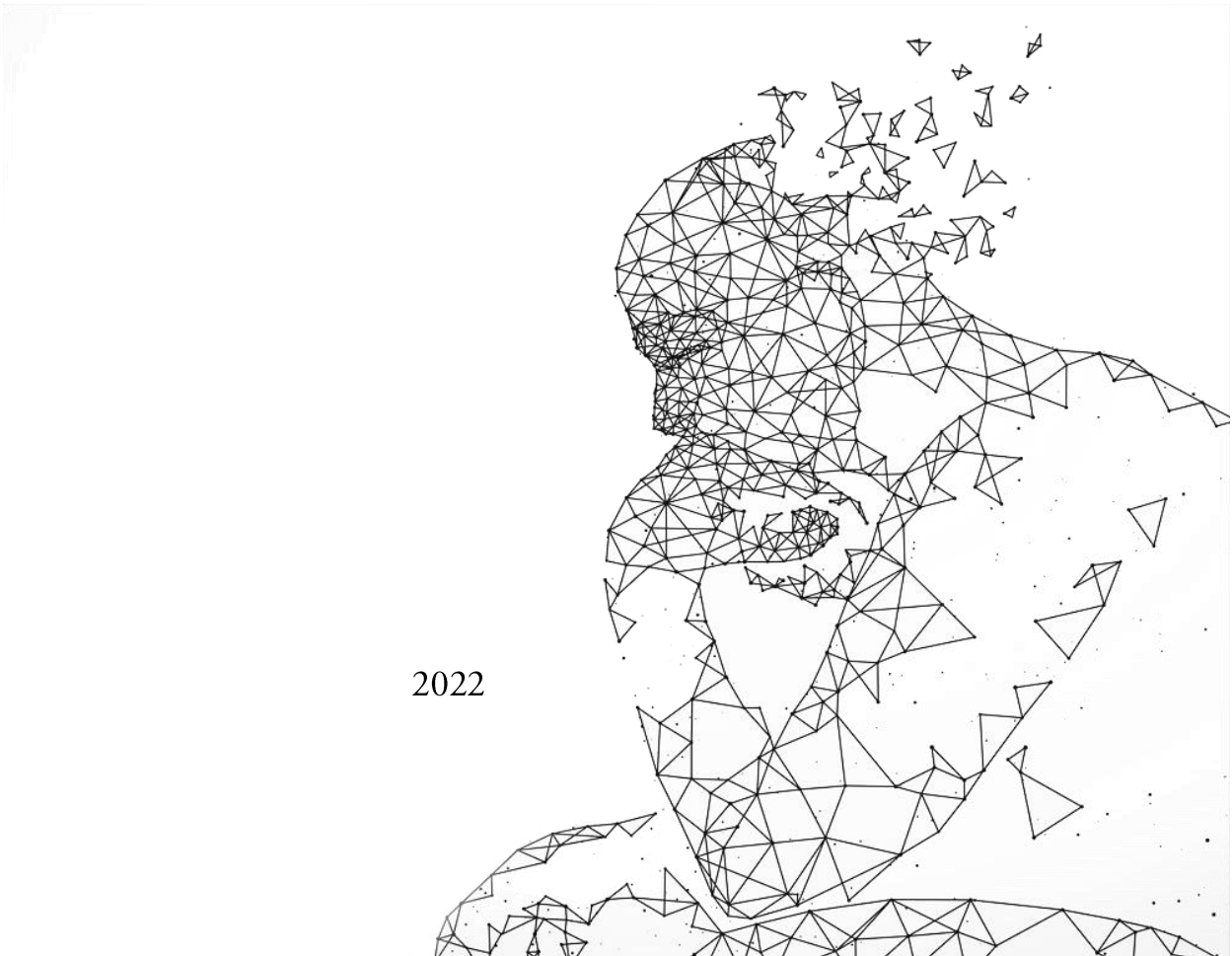
CORPUS

φιλοσοφία
فلسفة
PHILOSOPHIA
philosophie
philosophy



2022

Table of Contents

Ancient Philosophy

Medieval & Renaissance Philosophy

Modern Philosophy

Abbreviations:

i.e.	*id est* (Latin), which means "that is" (French "c'est-à-dire")
c.	*circa* (Latin) means "around", it is used when a date is only known approximately
e.g.	*exempli gratia* (Latin) means "for [the sake of an] example"
cf.	*confer* (Latin) means "compare" and is used to refer to another source

Made with an introduction by Mathias Clivaz, 2019-2022.

~On Chronology~

AN INTRODUCTION

We use the word "chronology" (from the Greek χρόνος, *chronos*, 'time', and λόγος, *logos*, 'speech/study') in order to express our relationship to time.—Time? We rarely think about it: 60 minutes make an hour, 24 hours make a day, 7 days a week, 4 weeks a month, 12 months a year, 10 years a decade, 10 decades a century, 10 centuries a millennium[1]. In everyday life we follow the ticking of the clock and the notes in our diaries, and these measures seem self-evident, though they are but approximations. For example, a year does not last 365 days, but closer to 365.25 days. These measures are also conventions: everybody seems to agree to call this approximation a "year" (which by the way could also have been divided into 5 months of 73 days, instead of 12 months of 31, 30 and 28 days). What are we to conclude?

That these measures – through numbers and words – are human inventions, human-made attempts to translate our experience into a language *we* invented?

As we delve into the study of philosophy and the history of ideas, it seems cautious to begin by reflecting on the fact that our way of thinking about time has not always been the same. For what is time? And what is the relationship between time and knowledge? Let us take an example: we today hold Darwin's theory of evolution to be certain; and evolution means time, development; but 300 years ago, that theory did not exist; it probably wasn't even conceivable. Actually, the very notion that living beings 'evolve' would have seemed crazy to most; just as it would have seemed crazy, 600 years ago, to assert that the Earth turns around the sun, when everybody *knew* as a 'fact' that it stood at the centre of the universe… So, on the one hand, our vision of the world has changed dramatically on some matters, modifying our relationship to the world around us, giving it a different perspective; while on the other hand many things have remained quite similar to what they were, say, 10'000 years ago.

What about us humans? Have we changed? Our ideas certainly have, at least some of them. But how? How did our understanding of time evolve?

"Philosophy" began roughly 2500 years ago, in Ancient Greece. In order to study it, we need to know *when* this or that philosopher lived, so as to build a framework of reference; we need to keep an eye on the world map as well, and on the rise and fall of the different cultures that have allowed for specific kinds of knowledge to flourish. And we need to keep

[1] It is interesting to note that this manner of counting is determined by the decimal numeral system, that finds a possible origin in the fact that humans have ten fingers and probably began counting by using them (the word "digital" comes from the Latin *digitus*, 'finger, toe').
It may also be surprising that there is no word to designate periods of 10 or 100 millennia, as if this were too long a lapse of time to be comfortable with.

in mind that, although the sun has risen every morning for 2500 years, our experience of the sunrise is unique every time.

*

Humans are the only species that counts the years as they go by. Why did our species develop such a trait? The analysis of this question will serve as an introduction, allowing for a number of basic notions to emerge along the way.

Through the experience of the cycle of the seasons and the observation of the stars, every ancient civilization formed a concept of 'year'. Yet, the seasons vary from one climatic region to another, which resulted in different ways of dividing the year, of naming these divisions and organising human activities accordingly; so that each civilization invented their own calendar, based on the movement of the moon, of the sun, or on a combination of both. With sedentarization and agriculture (which marks the beginning of the Neolithic period, approximately 10 200 BCE) and the invention of writing (around 3 300 BCE), the **measure** of time became an essential feature of human societies.

All calendars, therefore, share a common characteristic: they are cyclical. The fact that natural events will 'come back' tomorrow or next year creates a perspective and influences the way we think about our lives (e.g. when anticipating agricultural work that needs to be done, but also when organising any institution or business, or when celebrating birthdays, etc.). The experience of this recurrence, of things we can expect will happen *again*, is inherent to the concept of **nature** (in Latin *natura*, in Ancient Greek φύσις, *phúsis*). But what is the meaning of this recurrence? Are we living under the same conditions? Do some events happen only once? And how can we relate to memories from several years ago? How can we plan for the distant future?

When a human society establishes itself over several generations, it gradually produces a nature of its own, what we commonly call a **culture**. By observing the recurrences taking place *inside* a society, people attempted to understand how it worked. They began to talk about experiences from the past, discuss similarities and differences, form opinions, representations and ideas about what would be the best and the worst possible ways for that society to develop. Because there was a need to be able to refer to past events and plan into the future, cultures introduced another dimension of time: linearity. Linear time allows a society to produce its own narrative: a story that would give culture an edge over the cycle of the seasons, over the recurrences of nature.

