his self-affirmation, the anxiety of nonbeing upon himself. Both prepositions, "into" and "upon," are metaphoric and point to anxiety as an element within the total structure of self-affirmation, the element which gives self-affirmation the quality of "in spite of" and transforms it into courage. Anxiety turns us toward courage, because the other alternative is despair. Courage resists despair by taking anxiety into itself.

This analysis gives the key to understanding pathological anxiety. He who does not succeed in taking his anxiety courageously upon himself can succeed in avoiding the extreme situation of despair by escaping into neurosis.

He still affirms himself but on a limited scale. Neurosis is the "way of avoiding nonbeing by avoiding being. In the neurotic state self-affirmation is not lacking; it can indeed be very strong and

emphasized. But the self which is affirmed is a reduced one. Some or many of its potentialities are not admitted to actualization, because actualization of being implies the acceptance of nonbeing and its anxiety. He who is not capable of a powerful self-affirmation in spite of the anxiety of nonbeing is forced into a weak, reduced self-affirmation. He affirms something which is less than his essential or potential being. He surrenders a part of his potentialities in order to save what is left. This structure explains the ambiguities of the neurotic character. The neurotic is more sensitive than the average man to the threat of nonbeing. And since non- being opens up the mystery of being (see Chapter 6) he can be more creative than the average. This limited ex- tensiveness of self-affirmation can be balanced by greater intensity, but by an intensity which is narrowed to a special point accompanied by a distorted relation to reality as a whole. Even if pathological anxiety has psychotic traits, creative moments can appear. There are sufficient examples of this fact in the biographies of creative men. And as the example of the demoniacs of the New Testament shows, people far below the average can have flashes of insight which the masses and even the disciples of Jesus do not have: the profound anxiety produced by the presence of Jesus reveals to them in a very early stage of his appearance his messianic character. The history of human culture proves that again and again neurotic anxiety breaks through the walls of ordinary self-affirmation and opens up levels of reality which are normally hidden. This however brings us to the question whether the normal self-affirmation of the average man is not even more limited than the pathological self-affirmation of the neurotic, and consequently whether the state of pathological anxiety and self-affirmation is not the ordinary state of man. It has

often been said that there are neurotic elements in everybody and that the difference between the sick and the healthy mind is only a quantitative one. One could support this theory by referring to the psycho- somatic character of most diseases and to the presence of elements of illness in even the most healthy body. Insofar as the psychosomatic correlation is valid this would indicate the presence of elements of illness also in the healthy mind. Is there then a distinction between the neurotic and the average mind which is conceptually sharp even if reality has many transitions?

The difference between the neurotic and the healthy (although potentially neurotic) personality is the following: the neurotic personality, on the basis of his greater sensitivity to nonbeing and consequently of his profounder anxiety, has settled down to a fixed, though limited and unrealistic, self-affirmation. This is, so to speak, the castle to which he has retired and which he defends with all means of psychological resistance against attack, be it from the side of reality or from the side of the analyst. And this resistance is not without some instinctive wisdom. The neurotic is aware of the danger of a situation in which his unrealistic self-affirmation is broken down and no realistic self-affirmation takes its place. The danger is either that he will fall back into another and much better defended neurosis or that with the breakdown of his limited self-affirmation he will fall into an unlimited despair.

The situation is different in the case of the normal selfaffirmation of the average personality. That also is fragmentary. The average person keeps himself away from the extreme situations by dealing courageously with concrete objects of fear. He usually is not aware of nonbeing and anxiety in the depth of his personality. But his fragmentary self-affirmation is not fixed and

defended against an overwhelming threat of anxiety. He is adjusted to reality in many more directions than the neurotic. He is superior in extensity, but he is lacking in the intensity which can make the neurotic creative. His anxiety does not drive him to the construction of imaginary worlds. He affirms himself in unity with those parts of reality which he encounters; and they are not definitively circumscribed. This is what makes him healthy in comparison with the neurotic. The neurotic is sick and needs healing because of the conflict in which he finds himself with reality. In this conflict he is hurt by the reality which permanently penetrates the castle of his defense and the imaginary world behind it. His limited and fixed self-affirmation both preserves him from an intolerable impact of anxiety and destroys him by turning him against reality and reality against him, and by producing another intolerable attack of anxiety. Pathological anxiety, in spite of its creative potentialities, is illness and danger and must be healed by being taken into a courage to be which is extensive as well as intensive.

HAPTER 6. COURAGE AND TRANSCENDENCE (The courage to accept acceptance)

Courage is the self-affirmation of being in spite of the fact of nonbeing. It is the act of the individual self in taking the anxiety of nonbeing upon itself by affirming itself either as part of an embracing whole or in its individual selfhood. Courage always includes a risk, it is always threatened by nonbeing, whether the risk of losing oneself and becoming a thing within the whole of things or of losing one's world in an empty self-relatedness. Courage needs the power of being, a power transcending the non-

being which is experienced in the anxiety of fate and death, which is present in the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness, which is effective in the anxiety of guilt and condemnation. The courage which takes this threefold anxiety into itself must be rooted in a power of being that is greater than the power of oneself and the power of one's world. Neither self-affirmation as a part nor self-affirmation as oneself is beyond the manifold threat of nonbeing. Those who are mentioned as representatives of these forms of courage try to transcend themselves and the world in which they participate in order to find the power of be-ing-itself and a courage to be which is beyond the threat of nonbeing. There are no exceptions to this rule; and this means that every courage to be has an open or hidden religious root. For religion is the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself. In some cases the religious root is carefully covered, in others it is passionately denied; in some it is deeply hidden and in others superficially. But it is never completely absent. For everything that is participates in being-itself, and everybody has some awareness of this participation, especially in the moments in which he experiences the threat of nonbeing. This leads us to a final consideration, the double question: How is the courage to be rooted in being-itself, and how must we understand being-itself in the light of the courage to be? The first question deals with the ground of being as source of the courage to be, the second with courage to be as key to the ground of being.

<...>

The courage to be as the key to being-itself

Nonbeing opening up being

<…> The divine self-affirmation is the power that makes the self-affirmation of the finite being, the courage to be, possible. Only because being-itself has the character of selfaffirmation inspite of nonbeing is courage possible. Courage participates in the self-affirmation of being-itself, it participates in the power of being which prevails against nonbeing. He who receives this power in an act of mystical or personal or absolute faith is aware of the source of his courage to be.

Man is not necessarily aware of this source. In situations of cynicism and indifference he is not aware of it. But it works in him as long as he maintains the courage to take his anxiety upon himself. In the act of the courage to be the power of being is effective in us, whether we recognize it or not. Every act of courage is a manifestation of the ground of being, however questionable the content of the act may be. The content may hide or distort true being, the courage in it reveals true being. Not arguments but the courage to be reveals the true nature of being-itself. By affirming our being we participate in the selfaffirmation of being-itself. There are no valid arguments for the "existence" of God, but there are acts of courage in which we affirm the power of being, whether we know it or not. If we know it, we accept acceptance consciously. If we do not know it, we nevertheless accept it and participate in it. And in our acceptance of that which we do not know the power of being is manifest to us. Courage has revealing power, the courage to be is the key to beingitself.

<…>

The god above god and the courage to be

The ultimate source of the courage to be is the "God above God"; this is the result of our demand to tran- scend theism. Only if the God of theism is transcended can the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness be taken into the courage to be. The God above God is the object of all mystical longing, but mysticism also must be transcended in order to reach him. Mysticism does not take seriously the concrete and the doubt concerning the concrete. It plunges directly into the ground of being and meaning, and leaves the concrete, the world of finite values and meanings, behind. Therefore it does not solve the problem of meaninglessness. In terms of the present religious situation this means that Eastern mysticism is not the solution of the problems of Western Existentialism, although many people attempt this solution. The God above the God of theism is not the devaluation of the meanings which doubt has thrown into the abyss of meaninglessness; he is their potential restitution. Nevertheless absolute faith agrees with the faith implied in mysticism in that both transcend the theistic objectivation of a God who is a being. For mysticism such a God is not more real than any finite being, for the courage to be such a God has disappeared in the abyss of meaninglessness with every other value and meaning.