Kingdoms and empires, unsurprisingly, especially encouraged linear chronology, desirous of chronicling their conquests and the succession of kings or dynasties. Chronology – in the wake of human-made 'history' – appears as an instrument of **political power**. To assert their narrative, rulers and ruling classes have designed and redesigned past history to favour their own vision of the future. Which brings us to another question, that of origin: *as of when should we start counting the years?*

To mark the date of an event, we use a reference that serves as a starting point, usually an event in the past, whose role is to set the beginning of an ***era***. A variety of starting points

have been used over time by human cultures: either a natural event (a great flood, an eclipse, etc.), or a human one (the founding of a city, the first year of a king's rule), or a religious one (the creation of the world, the birth of a prophet or another strongly symbolic event), most often with the addition of a super-natural reference or meaning. We can easily infer that the further away a starting point, the more the chance it might lack precision and be surrounded by a mythical aura.

If – based on these assumptions – we take a look at the abbreviations in use today, we might come to the conclusion that we live in the ***Christian era***. Based upon the supposed birthdate of the prophet Jesus Christ, these abbreviations are BC (= Before Christ) and AD, which stands for the Latin expression *Anno Domini nostri Jesus Christi* (= the Year of our Lord Jesus Christ). This starting point, however, was only implemented a millennium after the birth of Jesus. We shall soon take a look at the advent of this dating system—but before we get there, we must return to our question.

How did the ancient Greek, Chinese, Roman and Arab philosophers count the years and situate themselves in time? How are **we** to count the years, while studying the history of ideas, and their development? 'Philosophy' can be Christian, but it can also be polytheistic, Jewish, Muslim, atheistic, etc. Does it make any sense to apply a Christian dating system to Plato or Heraclitus? Can we do it without misrepresenting their thought, or introducing a bias in our understanding of their philosophy?

Of the cultures in existence today, the majority are not Christian, and yet they use a Christian-made calendar for civil purposes. They do not feel part of a "Christian era". Often, they have another calendar for domestic purposes, and use the Christian-era calendar only for dealing with Christian countries, in matters of trade and diplomacy.

Do we, who live in a Christian country[1], have to believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ in order to use the Christian-era calendar? We can be atheists, Muslims, Buddhists, or Jews, and still use this dating system with minor inconveniences (or so it seems). In the end, isn't it all about sharing a common language?

A culturally neutral term has recently gained in popularity, appearing in academic and scientific publications as an alternative way of referring to year 1. It matches our concern. Following in these footsteps, we will use **BCE** for *Before Common Era*, instead of BC for *Before Christ*; and **CE**, for *Common Era*, instead of AD for *Anno Domini*.

In this way, we can keep the question "what is culture?" open. And ask ourselves: from what point in time should we begin to date the years, **and to what end?**

~ Antiquity ~

[1] In 1910, the Swiss population was composed of 98.7% of Christians. In 2017, this number has shrunk to 65.6%. Meanwhile, the number of Unaffiliated (individuals with no declared religion, who can be atheist or believers, but outside any organised religion) rose from 0% in 1910 to 26% in 2017.

We call **periodization** the action of categorizing the past into quantified blocks of time. Let us therefore begin by questioning the category of 'Antiquity'. The word seems to indicate that, for those who gave it that name, it was the oldest period there was. It is actually the oldest for which we have sources that are reliable, coinciding with our notion of civilization: urban[1] societies that knew how to count and write.

Over the 4th, 3rd and 2nd millennia, writing was developed for trade, religious and political purposes. In Mesopotamia, in Egypt, in India, in China, the first cities appeared, and civilizations arose. But, obviously, the people who lived then didn't refer to their present-time as "Antiquity". If we take a look at the history of periodization, we learn that the category 'Antiquity' was invented over the course of the 15th century CE in Italy, and would only later, in the 19th century, become a common feature of historical studies, first in France, then in other western nations. We therefore need to conclude that this category is **Eurocentric** (centred on how history is understood from a European perspective), and **present-centric** (… from our perspective *as of today*).

Indeed, when the first philosophers appeared, "Europe" actually did not exist. It was 2500 years ago, and also approximately 2500 years after the invention of writing.

In the periods that today's scholars call *Archaic Greece* (from the 8th century BCE to the second Persian invasion of Greece in 480 BCE) and *Classical Greece* (from 480 to the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE)[2], one would indicate a year in the past by **referring to the name of the *archon*** (Ancient Greek for 'ruler') who was in power at that moment, e.g. the year 3 of the reign of Solon in Athens. However, since the Greeks lived in different city-States (Athens, Sparta, Thebes, etc.) ruled by as many archons, they had no common chronological standard.

Other aspects of Greek culture supported **a common timeline**: the epic poetry of Homer (the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*, composed in the 8th century BCE) was famous all over the Greek world; the works of many other poets were transmitted orally throughout the land, narrating battles, the rule of kings and myths; tragedies which dramatized the lives of the Greek ruling class, and comedies that poked fun at famous characters and common people alike, were played during the *Dionysia* (a yearly religious festival held in the honour of the god Dionysus). These were elements of the Greek culture that allowed people to share stories and memories. They also created a social rhythm, along with the succession of other religious festivals, among which the most famous was, in Athens, the *Panathenaia*, which took place every 4 years. Last but not least, **the Olympic Games** also served that purpose: held every 4 years and PanHellenic (= for all the Greeks), their regularity provided the inhabitants of the different city-States with a common calendar.

In the late 5th century BCE, Thucydides (famous for his *History of the Peloponnesian War*) was one of the first western historians to record events strictly by year—but he still

[1] The word "urban comes from the Latin *urbs*, while "civilization" comes from the Latin *civitas*, 'community of citizens'. The Greek word for city is πολίς, *polis*, from which we derive the word "politic".

[2] German philosopher Karl Jaspers, in his book *The Origin and Goal of History* (1949), called 'Axial age' the period from the 8th to the 3rd century BCE, not from a European but from a world perspective. He observed that, without any direct contact, cultures from Asia and Europe experienced a striking parallel development: "Confucius and Lao-Tse were living in China, all the schools of Chinese philosophy came into being, including those of Mo Ti, Chuang Tse, Lieh Tzu and a host of others; India produced the Upanishads and Buddha and, like China, ran the whole gamut of philosophical possibilities down to materialism, scepticism and nihilism; in Iran Zarathustra taught a challenging view of the world as a struggle between good and evil; in Palestine the prophets made their appearance from Elijah by way of Isaiah and Jeremiah to Deutero-Isaiah; Greece witnessed the appearance of Homer, of the philosophers – Parmenides, Heraclitus and Plato, – of the tragedians, of Thucydides and Archimedes. Everything implied by these names developed during these few centuries almost simultaneously in China, India and the West."

referred to them according to the rules of the different archons. The idea of counting on the basis of the Olympiads would emerge only a century later, with the Greek Sicilian historian Timaeus. Encouraged by Alexander the Great, he set the beginning of the Greek era in the year of the first Olympic Games in 776 BCE.

It was historians from the 19th century CE, however, who chose the date of the death of Alexander to mark the beginning of a new age, the *Hellenistic period* (from 323 to the battle of Actium in 31 BCE). The term derives from Ἑλλάς, *Hellás*, the Greek word for 'Greece', and was chosen to indicate **the influence of Greek culture**, which spread in the footsteps of Alexander's conquests. From Egypt to present-day Turkey, and from Macedonia to present-day Pakistan, the use of Greek language expanded, mostly for the benefit of the ruling classes, before it was supplanted by Latin as the new *lingua franca*[1].

During the *Roman Republic* (from 509 BCE to the rise of Octavian in 27 BCE) and the *Roman Empire* (from 27 BCE to the fall of Rome in 476 CE), the common use was also to refer to the ruling years, first of the Consuls, then of the Emperors. However, another counting method was invented at the beginning of the empire by a Latin historian named Varro. Also a magistrate and commander, Varro, who had been a supporter of Julius Caesar[2], lost everything when Caesar was assassinated in 44 BCE, but later gained the favour of Octavian. When the latter became the first Emperor, Varro wrote in his honour a year-by-year timeline of Roman history, starting with the (mythical) **foundation of Rome**, that he placed in 753 BCE. That year thus became year 1 AUC, which stands for *Ad Urbe Condita*, meaning 'from the founding of the City'.

Year **1**, and not year 0, since at the time the "0" did not yet exist in that part of the world (the Hindu–Arabic numerals would reach Europe in the 11th century CE, via Muslim Spain). Let us also note that the new dating-system invented by Varro was used mostly to celebrate the anniversaries of the empire, but was not strongly integrated in the Roman culture and everyday life: people continued to refer to the names of the Consuls and Emperors, and many local calendars remained effective in regions under Roman rule.

Around 783 AUC, that is, around 30 CE, one event took place that would be of considerable importance for the centuries to come: Jesus of Nazareth was killed by crucifixion in Jerusalem, on the order of Pontius Pilate, then the Roman prefect of Judea, on the motive that he was a threat to the region's stability. Three days after his death, it was said that he was resurrected, and over the course of the 1st century the first believers in the divinity of the one they named **Jesus Christ**[3] would appear.

Early Christians thought that Jesus was the son of God, born from a virgin; and that to believe in Jesus was to believe in the one God, a faith incompatible with faith in other gods. Therefore they rejected polytheism which was the norm in the Empire—a norm of tolerance of every group's beliefs, as long as they did not disturb the Roman social order.

---

[1] A *lingua franca* is a language that is used by entire populations as a bridge between people who don't share a common native language. It is also the sign of an important cultural influence or hegemony. Today's lingua franca is obviously the English language, in the aftermath of colonisation by the British Empire and of the United State of America's imperialism over the last 80 years.

[2] Julius Caesar was at the origin of an important reform of the Roman yearly calendar in 45 BCE, that would be copied by many other cultures. Prior to his reform, the year was made up of 355 days; he changed it to 365 days, also introducing the extra day that we still add in February once every four years (leap years). The *Julian calendar* remained in use until 1582 CE, when it was replaced by Pope Gregory XIII. Before him it was the Emperor, and later the Pope, who decided to add an extra day or not. Gregory made this an automatic event in the *Gregorian calendar*, now in use in most countries.

[3] From the Greek Χριστός, Christos, 'the anointed one', a translation of the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ, Mašíaḥ, 'messiah'.

Considered as extremists who brought misfortune upon the land, thus turned into scapegoats, Christians were persecuted and killed. However, **Christianity** developed rapidly, thanks to the empire's networks of roads and the secure travel ensured by the *Pax Romana* ('the Roman peace'). A decision to end persecutions was promulgated in 313 CE by Constantine I, who would eventually become the first Christian emperor in 324. Now the religion of the empire, Christianity would change, from a religion of the oppressed into a religion that could carry out oppression.

Yet, Christianity was of immense cultural importance, and one of the reasons for this is that it was born at the crossroads of **three languages**: Hebrew (the language of the Jewish Bible, the *Tanakh*, written between the 6th and 1st century BCE, on which the Christian *Old Testament* is based), Greek (the language of the Greek philosophical tradition, and also of the Christian *New Testament*, written between the 1st and 2nd century CE) and Latin (into which the Bible was first translated in the 4th century CE). The exchanges between these languages and cultures would be fruitful for the development of Christianity, and would leave a strong mark on the history of ideas.

Thus ends 'Antiquity'. Until recently, a convention among historians was to use the date of **the fall of Rome in 476 CE** to set the beginning of the Middle Ages—but this categorization was criticized as being too artificial. On the one hand, the decadence of the Roman Empire had begun at least one century earlier, and many of its institutions would survive through the Byzantine Empire, which lasted until the 15th century. On the other hand, the cultural legacy of the Roman Empire in Europe proves that, rather than a complete fall, what happened was a complex cultural transformation that would be foundational for the future of the European continent.

Complex also because, at the same time, Christianity continued its expansion, sending emissaries to the Huns and the Vandals in attempts to convert them, and establishing from the 5th century CE onward a network of monasteries throughout the continent.

~ Middle Ages ~

The idea of a Christian era dating system first appeared in the works of a monk named Dionysius Exiguus, born in 470 CE in Scythia Minor (present-day Romania and Bulgaria). Thirteen years after the disaggregation of the Empire, Dionysius moved to Rome where he would translate many ecclesiastical documents from Greek into Latin.

In 525 CE, while working on a computational method that would allow him to set the dates of Easter[1] for the years to come, he used **the year of the birth of Jesus** in order to transcend all the different calendars then in use. He determined – we don't know how – that Jesus was born 525 years earlier (and in doing so he was rather accurate, since historians today think that Jesus was born only 4 to 6 years before that). Yet, two more centuries would pass before this dating system became dominant in Europe.

Meanwhile, in the 7th century, a major religious event happened in Mecca, which would have a lasting impact throughout the world. **Islam** began when Muhammad received and wrote down what Muslims believe to be the exact word of God: the *Quran*. Soon after, in 622 CE, Muhammad and his followers moved from Mecca to Medina, where **the first**

[1] Easter is a Christian festival that commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Muslim community was formed. This event, called the Hijra, became the starting-point of the Islamic dating system. In the Christian world, it is referred to with the Latin expression *Anno Hegirae* (= year of the Hijra).[1]

How is this important for the history of philosophy? Firstly, because many ancient texts from Antiquity wouldn't have survived if Middle-Eastern scholars had not preserved them. Indeed, many scrolls were destroyed first by the Roman conquests of Greece, later by the Huns' and Visigoths' conquests of Europe. But from Persia to Egypt and from Bukhara to Carthage, the Greek legacy survived and prospered in the Arabic and later in the Islamic world, thanks to libraries, *madrasa* (Arabic educational institutions, specialized in the study of the Quran) and to the world's first universities (cf. the University of al-Qarawiyyin, founded by Fatima al-Fihri in 859 CE in Fez, present-day Morocco).

It is thanks to the numerous exchanges that later took place with Latin Christian Europe, in the midst of wars (the Muslim conquest of the Iberian peninsula in the 8th century, the Christian religious wars called the crusades between the 11th and the 13th centuries, and the Muslim rule over Grenada in Spain which lasted until the 15th century) and commercial relationships (the Silk Road which connected Europe to Asia went through the cities of Damascus, Baghdad and Samarkand) that many Greek texts finally reached European monks and scholars, in the original Greek or in Arabic translations.

The Islamic world entered a Golden Age in the 8th century CE; we can thus infer that it is not concerned by the term '**Middle Ages**'. The expression was actually coined in the 14th century in Florence by Renaissance scholars, with the intention of describing what they saw as a cultural gap between the fall of Rome and the start of their own movement. As such, it has long been disregarded and many clichés still endure today about the so-called "Dark Ages". In fact, essential developments happened over that period, without which we cannot hope to understand the following centuries.

One of these developments is the implementation of the Christian era dating system. Again, it implied political power. In 731 CE, an English monk named Bede the Venerable completed his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, in which he used the starting-point invented by Dionysius Exiguus to date all the events he recollected of Christian England. The book was a success, and the dating system eventually entered France, where, at the turn of 9th century, it was endorsed by **Charlemagne**, who had just been crowned Emperor by Pope Leo III.

The power of the new Empire – later known as the Holy Roman Empire, which lasted until 1806 CE – would ensure the prevalence of the *Anno Domini* throughout Europe.

~ Modern era ~

Through the medieval period into the Renaissance (14th to 17th centuries CE), marked by the progressive re-discovery by Europeans of Greek and Roman cultures, we are already entering the modern era. Historians have the *Early modern* period begin in the 16th century (with Christopher Columbus, the heliocentric revolution, the Fall of Constantinople and the Muslim conquests in India), and the *Late modern* period in the 18th century (with the American, French and industrial revolutions).

[1] 2020 AD corresponds to 1441-1442 AH. The Hijri calendar is a lunar calendar, therefore the first day of the year changes from year to year, when compared with the Gregorian calendar.

The term 'modern' is of course present-centric: today is by definition more modern than yesterday.[1] However, it also implies something more. In the debate between the Ancients and the Moderns, to be a Modern meant to hold **new discoveries** more valuable than old certainties. From the 16th century onwards, this question has been central in the history of ideas. Is what we "discover" today *better* than what we "knew" yesterday?

In the 19th century, many scientists and politicians believed in the ideology of Progress, stating that, from the Neolithic until the present day, humankind has evolved for the best; that we know better, rule better, live better than at any moment in the past. And of course, Darwin's theory of evolution was used to support progressivism, providing an additional edge to the linear aspect of time over the circular one.

The term 'modern' is also Eurocentric: it is **a product of European culture** and was seen, by Europeans, not only as the apex of European civilization, but of humankind. The quasi-ubiquity today of the Christian era dating system testifies to this, as a direct consequence of European invasions, colonisations and imperialism, from the 15th to the 21st centuries. Now used for civil purposes by nations around the world, its use is entangled with the globalisation of another European cultural product: capitalism. All countries are now tied by the struggle for resources and commercial relationships, by a global financial infrastructure, by nuclear and quantum physics, mass media, information technologies and the internet, by climate change and biodiversity mass destruction.