The God above the God of theism is present, although hidden, in every divine-human encounter. Biblical religion as well as Protestant theology are aware of the paradoxical character of this encounter. They are aware that if God encounters man God is neither object nor subject and is therefore above the scheme into which theism has forced him. They are aware that personalism with respect to God is balanced by a transpersonal presence of the

divine. They are aware that forgiveness can be accepted only if the power of acceptance is effective in man – biblically speaking, if the power of grace is effective in man. They are aware of the paradoxical character of every prayer, of speaking to somebody to whom you cannot speak because he is not "somebody," of asking somebody of whom you cannot ask anything because he gives or gives not before you ask, of saying "thou" to somebody who is nearer to the I than the I is to itself. Each of these paradoxes drives the religious consciousness toward a God above the God of theism.

The courage to be which is rooted in the experience of the God above the God of theism unites and transcends the courage to be as a part and the courage to be as oneself. It avoids both the loss of oneself by participation and the loss of one's world by individualization. The acceptance of the God above the God of theism makes us a part of that which is not also a part but is the ground of the whole. Therefore our self is not lost in a larger whole, which submerges it in the life of a limited group. If the self participates in the power of being-itself it receives itself back. For the power of being acts through the power of the individual selves. It does not swallow them as every limited whole, every collectivism, and every conformism does. This is why the Church, which stands for the power of being-itself or for the God who transcends the God of the religions, claims to be the mediator of the courage to be. A church which is based on the authority of the God of theism cannot make such a claim. It inescapably develops into a collectivist or semicollectivist system itself.

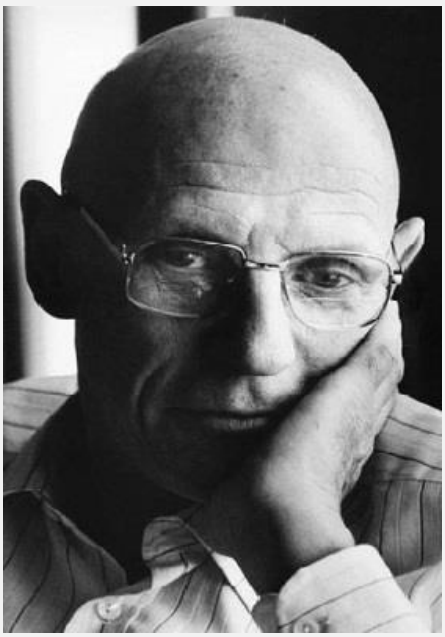
But a church which raises itself in its message and its devotion to the God above the God of theism without sacrificing its concrete symbols can mediate a courage which takes doubt and

meaninglessness into itself. It is the Church under the Cross which alone can do this, the Church which preaches the Crucified who cried to God who remained his God after the God of confidence had left him in the darkness of doubt and meaninglessness. To be as a part in such a church is to receive a courage to be in which one cannot lose one's self and in which one receives one's world.

Absolute faith, or the state of being grasped by the God beyond God, is not a state which appears beside other states of the mind. It never is something separated and definite, an event which could be isolated and described. It is always a movement in, with, and under other states of the mind. It is the situation on the boundary of man's possibilities. It is this boundary. Therefore it is both the courage of despair and the courage in and above every courage. It is not a place where one can live, it is without the safety of words and concepts, it is without a name, a church, a cult, a theology. But it is moving in the depth of all of them. It is the power of being, in which they participate and of which they are fragmentary expressions.

One can become aware of it in the anxiety of fate and death when the traditional symbols, which enable men to stand the vicissitudes of fate and the horror of death have lost their power. When "providence" has become a superstition and "immortality" something imaginary that which once was the power in these symbols can still be present and create the courage to be in spite of the experience of a chaotic world and a finite existence. The Stoic courage returns but not as the faith in universal reason. It returns as the absolute faith which says Yes to being without seeing anything concrete which could conquer the nonbeing in fate and death.

And one can become aware of the God above the God of theism in the anxiety of guilt and condemnation when the traditional symbols that enable men to withstand the anxiety of guilt and condemnation have lost their power. When "divine judgment" is interpreted as a psychological complex and forgiveness as a remnant of the "fatherimage," what once was the power in those symbols can still be present and create the courage to be in spite of the experience of an infinite gap between what we are and what we ought to be. The Lutheran courage returns but not supported by the faith in a judging and forgiving God. It returns in terms of the absolute faith which says Yes although there is no special power that conquers guilt. The courage to take the anxiety of meaninglessness upon oneself is the boundary line up to which the courage to be can go. Beyond it is mere non-being. Within it all forms of courage are re-established in the power of the God above the God of theism. *The courage to be is rooted in the God who appears when God has disappeared in the anxiety of doubt.*



MICHEL FOUCAULT

TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF[75]

I

<…>

CONTEXT OF STUDY

My objective for more than twenty-five years has been to sketch out a history of the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology. The main point is not to accept this knowledge at face value but to analyze these so-called sciences as very specific "truth games" related to specific techniques that human beings use to understand themselves.

As a context, we must understand that there are four major types of these "technologies," each a matrix of practical reason: (I) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3)

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[75] Foucault, Michel. "Technologies of the Self." Lectures at University of Vermont Oct. 1982, in Technologies of the Self, 16-49. Univ. of Massachusets Press, 1988. URL: https://foucault.info/documents/foucault.technologiesOfSelf.en/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform I themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.

These four types of technologies hardly ever function separately, although each one of them is associated with a certain I type of domination. Each implies certain modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes. I wanted to show both their specific nature and their constant interaction. For instance, one sees the relation between manipulating things and domination in Karl Marx's *Capital*, where every technique of production requires modification of individual conduct not only skills but also attitudes.

Usually the first two technologies are used in the study of the sciences and linguistics. It is the last two, the technologies of domination and self, which have most kept my attention. I have attempted a history of the organization of knowledge. with respect to both domination and the self. For example, I studied madness not in terms of the criteria of formal sciences but to show how a type of management of individuals inside and outside of asylums was made possible by this strange discourse. This contact between the technologies of domination of others and those of the self I call governmentality.

Perhaps I've insisted too much in the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of self.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGIES OF THE SELF

I wish to sketch out the development of the hermeneutics of the self in two different contexts which are historically contiguous: (1) Greco-Roman philosophy in the first two centuries A.D. of the early Roman Empire and (2) Christian spirituality and the monastic principles developed in the fourth and fifth centuries of the late Roman Empire.

Moreover, I wish to discuss the subject not only in theory but in relation to a set of practices in late antiquity. These practices were constituted in Greek as epimelesthai sautou, "to take care of yourself", "the concern with self", "to be concerned, to take care of yourself".

The precept "to be concerned with oneself" was, for the Greeks, one of the main principles of cities, one of the main rules for social and personal conduct and for the art of life. For us now this notion is rather obscure and faded. When one is asked "What is the most important moral principle in ancient philosophy?" the immediate answer is not, "Take care of oneself" but the Delphic principle, gnothi sauton ("Know yourself").

Perhaps our philosophical tradition has overemphasized the latter and forgotten the former. The Delphic principle was not an abstract one concerning life; it was technical advice, a rule to be observed for the consultation of the oracle. "Know yourself" meant "Do not Suppose yourself to be a god". Other commentators

suggest that it meant “Be aware of what you really ask when you come to consult the oracle”.

In Greek and Roman texts, the injunction of having to know yourself as always associated with the other principle of having too take care of yourself, and it was that need to care for oneself that brought the Delphic maxim into operation. It is implicit in all Greek and Roman culture and has been explicit since Plato’s Alcibiades I. In the Socratic dialogues, in Xenophon, Hippocrates, and in the Neoplatonist tradition from Albinus on, one had to be concerned with oneself. One had to occupy oneself with oneself before the Delphic principle was brought into action. There was a subordination of the second principle to the former. I have three or four examples of this.