We live today in a subset of the modern era that historians call the contemporary period, which began with the end of the Second World War in 1945. The term, of course, is fated to change as soon as another major event will have been acknowledged as such, pushing into the future the notion of what is contemporary ('within our time'). Over the last 40 years, many thinkers have indeed argued that the modern era was coming to an end, our times therefore deserving to be termed the **post-modern** period.

Dates and periods – our way of counting, categorizing and giving names – create perspective. Let us keep that in mind when we read and think about the past, and indeed the present. Take the year 2020: in the Holocene calendar that starts with the advent of the Neolithic period, we would be in the year 12 220… in the Human Behaviour calendar that starts with the speciation of the *Homo sapiens*, in the year 350 020… in the Earth calendar that starts with the formation of the planet, in the year 4 540 000 020… in the Universe calendar that starts with the Big Bang, in the year 13 787 000 020.

That is, as far as speculation goes, when time as we know it didn't exist.

[1] From Late Latin *modernus*; from Latin *modo*, meaning "just now".

Ancient Philosophy

*

Heraclitus

Parmenides

Protagoras

Democritus

Hippocrates

Plato

Aristotle

Lucretius

Epictetus

Augustine

Heraclitus

Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 535-475 BCE) wrote a treatise, *On Nature*, that was divided into three discourses: "one on the universe, another on politics, and a third on theology" (Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, ix, 6).

A copy of the book was famously stored in the Artemisium, a temple of Artemis in Ephesus and one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient world; but the temple was destroyed and the copy was lost. What we know today of Heraclitus' writings are only *fragments*, as quoted by other writers who had access to the book. Called "the obscure" by some for this reason, his view of the changing nature of reality remains a powerful beacon for the philosophical thought.

FRAGMENTS

Translated from Ancient Greek by John Burnet, 1892.
Traductions françaises par Marcel Conche, 1986.

Fragment 6, from Aristotle, *Meteorology* (c. 350 BCE), B 2, 355a 14.

The sun is new every day.
Le soleil est nouveau chaque jour.

Fragment 41, from Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the philosophers* (c. 300 CE), IX, 1.

Wisdom is one thing. It is to know the thought by which all things are steered through all things.
La sagesse consiste en une seule chose : savoir qu'une sage raison gouverne tout à travers tout.

Fragment 89, from Plutarch, *Moralia: On superstition* (c. 100 CE), 3, 166 C.

The waking have one common world, but the sleeping turn aside each into a world of their own.
Il y a pour les éveillés un monde unique et commun, mais chacun des endormis se détourne dans un monde particulier.

Fragment 91, from Plutarch, *Moralia: On the Epsilon at Delphi* (c. 100 CE), 392 B.

You cannot step twice into the same rivers.
On ne peut pas entrer deux fois dans le même fleuve.

Fragment 108, from Stobaeus, *Anthology* (c. 400 CE), III, 1, 174.

Of all whose discourses I have heard, there is not one who attains to understanding that wisdom is apart from all.
De tous ceux dont j'ai entendu les discours, aucun ne parvient à ce point: connaître que la sagesse est séparée de tout.

For the fragment presented below, we will read first the Greek and its Latin transliteration, then different translations in English, German and French. When trying to understand a thought that is 2600 years old, the knowledge and experience of several translators might prove essential.

Fragment 112 (DK), from Stobaeus, *Anthology* (c. 400 CE), III, 1, 178.

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μεγίστη καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν
καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαΐοντας

sophroneîn aretè megíste kaì sophíe alethéa légein
kaì poieîn katà fúsin epaíontas

Self-control is the highest virtue, and wisdom is to speak truth
and consciously to act according to nature.

John Burnet, 1892.

Das Denken ist der größte Vorzug, und die Weisheit besteht darin, die Wahrheit zu sagen und nach der Natur zu handeln, auf sie hinhörend.

Hermann Diels, 1922.

Thinking well is the greatest excellence and wisdom: acting and speaking what is true, perceiving things according to their nature.

Charles Kahn, 1979.

Bien-penser, la qualité suprême ; et la sagesse : dire le vrai
et agir suivant la nature, à l'écoute.

Marcel Conche, 1986.

Parmenides

Parmenides of Elea (c. 515-450 BCE) wrote a poem in prose – a "proem" – of which several sections were lost. Entitled Περί Φύσεως (Peri Phuseos), which is usually translated into *On Nature*, it addresses a problem that has remained current: the relationship between what *is* and what we can think of it (Parmenides is often considered as the founder of *ontology*).

The proem begins with a mythical narrative that speaks of an initiatory journey until "the gates of the ways of Night and Day", guarded by Justice itself, and beyond which the speaker will meet with "the goddess". It will be she, who, in the next part of the proem, speaks Parmenides' argument, concerning how we are to find the truth.

ON NATURE

The Two Ways of Searching

Section I to VIII // Translated from Ancient Greek by John Burnet, 1892.

I

The steeds that bear me carried me as far as ever my heart
Desired, since they brought me and set me on the renowned
Way of the goddess, who with her own hands conducts the man
who knows through all things. On what way was I borne

along; for on it did the wise steeds carry me, drawing my car,
and maidens showed the way. And the axle, glowing in the socket –
for it was urged round by the whirling wheels at each
end – gave forth a sound as of a pipe, when the daughters of the
Sun, hasting to convey me into the light, threw back their veils

from off their faces and left the abode of Night.
There are the gates of the ways of Night and Day, fitted
above with a lintel and below with a threshold of stone. They
themselves, high in the air, are closed by mighty doors, and
Avenging Justice keeps the keys that open them. Her did

the maidens entreat with gentle words and skilfully persuade
to unfasten without demur the bolted bars from the gates.
Then, when the doors were thrown back,
they disclosed a wide opening, when their brazen
hinges swung backwards in the

sockets fastened with rivets and nails. Straight through them,
on the broad way, did the maidens guide the horses and the car,
and the goddess greeted me kindly, and took my right hand
in hers, and spoke to me these words: –
Welcome, noble youth, that come to my abode on the car

that bears thee tended by immortal charioteers ! It is no ill chance, but justice and right that has sent thee forth to travel on this way. Far, indeed, does it lie from the beaten track of men! Meet it is that thou should learn all things, as well the unshaken heart of persuasive truth, as the opinions of

mortals in which is no true belief at all. Yet none the less shalt thou learn of these things also, since thou must judge approvedly of the things that seem to men as thou goest through all things in thy journey."

II

Come now, I will tell thee – and do thou hearken to my saying and carry it away – the only two ways of search that can be thought of. The first, namely, that It is, and that it is impossible for anything not to be, is the way of conviction,

for truth is its companion. The other, namely, that It is not, and that something must needs not be, – that, I tell thee, is a wholly untrustworthy path. For you cannot know what is not – that is impossible – nor utter it;

III

For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be.

IV

V

VI

It needs must be that what can be thought and spoken of is; for it is possible for it to be, and it is not possible for, what is nothing to be. This is what I bid thee ponder. I hold thee back from this first way of inquiry, and from this other also,

upon which mortals knowing naught wander in two minds; for hesitation guides the wandering thought in their breasts, so that they are borne along stupefied like men deaf and blind. Undiscerning crowds, in whose eyes the same thing and not the same is and is not, and all things travel in opposite directions!

VII

For this shall never be proved, that the things that are not
are; and do thou restrain thy thought from this way of inquiry.
Nor let habit force thee to cast a wandering eye upon this
devious track, or to turn thither thy resounding ear or thy

tongue; but do thou judge the subtle refutation of their
discourse uttered by me.

VIII

One path only is left for us to
speak of, namely, that It is. In it are very many tokens that
what is, is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete,
immovable and without end. Nor was it ever, nor will it be; for

now it is, all at once, a continuous one. For what kind of origin
for it, will you look for? In what way and from what source
could it have drawn its increase? I shall not let thee say nor
think that it came from what is not; for it can neither be
thought nor uttered that what is not is. And, if it came from

nothing, what need could have made it arise later rather than
sooner? Therefore must it either be altogether or be not at
all. Nor will the force of truth suffer aught to arise besides
itself from that which in any way is. Wherefore, Justice does
not loose her fetters and let anything come into being or pass

away, but holds it fast.
"Is it or is it not?" Surely it is adjudged, as it needs must
be, that we are to set aside the one way as unthinkable and
nameless (for it is no true way), and that the other path is real
and true. How, then, can what is be going to be in the

future? Or how could it come into being? If it came into
being, it is not; nor is it if it is going to be in the future. Thus is
becoming extinguished and passing away not to be heard of.
Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike, and there is no more
of it in one place than in another, to hinder it from holding
together, nor less of it, but everything is full of what is.

Wherefore all holds together; for what is; is in contact with what is.
Moreover, it is immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, without
beginning and without end; since coming into being
and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away.
It is the same, and it rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself.

And thus it remaineth constant in its place; for hard necessity

keeps it in the bonds of the limit that holds it fast on every side.
Wherefore it is not permitted to what is to be infinite; for it is in need of nothing;
while, if it were infinite, it would stand in need of everything. It is the
same thing that can be thought and for the sake of which the thought exists;

for you cannot find thought without something that is, to which it is
betrothed. And there is not, and never shall be, any time other, than that which
is present, since fate has chained it so as to be whole and immovable.
Wherefore all these things are but the names which mortals
have given, believing them, to be true –

coming into being and passing away, being and not being,
change of place and alteration of bright colour.
Where, then, it has its farthest boundary, it is complete on
every side, equally poised from the centre in every direction,
like the mass of a rounded sphere; for it cannot be greater or

smaller in one place than in another. For there is nothing
which is not that could keep it from reaching out equally, nor
is it possible that there should be more of what is in this place
and less in that, since it is all inviolable. For, since it is equal
in all directions, it is equally confined within limits.

Here shall I close my trustworthy speech and thought about the truth.
Henceforward learn the opinions of mortals,
giving ear to the deceptive ordering of my words.
Mortals have settled in their minds to speak of two forms, one of which
they should have left out, and that is where they go astray from the truth.

They have assigned an opposite
substance to each, and marks distinct from one another. To the
one they allot the fire of heaven, light, thin, in every direction
the same as itself, but not the same as the other. The other is
opposite to it, dark night, a compact and heavy body. Of these

I tell thee the whole arrangement as it seems to men,
in order that no mortal may surpass thee in knowledge.

[…]

Protagoras

Protagoras of Abdera (c. 490-420 BCE) was the author of several treatises, and although some titles are known, the works themselves are lost. However, some of his views survived in the writings of other thinkers—most of the time, only one or two sentences. One of his famous quotes is "Human is the measure of all things", which was highly regarded during the Renaissance period, and also during the 20th century, but despised by most religious thinkers.

This gives us the occasion to read the Hellenistic compiler Diogenes Laërtius, who, in the 3rd century CE, wrote a *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, one of the principal sources for our knowledge of the history of ancient Greek philosophers. As far as philosophy is concerned, Diogenes' work is what we call a *secondary source* (while Protagoras' lost writings would have been *primary sources*), which implies that we must be cautious when reading him, by making sure to compare what he wrote with other testimonies and not blindly trusting his accounts or the order of their succession. As it appears in the following text, Diogenes was also inclined to relate trivial information and word of mouth accounts without context or critical approach.

Diogenes Laërtius

LIVES OF THE EMINENT PHILOSOPHERS

Translated from Ancient Greek by Robert Drew Hicks, 1925.

50. Protagoras, son of Artemon or, according to Apollodorus and Dinon in the fifth book of his *History of Persia*, of Maeandrius, was born at Abdera (so says Heraclides of Pontus in his treatise *On Laws*, and also that he made laws for Thurii) or, according to Eupolis in his *Flatterers*, at Teos; for the latter says:

> Inside we've got Protagoras of Teos.

He and Prodicus of Ceos gave public readings for which fees were charged, and Plato in the Protagoras calls Prodicus deep-voiced. Protagoras studied under Democritus. The latter was nicknamed "Wisdom," according to Favorinus in his *Miscellaneous History*.

51. Protagoras was the first to maintain that there are two sides to every question, opposed to each other, and he even argued in this fashion, being the first to do so. Furthermore he began a work thus: "Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not." He used to say that soul was nothing apart from the senses, as we learn from Plato in the *Theaetetus*, and that everything is true. In another work he began thus: "As to the gods, I have no means of knowing either that they exist or that they do not exist. For many are the obstacles that impede knowledge, both the obscurity of the question and the shortness of human life."

52. For this introduction to his book the Athenians expelled him; and they burnt his works in the market-place, after sending round a herald to collect them from all who had copies in their possession.

He was the first to exact a fee of a hundred minae and the first to distinguish the tenses of verbs, to emphasize the importance of seizing the right moment, to institute contests in debating, and to teach rival pleaders the tricks of their trade. Furthermore, in his dialectic he neglected the meaning in favour of verbal quibbling, and he was the father of the whole

tribe of eristical disputants now so much in evidence; insomuch that Timon too speaks of him as

> Protagoras, all mankind's epitome,
> Cunning, I trow, to war with words.

53. He too first introduced the method of discussion which is called Socratic. Again, as we learn from Plato in the *Euthydemus*, he was the first to use in discussion the argument of Antisthenes which strives to prove that contradiction is impossible, and the first to point out how to attack and refute any proposition laid down: so Artemidorus the dialectician in his treatise *In Reply to Chrysippus*. He too invented the shoulder-pad on which porters carry their burdens, so we are told by Aristotle in his treatise *On Education*; for he himself had been a porter, says Epicurus somewhere. This was how he was taken up by Democritus, who saw how skilfully his bundles of wood were tied. He was the first to mark off the parts of discourse into four, namely, wish, question, answer, command;

54. others divide into seven parts, narration, question, answer, command, rehearsal, wish, summoning; these he called the basic forms of speech. Alcidamas made discourse fourfold, affirmation, negation, question, address.

The first of his books he read in public was that *On the Gods*, the introduction to which we quoted above; he read it at Athens in Euripides' house, or, as some say, in Megaclides'; others again make the place the Lyceum and the reader his disciple Archagoras, Theodotus's son, who gave him the benefit of his voice. His accuser was Pythodorus, son of Polyzelus, one of the four hundred; Aristotle, however, says it was Euathlus.

55. The works of his which survive are these:

The Art of Controversy. – *Of Wrestling*. – *On Mathematics*. – *Of the State*. – *Of Ambition*. – *Of Virtues*. – *Of the Ancient Order of Things*. – *On the Dwellers in Hades*. – *Of the Misdeeds of Mankind*. – *A Book of Precepts*. – *Of Forensic Speech for a Fee, two books of opposing arguments*.

This is the list of his works. Moreover there is a dialogue which Plato wrote upon him.

Philochorus says that, when he was on a voyage to Sicily, his ship went down, and that Euripides hints at this in his *Ixion*. According to some his death occurred, when he was on a journey, at nearly ninety years of age,

56. though Apollodorus makes his age seventy, assigns forty years for his career as a sophist, and puts his floruit in the 84th Olympiad.

There is an epigram of my own on him as follows:

> Protagoras, I hear it told of thee
> Thou died'st in eld when Athens thou didst flee;
> Cecrops' town chose to banish thee; but though
> Thou 'scap'dst Athene, not so Hell below.

The story is told that once, when he asked Euathlus his disciple for his fee, the latter replied, "But I have not won a case yet." "Nay," said Protagoras, "if I win this case against you I must have the fee, for winning it; if you win, I must have it, because you win it."

Democritus

Democritus of Abdera (c. 460-370 BCE) was the co-founder with Leucippus of the theory of atomism, stating that the physical world is constituted by an infinite number of indivisible (=ancient Greek *átomos*) corpuscles moving randomly in an infinite void. This theory was lost for the European world until the Renaissance, after which it would become the basis, in the 17th century CE, of the theory of corpuscularianism (cf. Descartes, Gassendi, Boyle, Newton, etc.) which successfully replaced Aristotle's theory of the four elements.

Democritus also seems to have been the first thinker to recognize that the qualities of the things we perceive are dependent on our perception, rather than on how these things really are. He thought, according to Sextus Empiricus, that "belief restructures things for each of us", and that therefore any knowledge is at best unclear to us (cf. Aristotle's passage).