In Plato’s *Apology*, 29, Socrates presents himself before his judges as a master of *epimeleia heautou*. You are “not ashamed to care for the acquisition of wealth and for reputation and honor,” he tells them, but you do not concern yourselves with yourselves, that is, with “wisdom, truth and the perfection of the soul.” He, on the other hand, watches over the citizens to make sure they occupy themselves with themselves.

Socrates says three important things with regard to his invitation to others to occupy themselves with themselves: (1) His mission was conferred on him by the gods, and he won’t abandon it except with his last breath. (2) For this task he demands no reward; he is disinterested; he performs it out of benevolence. (3) His mission is useful for the city more useful than the Athenians military victory at Olympia - because in teaching people too occupy themselves with themselves, he teaches them to occupy themselves with the city.

Eight centuries later, one finds the same notion and the same phrase in Gregory of Nyssa's treatise, *On Virginity*, but with an entirely different meaning. Gregory did not mean the movement by which one takes care of oneself and the city; he meant the movement by which one renounces the world and marriage and detaches oneself from the flesh and, with virginity of heart and body, recovers the immortality of which one has been deprived. In commentating on the parable of the drachma (Luke 15:8 - 10), Gregory exhorts one to light the lamp and turn the house over and search, until gleaming in the shadow one sees the drachma within. In order to recover the efficacy which God has printed on one's soul and which the body has tarnished, one must take care of oneself and search every corner of the soul (De Virg. 12). We can see that Christian asceticism, like ancient philosophy, places itself under the same sign of concern with oneself. The obligation to know oneself is one of the elements of its central preoccupation. Between these two extremes - Socrates and Gregory of Nyssa - taking care of oneself constituted not only a principle but also a constant practice.

I have two more examples. The first Epicurean text to serve as a manual of morals was the *Letter to Menoeceus* (Diogenes Laërtius 10.122 - 38). Epicurus writes that it is never too early, never too late, to occupy oneself with one's soul. One should philosophize when one is young and also when one is old. It was a task to be carried on throughout life. Teachings about everyday life were organized around taking care of oneself in order to help every member of the group with the mutual work of salvation.

Another example comes from an Alexandrian text, *On the Contemplative Life*, by Philo of Alexandria. He describes an

obscure, enigmatic group on the periphery of Hellenistic and Hebraic culture called the Therapeutae, marked by its religiosity. It was an austere community, devoted to reading, to healing meditation, to individual and collective prayer, and to meeting for a spiritual banquet (*agapä*, "feast"). These practices stemmed from the principle task, concern for oneself (De Vita Cont. 36).

This is the point of departure for some possible analysis for the care of the self in ancient culture. I would like to analyze the relation between care and self-knowledge, the relation found in Greco-Roman and Christion traditions between the care of oneself and the too well-known principle "Know yourself". As there are different forms of care, there are different forms of self.

SUMMARY

There are several reasons why "Know yourself" has obscured "Take care of yourself". First, there has been a profound transformation in the moral principles of Western society. We find it difficult to base rigorous morality and austere principles on the precept that we should give ourselves more care than anything else in the world. We are more inclined to see taking care of ourselves as an immorality, as a means of escape from all possible rules. We inherit the tradition of Christian morality which makes self-renunciation the condition for salvation. To know oneself was paradoxically the way to self-renunciation.

We also inherit a secular tradition which respects external law as the basis for morality. How then can respect for the self be the basis for morality? We are the inheritors of a social morality which seeks the rules for acceptable behavior in relations with others. Since the sixteenth century, criticism of established morality has been undertaken in the name of the importance of recognizing and

knowing the self. Therefore, it is difficult to see concern with oneself as compatible with morality. “Know thyself” has obscured “Take care of yourself” because our morality, a morality of asceticism, insists that the self is that which one can reject.

The second reason is that, in theoretical philosophy from Descartes to Husserl, knowledge of the self (the thinking subject) takes on an ever-increasing importance as the first step in the theory of knowledge.

To summarize: There has been an inversion between the hierarchy of the two principles of antiquity, “Take care of yourself” and “Know thyself”. In Greco-Roman culture knowledge of oneself appeared as the consequence of taking care of yourself. In the modern world, knowledge of oneself constitutes the fundamental principle.

II

The first philosophical elaboration of the concern with taking care of oneself that I wish to consider is found in Plato’s *Alcibiades I.* The date of its writing is uncertain, and it may be a spurious Platonic dialogue. It is not my intention to study dates but to point the principal features of the care of self which is the center of the dialogue.

The Neoplatonists in the third or fourth century A.D. show the significance given to this dialogue and the importance it assumed in the classical tradition. They wanted to organize Plato’s dialogues as pedagogy and as the matrix for encyclopedic knowledge. They considered *Alcibiades* to be the first dialogue of Plato, the first to be read, the first to be studied. It was *arche*. In the second century Albinus said that every gifted young man who wanted to stand apart from politics and practice virtue should

study the Alcibiades. It provided the point of departure and a program for all Platonic philosophy. “Taking care of oneself” was its first principle. I would like to analyze the care of self in the *Alcibiades* I in terms of three aspects.

1. How is this question introduced into the dialogue? What are the reasons Alcibiades and Socrates are brought to the notion of taking care of one’s self?

Alcibiades is about to begin his public and political life. He wishes to speak before the people and be all-powerful in the city. He is not satisfied with his traditional status, with the privileges of his birth and heritage. He wishes to gain personal power over all others both inside and outside the city. At this point of intersection and transformation, Socrates intervenes and declares his love for Alcibiades. Alcibiades can no longer be the beloved; he must become a lover. He must become active in the political and the love game. Thus, there is a dialect between political and erotic discourse. Alcibiades makes his transition in specific ways in both politics and love.

An ambivalence is evident in Alcibiade’s political and erotic vocabulary. During his adolescence Alcibiades was desirable and had many admirers, but now that his beard is growing, his lovers disappear. Earlier, he had rejected them all in the bloom of his beauty because he wanted to be dominant, not dominated. He did not wish to be dominated by youth, but now he wants to dominate others. This is the moment Socrates appears, and he succeeds where others have failed: He will make Alcibiades submit, but in a different sense. They make a pact - Alcibiades will submit to his lover. Socrates, not in a physical but in a spiritual sense. The

intersection of political ambition and philosophical love is “taking care of oneself”.

2. In that relationship, why should Alcibiades be concerned with himself, and why is Socrates concerned with that concern of Alcibiades? Socrates asks Alcibiades about his personal capacity and the nature of his ambition. Does he know the meaning of the rule of law, of justice or concord?

Alcibiades clearly knows nothing. Socrates calls upon him to compare his education with that of the Persian and Spartan kings, his rivals. Spartan and Persian princes have teachers in Wisdom, Justice, Temperance, and Courage. By comparison, Alcibiades’ education is like that of an old, ignorant slave. He doesn’t know these things so he can’t apply himself to knowledge. But, says Socrates, it’s not too late. To help him gain the upper hand - to acquire *techne* - Alcibiades must apply himself, he must take care of himself. But Alcibiades doesn’t know to what he must apply himself. What is this knowledge he seeks? He is embarrassed and confused. Socrates calls upon him to take heart.

In 127d of the *Alcibiades* we find the first appearance of the phrase, *epimelesthai sautou*. Concern for the self always refers to an active political and erotic state. *Epimelesthai* expresses something much more serious than the simple fact of paying attention. It involves various things: taking pains with one’s holdings and one’s health. It is always a real activity and not just attitude. It is used in reference to the activity of a farmer tending his fields, his cattle, and his house, or to the job of the king in taking care of his city and citizens, or to the worship of ancestors or gods, or as a medical term to signify the fact of caring. It is highly significant that the concern for the self in *Alcibiades I* is directly

related to a defective pedagogy, one which concerns political ambition and a specific moment of life.