Atomism

Translated from Ancient Greek by Robin Waterfield, 2000.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*

(4th century BCE)

Leucippus and his companion Democritus say that the elements are the full and the void, by which they mean what-is and what-is-not, with what is full and solid being what-is, and what is void and rarefied being what-is-not. Hence they say that what-is has no more existence than what-is-not, because void exists just as much as solidity. These, according to them, are the material causes of things. And just as those thinkers who make the underlying substance single generate everything else by means of the modifications of this single substance, and posit rarefaction and condensation as the sources of these modifications, so Leucippus and Democritus say that differences are responsible for everything else. But they say that there are only three differences—in shape, arrangement, and position. For they say that what-is differs only 'by structure, contact, and inclination', of which 'structure' is shape, 'contact' is arrangement, and 'inclination' is position. So, for instance, A differs from N in shape, AN differs from NA in arrangement, and differs from H in position. But just like the other thinkers we have been looking at, Leucippus and Democritus carelessly said nothing about the origin of movement and how things have movement. [985b4–20]

Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*

(3rd century CE)

Worlds are created as follows. A number of atoms with all kinds of shapes move 'by being cut off from the infinite' into a large void area, where they gather together and produce a single whirl. In this whirl they collide with one another and, as they move around in all kinds of ways, they begin to separate from one another, with atoms moving towards those to which they are similar. When there are too many of them for them any longer to rotate in equilibrium, the light atoms move out into the void, as if from a sieve, while the rest of them stay together and, as they become entangled, race along together with one another, and so create a first spherical composite body. This spherical body billows out like

a membrane and encloses within itself all kinds of atoms. As these varied atoms whirl around with pressure provided by the centre of the system, the surrounding membrane becomes thinner, because atoms, connected by contact with the whirl, are constantly streaming together. So the earth was created, once those atoms that had moved down to the centre stayed together. Then again, the surrounding membrane (so to call it) grows by the influx† of atoms from outside, because as it is moved around by the whirl, it incorporates any atoms with which it comes into contact. Some of these incorporated atoms become entangled and form a composite body which at first is damp and muddy, but they dry out as they revolve along with the whirl of the whole system, and then ignite and form the heavenly bodies. [9.31.3–32.11]

Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies*
(3rd century CE)

Democritus' views on the elements, the full and the void, are the same as those of Leucippus. He calls the full 'what-is' and the void 'what-is-not'. He spoke as if things were perpetually in motion in the void, and said that there was an infinite number of worlds of various sizes. Some of them do not have a sun or a moon, while others have a sun and a moon that are larger than ours, and others have more suns and moons than we do. He said that the intervals between worlds are unequal, so that in one part there are a larger number of worlds, while elsewhere there are fewer;* that some worlds are growing, while others are at their peak and others are decreasing in size; and that in some places worlds are arising, while elsewhere they are departing. Worlds are destroyed by colliding with one another. Some worlds are uninhabited by living creatures and have no plants or moisture. As for our world, the earth was formed before the heavenly bodies, and the moon is lowest, then the sun, and then the fixed stars. The planets too are not all at the same level. A world is at its peak until it is no longer capable of gaining material from outside. Democritus used to laugh at everything, since he regarded all human affairs as ridiculous. [1.13.2–4]

On Perception
Translated from Ancient Greek by Robin Waterfield, 2000.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*
(4th century BCE)

Then again, along the same lines some thinkers have concluded that the truth about appearances depends on what is perceived. They think it wrong to assess the truth by majorities and minorities, and point out that the same thing appears sweet to some of those who taste it and bitter to others; the upshot of this, they claim, is that if everyone were ill or insane, except for two or three healthy or sane people, it is the latter who would be thought ill or insane, not the former. They also say that many other creatures perceive things in ways that directly contrast with the ways we perceive them, and even a single individual does not always perceive things the same way. It is unclear, then, which of these perceptions are true and which are false, since the one lot is no more or less true than the other. This is why Democritus, at any rate, says that either nothing is true or at least that the matter is unclear to us. [1009a38-b12]

Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Professors*

(2nd century CE)

Democritus occasionally does away with sensible phenomena, saying that none of them really and truly presents itself to the senses, but is only thought to do so, while the only truth in existing things is the existence of atoms and void. He says: 'Sweet exists by convention, and so does bitter, warm, cold, and colour; in reality there are atoms and void.' … And in *Confirmations* … he says: 'In actual fact we have no certain understanding, but our grasp on things changes depending on the condition of our bodies, of the things that enter into it, and of the things that impinge upon it.' Again, he says: 'That we have no true understanding of what anything is or is not like has often been demonstrated.' And in his *On Forms* he says, 'It is important for a person to use this criterion to realize that he is removed from reality'; and again, 'This is yet another argument which demonstrates that in reality we know nothing about anything, but that belief restructures things for each of us'; and again, 'However, the difficulty of knowing what anything is in reality will be clear.'

In these passages, then, he rejects apprehension more or less entirely, even though his remarks are aimed in particular at the senses. But in *Criteria* he says that there are two kinds of knowledge, one which comes through the senses and the other which comes through thinking, and he calls the one that comes through thinking 'genuine', and ascribes to it trustworthiness in the assessment of truth, while the one that comes through the senses he calls 'bastard', and denies that it is reliable in the discernment of truth. His actual words are: 'There are two forms of knowledge, one genuine, the other bastard. To the bastard kind belong all the following: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch. But the other kind is genuine and is far removed from the bastard kind.' [7.135.1–139.4]

Hippocrates

Hippocrates of Kos (c. 460–370 BCE) was a Greek physician. Reflecting on his activity, he was allegedly the first person to think that diseases were produced by natural causes (diet, habits and environmental factors), and not a punishment inflicted by the gods.

Today, he is probably best known for the "Hippocratic Oath", a declaration that is at the origin of the oath that medical graduates still swear today in many countries when entering the profession. It is an example of *deontological* ethics – the notion that we should behave according to *what we must do* – that takes as its criterion whether an action is right or wrong, in order to decide whether it must be undertaken or not. In this text, two such principles appear, namely the principle of medical confidentiality and the principle of non-maleficence.

The oath – that most modern scholars do not regard as having been written by Hippocrates himself – begins with an address to several gods related to health (Apollo, Asclepius, Hygieia, Panacea). It also contains several elements of the medical beliefs of the time.

Hippocratic Oath

Translated from Ancient Greek by W.H.S. Jones, 1923.

I swear by Apollo Physician, by Asclepius, by Hygieia, by Panacea, and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this oath and this indenture.

To hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents; to make him partner in my livelihood; when he is in need of money to share mine with him; to consider his family as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they want to learn it, without fee or indenture; to impart precept, oral instruction, and all other instruction to my own sons, the sons of my teacher, and to indentured pupils who have taken the physician's oath, but to nobody else.

I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similarly I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion. But I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art. I will not use the knife, not even, verily, on sufferers from stone, but I will give place to such as are craftsmen therein.

Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm, especially from abusing the bodies of man or woman, bond or free. And whatsoever I shall see or hear in the course of my profession, as well as outside my profession in my intercourse with men, if it be what should not be published abroad, I will never divulge, holding such things to be holy secrets.

Now if I carry out this oath, and break it not, may I gain for ever reputation among all men for my life and for my art; but if I break it and forswear myself, may the opposite befall me.

Plato

Plato (c. 427–348 BCE), who was born and died in Athens, is considered a pivotal figure in the development of philosophy, along with his teacher Socrates. Since the latter didn't leave behind any writings, it is through Plato that we know of his positions and life. Although the two philosophers are often amalgamated in the history of ideas, it is important to differentiate between the character of Socrates in Plato's written pieces, and the man Socrates.

Plato was the first philosopher to extensively use the dialogue form: he presents us with a series of protagonists, dialoguing together in an open-ended quest for the truth. A result of this method – called *dialectics* – is extensive argumentation, sudden reversals and the occasional *aporia* (=no answer can be found and therefore the dialogue seems to have reached a dead end).

Thirty-five dialogues have been attributed to Plato, one of the biggest legacies in ancient philosophy. The following extracts are taken from two dialogues of the middle period. In *The Republic*, Plato questions the nature of the soul and that of the city in parallel, while the *Phaedrus* is a dialogue about love and speech. We will read two of the most famous of Plato's allegories in particular, that of the cave and that of the chariot of the soul.

THE REPUBLIC (C. –380)

Introduction

Book I, 327a-330d // Translated from Ancient Greek by Allan Bloom, 1991

[327] SOCRATES: I went down to the Piraeus[1] yesterday with Glaucon, son of Ariston, to pray to the goddess; and, at the same time, I wanted to observe how they would put on the festival, since they were now holding it for the first time. Now, in my opinion, the procession of the native inhabitants was fine; but the one the Thracians conducted was no less fitting a show. After we had prayed and looked on, we went off toward town.

Catching sight of us from afar as we were pressing homewards, Polemarchus, son of Cephalus, ordered his slave boy to run after us and order us to wait for him. The boy took hold of my cloak from behind and said, "Polemarchus orders you to wait."

And I turned around and asked him where his master was. "He is coming up behind," he said, "just wait."

"Of course we'll wait," said Glaucon.

A moment later Polemarchus came along with Adeimantus, Glaucon's brother, Niceratus, son of Nicias, and some others—apparently from the procession. Polemarchus said, "Socrates, I guess you two are hurrying to get away to town."

"That's not a bad guess," I said.

[1] The Piraeus is the port of Athens, situated some 10 km from the city. As the center of Athenian commerce, it was the place to find all the diversity and disorder that come from foreign lands. It was, therefore, the appropriate place in which to consider outlandish ways of life. Furthermore, it was a center of the democratic party.

"Well," he said, "do you see how many of us there are?"

"Of course."

"Well, then," he said, "either prove stronger than these men or stay here."

"Isn't there still one other possibility ... ," I said, "our persuading you that you must let us go?"

"Could you really persuade," he said, "if we don't listen?"

"There's no way," said Glaucon.

"Well, then, think it over, bearing in mind we won't listen."

[328] Then Adeimantus said, "Is it possible you don't know that at sunset there will be a torch race on horseback for the goddess?"

"On horseback?" I said. "That is novel. Will they hold torches and pass them to one another while racing the horses, or what do you mean?"

"That's it," said Polemarchus, "and, besides, they'll put on an all-night festival that will be worth seeing. We'll get up after dinner and go to see it; there we'll be together with many of the young men and we'll talk. So stay and do as I tell you."

And Glaucon said, "It seems we must stay."

"Well, if it is so resolved," I said, "that's how we must act."

Then we went to Polemarchus' home; there we found Lysias and Euthydemus, Polemarchus' brothers, and, in addition, Thrasymachus, the Chalcedonian and Charmantides, the Paeanian, and Cleitophon, the son of Aristonymus.

Cephalus, Polemarchus' father, was also at home; and he seemed very old to me, for I had not seen him for some time. He was seated on a sort of cushioned stool and was crowned with a wreath, for he had just performed a sacrifice in the courtyard. We sat down beside him, for some stools were arranged in a circle there. As soon as Cephalus saw me, he greeted me warmly and said:

"Socrates, you don't come down to us in the Piraeus very often, yet you ought to. Now if I still had the strength to make the trip to town easily, there would be no need for you to come here; rather we would come to you. As it is, however, you must come here more frequently. I want you to know that as the other pleasures, those connected with the body, wither away in me, the desires and pleasures that have to do with speeches grow the more. Now do as I say: be with these young men, but come here regularly to us as to friends and your very own kin."

"For my part, Cephalus, I am really delighted to discuss with the very old," I said. "Since they are like men who have proceeded on a certain road that perhaps we too will have to take, one ought, in my opinion, to learn from them what sort of road it is—whether it is rough and hard or easy and smooth. From you in particular I should like to learn how it looks to you, for you are now at just the time of life the poets call 'the threshold of old age.' Is it a hard time of life, or what have you to report of it?"

[329] "By Zeus, I shall tell you just how it looks to me, Socrates," he said. "Some of us who are about the same age often meet together and keep up the old proverb. Now then, when they meet, most of the members of our group lament, longing for the pleasures of youth and reminiscing about sex, about drinking bouts and feasts and all that goes with things of that sort; they take it hard as though they were deprived of something very

important and had then lived well but are now not even alive. Some also bewail the abuse that old age receives from relatives, and in this key they sing a refrain about all the evils old age has caused them. But, Socrates, in my opinion these men do not put their fingers on the cause. For, if this were the cause, I too would have suffered these same things insofar as they depend on old age and so would everyone else who has come to this point in life. But as it is, I have encountered others for whom it was not so, especially Sophocles. I was once present when the poet was asked by someone, 'Sophocles, how are you in sex? Can you still have intercourse with a woman?' 'Silence, man,' he said. 'Most joyfully did I escape it, as though I had run away from a sort of frenzied and savage master.' I thought at the time that he had spoken well and I still do. For, in every way, old age brings great peace and freedom from such things. When the desires cease to strain and finally relax, then what Sophocles says comes to pass in every way; it is possible to be rid of very many mad masters. But of these things and of those that concern relatives, there is one just cause: not old age, Socrates, but the character of the human beings. If they are orderly and content with themselves, even old age is only moderately troublesome; if they are not, then both age, Socrates, and youth alike turn out to be hard for that sort."

Then I was full of wonder at what he said and, wanting him to say still more, I stirred him up, saying: "Cephalus, when you say these things, I suppose that the many do not accept them from you, but believe rather that it is not due to character that you bear old age so easily but due to possessing great substance. They say that for the rich there are many consolations."

[330] "What you say is true," he said. "They do not accept them. And they do have something there, but not, however, quite as much as they think; rather, the saying of Themistocles holds good. When a Seriphian abused him—saying that he was illustrious not thanks to himself but thanks to the city—he answered that if he himself had been a Seriphian he would not have made a name, nor would that man have made one had he been an Athenian. And the same argument also holds good for those who are not wealthy and bear old age with difficulty: the decent man would not bear old age with poverty very easily, nor would the one who is not a decent sort ever be content with himself even if he were wealthy."

"Cephalus," I said, "did you inherit or did you earn most of what you possess?"

"What do you mean, earned, Socrates!" he said. "As a moneymaker, I was a sort of mean between my grandfather and my father. For my grandfather, whose namesake I am, inherited pretty nearly as much substance as I now possess, and he increased it many times over. Lysanias, my father, used it to a point where it was still less than it is now. I am satisfied if I leave not less, but rather a bit more than I inherited, to my sons here."

"The reason I asked, you see," I said, "is that to me you didn't seem overly fond of money. For the most part, those who do not make money themselves are that way. Those who do make it are twice as attached to it as the others. For just as poets are fond of their poems and fathers of their children, so money-makers too are serious about money—as their own product; and they also are serious about it for the same reason other men are—for its use. They are, therefore, hard even to be with because they are willing to praise nothing but wealth."

[…]

[…] "Then it's our job, as it seems, to choose, if we're able, which are the natures, and what kind they are, fit for guarding the city."

"Indeed it is our job."

"By Zeus," I said, "it's no mean thing we've taken upon ourselves. But nevertheless, we mustn't be cowardly, at least as far as it's in our power."

"No," he said, "we mustn't."

"Do you suppose," I said, "that for guarding there is any difference between the nature of a noble puppy and that of a well-born young man?"

"What do you mean?"

[375] "Well, surely both of them need sharp senses, speed to catch what they perceive, and, finally, strength if they have to fight it out with what they have caught."

"Yes, indeed," he said, "both need all these things."

"To say nothing of courage, if they are to fight well."

"Of course."

"Then, will horse or dog—or any other animal whatsoever—be willing to be courageous if it's not spirited? Haven't you noticed how irresistible and unbeatable spirit is, so that its presence makes every soul fearless and invincible in the face of everything?"

"Yes, I have noticed it."

"As for the body's characteristics, it's plain how the guardian must be."

"Yes."

"And as for the soul's—that he must be spirited."

"That too."

"Glaucon," I said, "with such natures, how will they not be savage to one another and the rest of the citizens?"

"By Zeus," he said, "it won't be easy."

"Yet, they must be gentle to their own and cruel to enemies. If not, they'll not wait for others to destroy them, but they'll do it themselves beforehand."

"True," he said.

"What will we do?" I said. "Where will we find a disposition at the same time gentle and great-spirited? Surely a gentle nature is opposed to a spirited one."

"It looks like it."

"Yet, if a man lacks either of them, he can't become a good guardian. But these conditions resemble impossibilities, and so it follows that a good guardian is impossible."

"I'm afraid so," he said.

I too was at a loss, and, looking back over what had gone before, I said, “It is just, my friend, that we’re at a loss. For we’ve abandoned the image we proposed.”

“How do you mean?”

“We didn’t notice that there are, after all, natures such as we thought impossible, possessing these opposites.”

“Where, then?”

“One could see it in other animals too, especially, however, in the one we compared to the guardian. You know, of course, that by nature the disposition of noble dogs is to be as gentle as can be with their familiars and people they know and the opposite with those they don’t know.”

“I do know that.”

“Then,” I said, “it is possible, after all; and what we’re seeking for in the guardian isn’t against nature.”

“It doesn’t seem so.”

“In your opinion, then, does the man who will be a fit guardian need, in addition to spiritedness, also to be a philosopher in his nature?”

“How’s that?” he said. “I don’t understand.”

[376] “This, too, you’ll observe in dogs,” I said, “and it’s a thing in the beast worthy of our wonder.”

“What?”

“When it sees someone it doesn’t know, it’s angry, although it never had any bad experience with him. And when it sees someone it knows, it greets him warmly, even if it never had a good experience with him. Didn’t you ever wonder about this before?”

“No, I haven’t paid very much attention to it up to now. But it’s plain that it really does this.”

“Well, this does look like an attractive affection of its nature and truly philosophic.”

“In what way?”