3. The rest of the text is devoted to an analysis of this notion of *epimelesthai*, "taking pains with oneself". It is divided into two questions: What is this self of which one has to take care. and of what does that care consist?

First, what is the self (129b)? Self is a reflective pronoun, and it has two meanings. Auto means "the same", but it also conveys the notion of identity. The latter meaning shifts the question from "What is this self?" to "What is the plateau on which I shall find my identity?"

Alcibiades tries to find the self in a dialectical movement. When you take care of the body, you don't take care of the self. The self is not clothing, tools, or possessions. It is to be found in the principle which uses these tools, a principle not of the body but of the soul. You have to worry about your soul - that is the principle activity of caring for yourself. The care of the self is the care of the activity and not the care of the soul-as-substance.

The second question is: How must we take care of this principle of activity, the soul? Of what does this care consist? One must know of what the soul consists. The soul cannot know itself except by looking at itself in a similar element, a mirror. Thus, it must contemplate the divine element. In this divine contemplation, the soul will be able to discover rules serve as a basis for behavior and political action. The effort of the soul to know itself is the principle on which just political action can be founded, and Alcibiades will be a good politicians insofar as he contemplates his soul in the divine element.

Often the discussion gravitates around and is phrased in terms of the Delphic principle, “Know yourself”. To take care of oneself consists of knowing oneself. Knowing oneself becomes the object of the quest of concern for self. Being occupied with oneself and political activities are linked. The dialogue ends when Alcibiades knows he must take care of himself by examining his soul.

This early text illuminates the historical background of the precept “taking care of oneself” and sets out four main problems that endure throughout antiquity, although the solutions offered often differ from those in Plato’s *Alcibiades*.

First, there is the problem of the relation between being occupied with oneself and political activity. In the later Hellenistic and imperial periods, the question is presented in an alternative way: When is it better to turn away from political activity to concern oneself with oneself?

Second, there is a problem of the relationship between being occupied with oneself and pedagogy. For Socrates, occupying oneself if the duty of a young man, but later in the Hellenistic period it is seen as a permanent duty of one’s whole life.

Third, there is a problem of the relationship between concern for oneself and the knowledge of oneself. Plato gave priority to the Delphic maxim, “Know yourself”. The privileged position of “Know yourself” is characteristic of all Platonists. Later, in the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman periods, this is reversed. The accent was not on the knowledge of the self but on the concern with oneself. The latter was given an autonomy and even a pre-eminence as a philosophical issue.

Fourth, there is the problem of the relationship between the care of the self and philosophical love, of the relation to the master.

In the Hellenistic and imperial periods, the Socratic notion of "taking care of oneself" became a common, universal philosophical theme. "Care of the self" was accepted by Epicurus and his followers, by the Cynics, and by such Stoics as Seneca, Rufus, and Galen. The Pythagoreans gave attention to the notion of an ordered life in common. This theme of taking care of oneself was not abstract advice but a widespread activity, a network of obligations and services to the soul. Following Epicurus himself, the Epicureans believed that its never too late to occupy oneself with oneself. The Stoics say you must attend to the self, "retire into the self and stay there." Lucian parodied the notion. It was an extremely widespread activity and it brought about competition between rhetoricians and those who turned toward themselves, particularly over the question of the master.

There were charlatans, of course. But certain individuals took it seriously. It was generally acknowledged that it was good to be reflective, at least briefly. Pliny advises a friend to set aside a few moments a day, or several weeks or months, for a retreat into himself. This was an active leisure - to study, to read, to prepare for misfortune or death. It was a meditation and a preparation.

Writing was also important in the culture of taking care of oneself. One of the main features of taking care involved taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths on needed. Socrate's letters are an example of this self-exercise.

In traditional political life, oral culture was largely dominant, and therefore rhetoric was important. But the development of the administrative structures and the bureaucracy of the imperial period increased the amount and role of writing in the political sphere. In Plato's writings, dialogue gave way to the literary pseudo-dialogue. But by the Hellenistic age, writing prevailed, and real dialectic passed to correspondence. Taking care of oneself became linked to a constant writing activity. The self is something to write about, a theme or object (subject) of writing activity. That is not a modern trait born of the Reformation or of romanticism; it is one of the most ancient Western traditions. It was well established and deeply rooted when Augustine started writing his Confessions.

The new concern with self involved a new experience of self. The new form of the experience of the self is to be seen in the first and second century when introspection becomes more and more detailed. A relation developed between writing and vigilance. Attention was paid to nuances of life, mood, and reading, and the experience of oneself was intensified and widened by virtue of this act of writing. A whole field of experience opened which earlier was absent.

One can compare Cicero to the later Seneca or Marcu Aurelius. We see, for example, Seneca's and Marcus's meticulous concern with the details of daily life, with the movements of the spirit, with self-analysis. Everything in the imperial period is present in Marcus Aurelius's letter of 144-45 A.D. to Fronto:

Hail, my sweetest of masters.

We are well. I slept somewhat late owing to my slight cold, which seems now to have subsided. So from five A.M. till 9, I spent

the time partly reading some of Cato's Agriculture, partly in writing not quite such wretched stuff, by heavens, as yesterday. Then, after paying my respects to my father, I relieved my throat, I will not say by gargling - though the word gargarisso is, I believe, found in Novius and elsewhere - but by swallowing honey water as far as the gullet and ejecting it again. After easing my throat I went off to my father and attended him at a sacrifice. Then we went to luncheon. What do you think we ate? A wee bit of bread, though I saw others devouring beans, onions, and herrings full of roe. We then worked hard at grape-gathering, and had a good sweat, and were merry and, as the poet says, "still left some clusters hanging high as gleanings of the vintage." After six-o'clock we came home.

I did but little work and that to no purpose. Then I had a long chat with my little mother as she sat on the bed. My talk was this: "What do you think my Fronto is now doing?" Then she: "And what do you think my Gratia is doing?" Then I: "And what do you think our little sparrow, the wee Gratia, is doing?" Whilst we were chattering in this way and disputing which of us loved the one or other of you two the better, the gong sounded, an intimation that my father had gone to his bath. So we had supper after we had bathed in the oil-press room; I do not mean bathed in the oil-press room, but when we had bathed, had supper there, and we enjoyed hearing the yokels chaffing one another. After coming back, before I turn over and snore, I get my task done and give my dearest of masters an account of the day's doings, and if I could miss him more, I would not grudge wasting away a little more. Farewell, my Fronto, wherever you are, most honey-sweet, my love, my delight. How is it between you and me? I love you and you are away.

This letter presents a description of everyday life. All the details of taking care of oneself are here, all the unimportant things he has done. Cicero tells only important things, but in Aurelius's letter these details are important because they are you - what you thought, what you felt.

The relation between the body and the soul is interesting too. For the Stoics, the body was not so important, but Marcus Aurelius speaks of himself, his health, what he has eaten, his sore throat. This is quite characteristic of the ambiguity about the body in this cultivation of the self. Theoretically, the culture is soul-orientated, but all the concerns of the body take on a huge importance. In Pliny and Seneca there is great hypochondria. They retreat to the countryside. They have intellectual activities bu rural activities as well. They eat and engage in the activity of peasants. The importance of the rural retreat in this letter is that nature helps put one in contact with oneself.

<…>

Finally, in the last lines, there is an allusion to the examination of conscience at the end of the day. Aurelius goes to bed and looks in the notebook to see what he was going to do and how it corresponds to what he did. The letter is the transcription of that examination of conscience. It stresses what you did, not what you thought. That is the difference between practice in the Hellenistic and imperial periods and later monastic practice. In Seneca too there are only deeds, not thoughts. But it does prefigure Christian confession.

This genre of epistles shows a side apart from the philosophy of the era. The examination of conscience begins with this letter

writing. Diary writing comes later. It dates from the Christian Era and focuses on the notion of the struggle of the soul.

III

In my discussion of Plato's *Alcibiades, I* have isolated three major themes: first, the relation between care for oneself and care for the political life; second, the relation between taking care of the self and defective education; and third, the relation between taking care of oneself and knowing oneself. Whereas we saw in the *Alcibiades* the close relation between "Take care of yourself" and "Know yourself", taking care of yourself eventually became absorbed into knowing yourself.

We can see three themes in Plato, also in the Hellenistic period, and four to five centuries later in Seneca, Plutarch, Epicetus, and the like. If the problems are the same, the solutions and themes are quite different and, in some cases, the opposite of the Platonic meanings.

First, to be concerned with self in the Hellenistic and Roman periods is not exclusively a preparation for political life. Care of the self has become a universal principle. One must leave politics to take better care of the self.

Second, the concern with oneself is not just obligatory for young people concerned with their education; it is a way of living for everybody throughout their lives.

Third, even if self-knowledge plays an important role in taking care of oneself, it involves other relationships as well.

I want to discuss briefly the first two points: the universality of the care of the self independent of political life, and the care of the self throughout one's life.

1. A medical model was substituted for Plato's pedagogical model. The care of the self isn't another kind of pedagogy; it has to become permanent medical care. Permanent medical care is one of the central features of the care of the self. One must become the doctor of oneself.

2. Since we have to take care throughout, the objective is no longer to get prepared for adult, or for another life, or for another life, but to get prepared for a certain complete achievement of life. This achievement is complete at the moment just prior to death - of old age as completion - is an inversion of the traditional Greek values on youth.

3. Lastly, we have the various practices to which cultivation of self has given rise and the relation of self-knowledge to these.

In *Alcibiades I*, the soul had a mirror relation to itself, which relates to the concept of memory and justifies dialogue as a method of discovering truth in the soul. But, from the time of Plato to the Hellenistic age, the relationship between care of the self and knowledge of the self changed. We may note two perspectives.

In the philosophical movements of Stoicism in the imperial period there is a different conception of truth and memory, and another method of examining the self. First, we see the disappearance of dialogue and the increasing importance of a new pedagogical relationship - a new pedagogical game where the master/teacher speaks and doesn't ask questions and the disciple doesn't answer but must listen and keep silent. A culture of silence becomes more and more important. In Pythagorean culture, disciples kept silent for five years as a pedagogical rule. They didn't ask questions or speak up during the lesson, but they developed the art of listening. This is the positive condition for acquiring

truth. The tradition is picked up during the imperial period, where we see the beginning of the culture of silence and the art of listening rather than the cultivation of dialogue as in Plato

To learn the art of listening, we have to read Plutarch's treatise on the art of listening to lectures (*Peri tou akouein*). At the beginning of this treatise, Plutarch says that, following schooling, we have to learn to listen to *logos* throughout our adult life. The art of listening is crucial so you can tell what is true and what is dissimulation, what is rhetorical truth and what is falsehood in the discourse of the rhetoricans. Listening is linked to the fact that you're not under the control of the masters but you must listen to *logos*. You keep silent at the lecture. You think about it afterward. This is the art of listening to the voice of the master and the voice of reason in yourself.

The advice may seem banal, but I think it's important. In his teatise On the *Contemplative Life*, Philo of Alexandria describes banquets of silence, not debauched banquets with wine, boys, revelry, and dialogue. There is instead a teacher who gives a monologue on the interpretation of the Bible and a very precise indication of the way people must listen (*De Vita Cont. 77*). For example, they must always assume the same posture when listening. The morphology of this notion is an interesting theme in monasticism and pedagogy henceforth.

In Plato the themes of contemplation of self and care of self are related dialectically through dialogue. Now in the imperial period we have themes of, on one side, the obligation of listening to truth and, on the other side, of looking and listening to the self for the truth within. The difference between the one era and the other

is one of the great signs of the disappearance of the dialectical structure.

What was an examination of conscience in this culture, and how does one look at oneself? For the Pythagoreans, the examination of conscience had to do with purification. Since sleep was related to death as a kind of encounter with the gods, you had to purify yourself before going to sleep. Remembering the dead was an exercise for the memory. But in the Hellenistic and the early imperial periods, you see this practice acquitting new values and signification. There are several relevant texts: Seneca's *De Ira*, and *De Tranquilitate* and the beginning of Marcus Aurelius's fourth book of *Meditations*.

Seneca's *De Ira* (book 3) contains some traces of the old tradition. He describes an examination of conscience. The same thing was recommended by the Epicureans, and the practice was rooted in the Pythagorean tradition. The goal was purification of the conscience using a mnemonic device. Do good things, have a good examination of the self, and a good sleep follows together with good dreams, which is contact with the gods.

Seneca seems to use juridical language, and it seems that the self is both the judge and the accused. Seneca is the judge and prosecutes the self so that the examination is a kind of trial. But if you look closer, it's rather different than a court. Seneca uses terms related not to juridical but to administrative practices, as when a comptroller looks at the books or when a building inspector examines a building. Self-examination is taking stock. Faults are simply good intentions left undone. The rule is a means of doing something correctly, not judging what has happened in the past. Later, Christian confession will look for bad intentions.

It is this administrative view of life much more than the juridical model that is important. Seneca isn't a judge who has to punish but a stock-taking administrator. He is a permanent administrator of himself, not a judge of his past. He sees that everything has been done correctly following the rule but not he law. It is not real faults for which he reproaches himself but rather his lack of success. His errors are of strategy, not of moral character. He wants to make adjustments between what he wanted to do and what he had done and reactivate the rules of conduct, not excavate his guilt. In Christian confession, the penitent is obliged to memorize laws but does so in order to discover his sins.

For Seneca it isn't a question of discovering truth in the subject but of remembering truth, recovering a truth which has been forgotten. Second, the subject doesn't forget himself, his nature, origin, or his supernatural affinity, but the rules of conduct, what he ought to have done. Third, the recollection of errors committed in the day measures the distinction between what has been done and what should have been done. Fourth, the subject is not the operating ground for the process of deciphering but is the point where rules of conduct come together in memory. The subject constitutes the intersection between acts which have to be regulated and rules for what ought to be done. This is quite different from the Platonic conception and from the Christian conception of conscience.

The Stoics spiritualized the notion of *anachoresis*, the retreat of an army, the hiding of an escaped slave from his master, or the retreat into the country away from the towns, as in Marcus Aurelius's country retreat. A retreat into the country becomes a spiritual retreat into oneself. It is a general attitude and also a

precise act every day; you retire into the self to discover - but not to discover faults and deep feelings, only to remember rules of action, the main laws of behavior. It is mnemotechnical formula.

IV

I have spoken of three Stoic techniques of the self: letters to friends and disclosure of self; examination of self and conscience, including a review of what was done, of what should have been done, and comparison of the two. Now I want to consider the third Stoic technique, askesis, not a disclosure of the secret self but a remembering.

For Plato, one must discover the truth that is within one. For the Stoics, truth is not in oneself but in the logoi, the teaching of the teachers. One memorizes what one has heard, converting the statements one hears into rules of conduct. The subjectivization of truth is the aim of these techniques. During the imperial period , one couldn't assimilate ethical principles without a theoretical framework such as science, as for example in Lucretius's *De Rerum Naturae.* There are structural questions underlying the practice of the examination of the self every night. I want to underscore the fact that in Stoicism it's not the deciphering of the self, not the means to disclose secrecy, which is important; it's the memory of what you've done and what you've had to do.

In Christianity asceticism always refers to a certain renunciation of the self and of reality because most of the time your self is a part of that reality you have to renounce in order to get access to another level of reality. This move to attain the renunciation of the self distinguishes Christian asceticism.

In the philosophical tradition dominated by Stoicism, askesis means not renunciation but the progressive consideration of self, or mastery over oneself, obtained not through the renunciation of reality but through the acquisition and assimilation of truth. It has as its final aim not preparation for another reality but access to the reality of this world. The Greek word for this is *paraskeuazõ* ("to get prepared"). It is a set of practices by which one can acquire, assimilate, and transform truth into a permanent principle of action. *Alethia* becomes *ethos*. It is a process of becoming more subjective.

What are the principle features of *askesis*? They include exercises in which the subject puts himself into a situation in which he can verify whether he can confront events and use the discourse with which he is armed. It is a question of testing the preparation. Is this truth assimilated enough to become ethics so that we can behave as we must when an event presents itself?

The Greeks characterized the two poles of those exercises by the terms *melete* and *gymnasia*. *Melete* means "meditation", according to the Latin translation, meditatio. It has the same root as *epimelesthai*. It is a rather vague term, a technical term borrowed from rhetoric. *Melete* is the work one undertook in order to prepare a discourse or an improvisation by thinking over useful terms and arguments. You had to anticipate the real situation through dialogue in your thoughts. The philosophical meditation is this kind of meditation: It is composed of memorizing responses and reactivating those memories by placing oneself in a situation where one can imagine how one would react. One judges the reasoning one should use in an imaginary exercise ("Let us suppose…) in order to test an action or event (for example, "How

would I react?"). Imagining the articulation of possible events to test how you would react - that's meditation.

The most famous exercise of meditation is the *premeditatio mallorum* as practiced by the Stoics. It is an ethical, imaginary experience. In appearance it's a rather dark and pessimistic vision about eidetic reduction.

The Stoics developed three eidetic reductions of future misfortune. First, it is not a question of imagining the future as it is likely to turn out but to imagine the worst which can happen, even if there's little chance that it will turn out that way - the worst as certainty, as actualizing what could happen, not as calculation of probability. Second, one shouldn't envisage things as possibly taking place in the distant future but as already actual and in the process of taking place. For example, imagining not that one might be exiled but rather that one is already exiled, subjected to torture, and dying. Third, one does this not in order to experience inarticulate sufferings but in order to convince oneself that they are not real ills. The reduction of all that is possible, of all the duration and of all the misfortunes, reveals not something bad but what we have to accept. It consists of having at the same time the future and the present event. The Epicureans were hostile to it because they thought it was useless. They thought it better to recollect and memorize past pleasures in order to derive pleasure from present events.

At the opposite pole is *gymnasia* ("to train oneself"). While meditatio is an imaginary experience that trains thought, gymnasia is training in a real situation, even if it's been artificially induced. There is a long tradition behind this: sexual abstinence, physical privation, and other rituals of purification.

Those practices of abstinence have other meanings than purification or witnessing demonic force, as in Pythagoras and Socrates. In the culture of the Stoics, their function is to establish and test the independence of the individual with regard to the external world. For example, in Plutarch's *De Genio Socratis*, one gives oneself over to very hard sporting activities. Or one temps oneself by placing oneself in front of many tantalizing dishes and then renouncing these appetizing dishes. Then you call your slaves and give them the dishes, and you take the meal prepared for the slaves. Another example is Seneca's eighteenth letter to Lucilius. He prepares for a great feast day by acts of mortification of the flesh in order to convince himself that poverty is not an evil and he can endure it.

Between these poles of training in thought and training in reality, *melete* and *gymnasia*, there are a whole series of intermediate possibilities. Epictetus provides the best example of the middle ground between these poles. He wants to watch perpetually over representations, a technique which culminates in Freud. There are two metaphors important from his point of view: the night watchman, who doesn't admit anyone into town if that person can't prove who he is (we must be "watchman" over the flux of thought), and the money changer, who verifies the authenticity of currency, looks at it, weighs and verifies it. We have to be money changers of our own representations of our thoughts, vigilantly testing them, verifying them, their metal, weight, effigy.

The same metaphor of the money changer is found in the Stoics and in early Christian literature but with different meanings. When Epictetus says you have to be a money changer, he means as soon as an idea comes to mind you have to think of the rules

you must apply to evaluate. For John Cassian, being a money changer and looking at your thoughts means something very different: It means you must try to decipher it, at the root of the movement which brings you the representations, there is or is not concupiscence or desire - if your innocent thought has evil origins; if you have something underlying which is the great seducer, which is perhaps hidden, the money of your thought.

In Epictetus there are two exercises: sophistic and ethical. The first are exercises borrowed from school: question-and-answer games. This must be an ethical game; that is, it must teach a moral lesson. The second are more ambulatory exercises. In the morning you go for a walk, and you test your reactions to that walk. The purpose of both exercises is control of representations, not the deciphering of truth. They are reminders about conforming to the rules in the face of adversity. A pre-Freudian machine of censorship is described word for word in the tests of Epictetus and Cassian. For Epictetus, the control of representations means not deciphering but recalling principles of acting and thus seeing, through self-examination, if they govern your life. It is a kind of permanent self-examination. You have to be your own censor. The meditation on death is the culmination of all these exercises.

In addition to letters, examination, and *askesis*, we must now evoke a fourth technique in the examination of the self, the interpretation of dreams. It was to have an important destiny in the nineteenth century, but it occupied a relatively marginal position in the ancient world. Philosophers had an ambivalent attitude toward the interpretation of dreams. Most Stoics are critical and skeptical about such interpretation. But there is still the popular and general practice of it. There were experts who were able to

interpret dreams, including Pythagoras and some of the Stoics, and some experts who wrote books to teach people to interpret their own dreams. There were huge amounts of literature on how to do it, but the only surviving manual The *Interpretation of Dreams* by Artemidorus (second century A.D.). Dream interpretation was important because in antiquity the meaning of a dream was an announcement of a future event.

I should mention two other documents dealing with the importance of dream interpretation for everyday life. The first is by Synesius of Cyrene in the fourth century A.D. He was well known and cultivated. Even though he was not a Christian, he asked to be a bishop. His remarks on dreams are interesting, for public divination was forbidden in order to spare the emperor bad news. Therefore, one had to interpret one's own dreams; one had to be a self-interpreter. To do it, one had to remember not only one's dreams but the events before and after. One had to record what happened every day, both the life of the day and the life of the night.

Aelius Aristides' *Sacred Discourses*, written in the second century, records his dreams and explains how to interpret them. He believed that in the interpretation of dreams we receive advice from the gods about remedies for illness. With this work, we are at the crossing point of two kinds of discourses. It isn't the writing of self's daily activities that is the matrix of the Sacred Discourses but the ritual inscription of praises to the gods that have healed one.

V

I wish to examine the scheme of one of the main techniques of the self in early Christianity and what it was as a truth game. To do so, I must look at the transition from pagan to Christian culture

in which it is possible to see clear-cut continuities and discontinuities.

Christianity is not only a salvation religion, it is a confessional religion. It imposes very strict obligations of truth, dogma, and canon, more so than do the pagan religions. Truth obligations to believe this or that were and are still very numerous. The duty to accept a set of obligations, to hold certain books as permanent truth, to accept authoritarian decisions in matters of truth, not only to believe certain things but to show that one believes, and to accept institutional authority are all characteristic of Christianity.

Christianity requires anther form of truth obligation different from faith. Each person has the duty to know who he is, that is, to try to know what is happening inside him, to acknowledge faults, to recognize temptations, to locate desires, and everyone is obliged to disclose these things to either to God or to others in the community and hence to bear public or private witness against oneself. The truth obligations of faith and the self are linked together. This link permits a purification of the soul impossible without self-knowledge.

It's not the same in the Catholic as in the Reform tradition. But the main features of both are an ensemble of truth obligations dealing with faith, books, dogma, and one dealing with truth, heart and soul. Access to truth cannot be conceived of without purity of the soul. Purity of the soul is the consequence of self-knowledge and a condition for understanding the text; in Augustine: *Quis facit vertatem* (to make truth in oneself, to get access to the light).

I'd like to analyze the ways by which, in order to get access to the light, the church conceived of illumination: the disclosure of the self. The sacrament of penance and the confession of sins are

rather late innovations. Christians of the first centuries had different forms for discovering and deciphering truth about themselves. One of the two main forms of those disclosures can be characterized by the word exomologesis, or “recognition of fact”. Even the Latin fathers used this Greek term with no exact translation. For Christians it meant to recognize publicly the truth of their faith or to recognize publicly that they were Christians.

The word also had a penitential meaning. When a sinner seeks penance, he must visit a bishop and ask for it. In early Christianity, penitence was not an act or a ritual but a status imposed on somebody who had committed very serious sins.

Exomologesis was a ritual of recognizing oneself as a sinner and a penitent. It had several characteristics. First, you were penitent for four to ten years, and this status affected your life. There was fasting, and there were rules about clothing and prohibitions about sex. The individual was marked so he couldn’t live the same life as others. Even after his reconciliation, he suffered from a number of prohibitions; for example, he could not marry or become a priest.

Within this status you find the obligation of *exomologesis*. The sinner seeks his penance. He visits the bishop and asks the bishop to impose on him the status of a penitent. He must explain why he wants the status, and he has to explain his faults. This was not a confession; it was a condition of the status. Later, in the medieval period, *exomologesis* became a ritual which took place at the end of the period of penance just before reconciliation. This ceremony placed him among the other Christians. Of this recognition ceremony, Tertullian says that wearing a hair shirt and ashes, wretchedly dressed, the sinner stands humbled before the church.

Then he prostrates himself and kisses the brethren's knees (*On Repentance* 9-12). *Exomologesis* is not a verbal behavior but the dramatic recognition of one's status as a penitent. Much later, in the *Epistles* of Jerome, there is a description of the penitence of Fabiola, a Roman lady. During these days, Fabiola was in the ranks of penitents. People wept with her, lending drama to her public chastisement.

Recognition also designates the entire process that the penitent experiences in this status over the years. He is the aggregate of manifested penitential behavior, of self-punishment as well as of self-revelation. The acts by which he punishes himself are indistinguishable from the acts by which he reveals himself. Self-punishment and the voluntary expression of the self are bound together. This link is evident in many writings. Cyprian, for example, talks of exhibitions of shame and modesty. Penance is not nominal but dramatic.

To prove suffering, to show shame, to make visible humility and exhibit modesty - these are the main features of punishment.

Penitence in early Christianity is a way of life acted out at all times by accepting the obligation to disclose oneself. It must be visibly represented and accompanied by others who recognize the ritual. This approach endured until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Tertullian uses the term *publicatio sui* to characterize *exomologesis*. Publicatio sui is related to Seneca's daily self-examination, which was, however, completely private. For Seneca, *exomologesis or pulicatio sui* doesn't imply verbal analysis of deeds or thoughts; it is only a somatic and symbolic expression. What was private for the Stoics was public for the Christians.

What were its functions? First, this publication was a way to rub out sin and to restore the purity acquired by baptism.

Second, it was also to show a sinner as he is. That's the paradox at the heart of exomologesis; it rubs out the sin and yet reveals the sinner. The greater part of the act of penitence was not telling the truth of sin but showing the true sinful being of the sinner. It was not a way for the sinner to explain his sins but a way to present himself as a sinner.

Why should showing forth efface the sins? Exposé is the heart of *exomologesis*. In the Christianity of the first centuries, Christian authors had recourse to three models to explain the relation between the paradox of rubbing out sins and disclosing oneself.

The first is the medical model: One must show one's wounds in order to be cured. Another model, which was less frequent, was the tribunal model of judgement. One always appeases one's judge by confessing faults. The sinner plays devil's advocate, as will the devil on the Day of Judgement.

The most important model used to explain *exomologesis* was the model of death, of torture, or of martyrdom. The theories and practices of penance were elaborated around the problem of the man who prefers to die rather than to compromise or abandon the faith. The way the martyr faces death is the model for the penitent. For the relapsed to be reintegrated into the church, he must expose himself voluntarily to ritual martyrdom. Penance is the affect of change, of rupture with self, past and world. It's a way to show that you are able to renounce life and self, to show that you can face and accept death. Penitence of sin doesn't have as its target the establishing of an identity but serves instead to mark the refusal of the self, the breaking away from self: *Ego non sum, ego*. This

formula is at the heart of publicatio sui. It represents a break with one's past identity. These ostentatious gestures have the function of showing the truth of the state of being the sinner. Self-revelation is at the same time self-destruction.

The difference between Stoic and Christian traditions is that in the Stoic tradition examination of the self, judgement, and discipline show the way to self-knowledge by superimposing truth about self through memory, that is, by memorizing the rules. In *exomologesis*, the penitent superimposes truth about self by violent rupture and dissociation. It is important to emphasize that this *exomologesis* is not verbal. It is symbolic, ritual, and theatrical.

VI

During the fourth century we find a very different technology for the disclosure of the self, *exagoreeusis*, much less famous than *exomologesis* but more important. This one is reminiscent of the verbalizing exercises in relation to a teacher/master of the pagan philosophical schools. We can see the transfer of several Stoic technologies of the self to Christian spiritual techniques.

At least one example of self-examination, proposed by John Chrysostom, was exactly the same form and the same administrative character as that described by Seneca in De Ira. In the morning we must take account of our expenses, and in the evening we must ask ourselves to render account of our conduct of ourselves, to examine what is to our advantage and what is prejudicial against us, with prayers instead of indiscrete words. That is exactly the Senecan style of self-examination. It also important to note that this self-examination is rare in Christian literature.

The well-developed and elaborated practice of the self-examination in monastic Christianity is different from the Senecan self-examination and very different from the Chryssostom and from *exomologesis*. This new kind of practice must be understood from the point of view of two principles of Christian spirituality : obedience and contemplation.

In Seneca, the relationship of the disciple with the master was important, but it was instrumental and professional. It was founded on the capacity of the master to lead the disciple to a happy and autonomous life through good advice. The relationship would end when the disciple got access to that life.

For a long series of reasons, obedience has a very different character in monastic life. It differs from the Greco-Roman type of relation to the master in the sense that obedience isn't based just upon a need for self-improvement but must bear on all aspects of a monk's life. There is no element in the life of the of the monk which may escape from this fundamental and permanent relation of total obedience to the master. John Cassian repeats an old principle from the oriental tradition: "Everything the monk does without permission of his master constitutes a theft." Here obedience is complete control of behavior by the master, not a final autonomous state. It is a sacrifice of the self, of the subject's own will. This is the new technology of the self.

The monk must have the permission of his director to do anything, even die. Everything he does without permission is stealing. There is not a single moment when the monk can be autonomous. Even when he becomes a director himself, he must retain the spirit of obedience. He must keep the spirit of obedience

as a permanent sacrifice of the complete control of behavior by the master. The self must constitute self through obedience.

The second feature of monastic life is that contemplation is considered the supreme good. It is the obligation of the monk to turn his thoughts continuously to that point which is God and to make sure that his heart is pure enough to see God. The goal is permanent contemplation of God.

The technology of the self, which developed from obedience and contemplation in the monastery, presents some peculiar characteristics. Cassian gives a rather clear exposition of this technology of the self, a principle of self-examination which he borrowed from the Syrian and Egyptian monastic traditions.

This technology of self-examination of Oriental origins, dominated by obedience and contemplation, is much more concerned with the thought than with action. Seneca had placed his stress on action. With Cassian the object is not past actions of the day; it's the present thoughts. Since the monk must continuously turn his thoughts toward God, he must scrutinize the actual course of his thought. This scrutiny thus has as its object the permanent discrimination between thoughts which lead toward God and those which don't. This continual concern with the present is different from the Senecan memorization of deeds and their correspondence with rules. It is what the Greeks referred to with a pejorative word: logismoi ("cogitations, reasoning, calculating thought").

There is an etymology of *logismoi* in Cassian, but I don't know if it's sound *co-agitationes*. The spirit is *polukinetos*, "perpetually moving" (*First Conference of Abbot Serenus* 4). In Cassian,

perpetual mobility of spirit is the spirit's weakness. It distracts one from contemplation of God (*First Conference of Abbot Nesterus* 13).

The scrutiny of conscience consists of trying to immobilize consciousness, to eliminate movements of the spirit that divert one from God. That means that we have to examine any thought which presents itself to consciousness to see the relation between act and thought, truth and reality, to see if there is anything in this thought which will move our spirit, provoke our desire, turn our spirit away from God. The scrutiny is based on the idea of a secret concupiscence.

There are three major types of self-examination: first, self-examination with respect to thoughts in correspondence to reality (Cartesian); second, self-examination with respect to the way our thoughts relate to rules (Senecan), third, the examination of self with respect to the relation between the hidden thought and an inner impurity. At this moment begins the Christian hermeneutics of the self with its deciphering of inner thoughts. It implies that there is something hidden in ourselves and that we are always in a self-illusion which hides the secret.

In order to make this kind of scrutiny, Cassian says we have to care for ourselves, to attest our thoughts directly. He gives three analogies. First is the analogy of the mill (*First Conference of Abbot Moses* 18). Thoughts are like grains, and consciousness is the mill store. It is our role as the miller to sort out amongst the grains those which are bad and those which can be admitted to the mill store to give the good flour and good bread of our salvation.

Second, Cassian makes military analogies (*First Conference of Abbot Serenus* 5). He uses the analogy of the officer who orders the

good soldiers to march to the right, the bad to the left. We must act like officers who divide soldiers into two files, the good and the bad.

Third, he uses the analogy of a money changer (*First Conference of Abbot Moses* 20-22). Conscience is the money changer of the self. It must examine coins, their effigy, their metal, where they came from. It must weigh them to see if they have been ill used. As there is the image of the emperor on money, so must the image of God be on our thoughts. We must verify the quality of the thought: This effigy of God, is it real? What is its degree of purity? Is it mixed with desire or concupiscence? Thus, we find the same image as in Seneca, but with a different meaning.

Since we have as our role to be a permanent money changer of ourselves, how is it possible to make this discrimination and recognize if a thought is of good quality? How can this "discrimination" actively be done? There is only one way: to tell all thoughts to our director, to be obedient to our master in all things, to engage in the permanent verbalization of all our thoughts. In Cassian, self-examination is subordinated to obedience and the permanent verbalization of thoughts. Neither is true of Stoicism. By telling himself not only his thoughts but also the smallest movements of consciousness, his intentions, the monk stands in a hermeneutic relation not only to the master but to himself. This verbalization is the touchstone or the money of thought.

Why is confession able to assume this hermeneutical role? How can we be the hermeneuts of ourselves in speaking and transcribing all of our thoughts? Confession permits the master to know because of his greater experience and wisdom and therefore to give better advice. Even if the master, in his role as a

discriminating power, doesn't say anything, the fact that the thought has been expressed will have an effect of discrimination.

Cassian gives an example of the monk who stole bread. At first he can't tell. The difference between good and evil thoughts is that evil thoughts can't be expressed without difficulty, for evil is hidden and un-stated. Because evil thoughts cannot be expressed without difficulty and shame, the cosmological difference between light and dark, between verbalization and sin, secrecy and silence, between God and the devil, may not emerge. Then the monk prostrates himself and confesses. Only when he confesses verbally does the devil go out of him. The verbal expression is the crucial moment (*Second Conference of Abbot Moses* II). Confession is a mark of truth. This idea of the permanent verbal is only an ideal. It is never completely possible. But the price of permanent verbal was to make everything that couldn't be expressed into a sin.

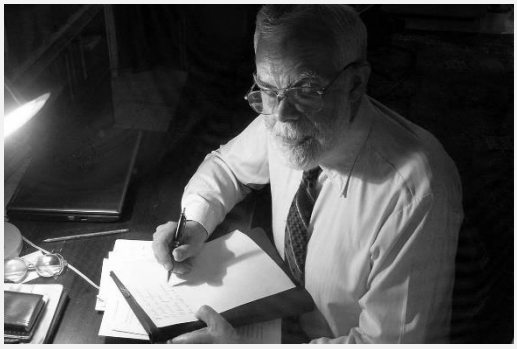
In conclusion, in the Christianity of the first centuries, there are two main forms of disclosing self, of showing the truth about oneself. The first is *exomologesis*, or a dramatic expression of the situation of the penitent as sinner which makes manifest his status as sinner. The second is what was called in the spiritual literature *exagoresis*. This is an analytical and continual verbalization of thoughts carried on in the relation of complete obedience to someone else. This relation is modelled on the renunciation of one's own will and of one's own self.

There is a great difference between exomologesis and *exagoreusis*; yet we have to underscore the fact that there is one important element in common: You cannot disclose without renouncing. *Exomologesis* had as its model martyrdom. In *exomologesis*, the sinner had to "kill" himself through ascetic

macerations. Whether through martyrdom or through obedience to a master, disclosure of self is the renunciation of one's own self. In exagoresis, on the other hand, you show that, in permanently obeying the master, you are renouncing your will and yourself. This practice continues from the beginning of Christianity to the seventeenth century. The inauguration of penance in the in the thirteenth century is an important step in its rise.

This theme of self-renunciation is very important. Throughout Christianity there is a correlation between disclosure of the self, dramatic or verbalized, and the renunciation of self. My hypothesis from looking at these two techniques is that it's the second one, verbalization, which becomes more important. From the eighteenth century to the present, the techniques of verbalization have been reinserted in a different context by the so called human sciences in order to use them without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively, a new self. To use these techniques without renouncing oneself constitutes a decisive break.

AFTERWORD



VICTOR MALAKHOV
ONTOLOGICAL BURDEN AND "BEING-IN-RESPONSE"[76]

As a conscious being, a person always finds some way to form a meaningful relationship with life. I believe the ethical axes of consciousness can be traced across a wide range of phenomena. Much of a person can be explained by physiology, psychology, genetics, or social heritage.

And yet, there remain for us clear and pressing questions of a spiritual and ethical nature. No matter how burdened a person may be as a being-in-the-world, they are inevitably called to respond to a certain appeal. In this sense, human existence is always, in a way, a "being-in-response".

People seek ways to answer this call – and this, in essence, is what characterizes their existence as human. These answers may be radically different, reflecting the vast range of how people experience the burdens of being.

For example, a person struggling with mental illness may not find the paths that might seem obvious to others. Each person's path is their own, and at times it can be extremely difficult. Still, I

[76] Victor Malakhov: on the Paradoxes of Ethics, Moral Revolution, and "Windows of Being". URL: https://huxley.media/en/victor-malakhov-on-the-paradoxes-of-ethics-moral-revolution-and-windows-of-being/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

believe that for every individual – no matter how unique their existential burden may be – there is a certain supra-ontological horizon of human existence, a horizon of higher spiritual meanings that calls them toward being-in-response, toward participating in those meanings to the best of their ability.

Every person bears their own ontological burden. But through the openings in ontology, we glimpse a kind of "guiding stars" – sources of light that reach out to us. We may be mistaken about the direction in which we must move toward goodness, light, and beauty. But when we look at the light, we cannot be mistaken in recognizing it as light.

And such "primary phenomena" of human spiritual orientation, in my view, go beyond the bounds of any possible ontology. From this, it follows in particular that – regardless of what a person may be as an ontological being – as a self-aware subject, they are inescapably within the gravitational field of ethics, of its spiritual principles. The call of goodness is something a person is capable of hearing even before asking any question about the existential conditions of their own life path.

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N. V. Skotna and O. A. Tkachenko

Corrector

Vira Slipetska

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