“In that it distinguishes friendly from hostile looks by nothing other than by having learned the one and being ignorant of the other,” I said. “And so, how can it be anything other than a lover of learning since it defines what’s its own and what’s alien by knowledge and ignorance?”

“It surely couldn’t be anything but,” he said.

“Well,” I said, “but aren’t love of learning and love of wisdom the same?”

“Yes, the same,” he said.

“So shall we be bold and assert that a human being too, if he is going to be gentle to his own and those known to him, must by nature be a philosopher and a lover of learning?”

“Yes,” he said, “let’s assert it.”

“Then the man who’s going to be a fine and good guardian of the city for us will in his nature be philosophic, spirited, swift, and strong.”

“That’s entirely certain,” he said.

"Then he would be of this sort to begin with. But how, exactly, will they be reared and educated by us? And does our considering this contribute anything to our goal of discerning that for the sake of which we are considering all these things—in what way justice and injustice come into being in a city? We don't want to scant the argument, but we don't want an overlong one either."

And Glaucon's brother said, "I most certainly expect that this present consideration will contribute to that goal."

"By Zeus," I said, "then, my dear Adeimantus, it mustn't be given up even if it turns out to be quite long."

"No, it mustn't."

"Come, then, like men telling tales in a tale and at their leisure, let's educate the men in speech."

"We must."

"What is the education? Isn't it difficult to find a better one than that discovered over a great expanse of time? It is, of course, gymnastic for bodies and music[1] for the soul."

"Yes, it is."

"Won't we begin educating in music before gymnastic?"

"Of course."

"You include speeches in music, don't you?" I said.

"I do."

"Do speeches have a double form, the one true, the other false?"

"Yes."

[377] "Must they be educated in both, but first in the false?"

"I don't understand how you mean that," he said.

"Don't you understand," I said, "that first we tell tales to children? And surely they are, as a whole, false, though there are true things in them too. We make use of tales with children before exercises."

"That's so."

"That's what I meant by saying music must be taken up before gymnastic."

"That's right," he said.

"Don't you know that the beginning is the most important part of every work and that this is especially so with anything young and tender? For at that stage it's most plastic, and each thing assimilates itself to the model whose stamp anyone wishes to give to it."

"Quite so."

[1] "Gymnastic" means the exercise of the unadorned body. "Music" means originally "any activity performed under the guidance of the Muses." This meant especially lyric poetry sung to music, which is not far from our sense. Socrates broadens the sense somewhat and concentrates upon subordinating the rhythmic and melodic elements to the verbal and rational content.

"Then shall we so easily let the children hear just any tales fashioned by just anyone and take into their souls opinions for the most part opposite to those we'll suppose they must have when they are grown up?"

"In no event will we permit it."

"First, as it seems, we must supervise the makers of tales; and if they make[1] a fine tale, it must be approved, but if it's not, it must be rejected. We'll persuade nurses and mothers to tell the approved tales to their children and to shape their souls with tales more than their bodies with hands. Most of those they now tell must be thrown out."

"Which sort?" he said.

"In the greater tales we'll also see the smaller ones," I said. "For both the greater and the smaller must be taken from the same model and have the same power. Don't you suppose so?"

"I do," he said. "But I don't grasp what you mean by the greater ones."

"The ones Hesiod and Homer told us, and the other poets too. They surely composed false tales for human beings and used to tell them and still do tell them."

"But what sort," he said, "and what do you mean to blame in them?"

"What ought to be blamed first and foremost," I said, "especially if the lie a man tells isn't a fine one."

"What's that?"

"When a man in speech makes a bad representation of what gods and heroes are like, just as a painter who paints something that doesn't resemble the things whose likeness he wished to paint."

"Yes, it's right to blame such things," he said. "But how do we mean this and what sort of thing is it?"

[378] "First," I said, "the man who told the biggest lie about the biggest things didn't tell a fine lie—how Uranus did what Hesiod says he did, and how Cronos in his turn took revenge on him[2]. And Cronos' deeds and his sufferings at the hands of his son, not even if they were true would I suppose they should so easily be told to thoughtless young things; best would be to keep quiet, but if there were some necessity to tell, as few as possible ought to hear them as unspeakable secrets, after making a sacrifice, not of a pig but of some great offering that's hard to come by, so that it will come to the ears of the smallest possible number."

"These speeches are indeed harsh," he said.

"And they mustn't be spoken in our city, Adeimantus," I said. "Nor must it be said within the hearing of a young person that in doing the extremes of injustice, or that in punishing

---

[1] The word is *poiein* from which the word "poet" is drawn. It means "to make" and is the characteristic expression for the activity of the poet. Poetry is just one form of making, but it is the most revealing kind of making, and the poet becomes the maker. In English usage it is impossible to translate it consistently as "making," and so "writing" and "composing" have also been used when necessary. It should be remembered that the word is always *poiein*; for the notion that a thing has been made, and made by the poet, is often part of Plato's meaning. The ancient interpretation of the poet as a maker contrasts with the modern view that the poet is a creator.

[2] Hesiod, *Theogony*, 154-210.

the unjust deeds of his father in every way, he would do nothing to be wondered at, but would be doing only what the first and the greatest of the gods did."

"No, by Zeus," he said. "To say this doesn't seem fitting to me either."

"Above all," I said, "it mustn't be said that gods make war on gods, and plot against them and have battles with them—for it isn't even true—provided that those who are going to guard the city for us must consider it most shameful to be easily angry with one another. They are far from needing to have tales told and embroideries woven about battles of giants and the many diverse disputes of gods and heroes with their families and kin. But if we are somehow going to persuade them that no citizen ever was angry with another and that to be so is not holy, it's just such things that must be told the children right away by old men and women; and as they get older, the poets must be compelled to make up speeches for them which are close to these. But Hera's bindings by her son, and Hephaestus' being cast out by his father when he was about to help out his mother who was being beaten, and all the battles of the gods Homer made, must not be accepted in the city, whether they are made with a hidden sense or without a hidden sense. A young thing can't judge what is hidden sense and what is not; but what he takes into his opinions at that age has a tendency to become hard to eradicate and unchangeable. Perhaps it's for this reason that we must do everything to insure that what they hear first, with respect to virtue, be the finest told tales for them to hear."

"That's reasonable," he said. "But if someone should at this point ask us what they are and which tales we mean, what would we say?"

[379] And I said, "Adeimantus, you and I aren't poets right now but founders of a city. It's appropriate for founders to know the models according to which the poets must tell their tales. If what the poets produce goes counter to these models, founders must not give way; however, they must not themselves make up tales."

"That's correct," he said. "But, that is just it; what would the models for speech about the gods be."

"Doubtless something like this," I said. "The god must surely always be described such as he is, whether one presents him in epics, lyrics, or tragedies."

"Yes, he must be."

"Then, is the god really good, and, hence, must he be said to be so?"

"Of course."

"Well, but none of the good things is harmful, is it?"

"Not in my opinion."

"Does that which isn't harmful do harm?"

"In no way."

"Does that which does not harm do any evil?"

"Not that, either."

"That which does no evil would not be the cause of any evil?"

"How could it be?"

"What about this? Is the good beneficial?"

"Yes."

"Then it's the cause of doing well?"

"Yes."

"Then the good is not the cause of everything; rather it is the cause of the things that are in a good way, while it is not responsible for the bad things."

"Yes," he said, "that's entirely so."

[…]

"Now, then," I said, "this would be one of the laws and models concerning the gods, according to which those who produce speeches will have to do their speaking and those who produce poems will have to do their making: the god is not the cause of all things, but of the good."

"And it's very satisfactory," he said.

"Now, what about this second one? Do you suppose the god is a wizard, able treacherously to reveal himself at different times in different ideas, at one time actually himself changing and passing from his own form into many shapes, at another time deceiving us and making us think such things about him? Or is he simple and does he least of all things depart from his own idea?"

"On the spur of the moment, I can't say," he said.

"What about this? Isn't it necessary that, if something steps out of its own idea, it be changed either by itself or something else?"

"Yes, it is necessary."

"Are things that are in the best condition least altered and moved by something else—for example, a body by food, drink, and labor, and all plants by the sun's heat, winds, and other affections of the sort; aren't the healthiest and strongest least altered?"

"Of course."

[381] "And a soul that is most courageous and most prudent, wouldn't an external affection least trouble and alter it?"

"Yes."

"And, again, the same argument surely also holds for all composites, implements, houses, and clothing; those that are well made and in good condition are least altered by time and the other affections."

"That's so."

"Hence everything that's in fine condition, whether by nature or art or both, admits least transformation by anything else."

"It seems so."

"Now, the god and what belongs to the god are in every way in the best condition."

"Of course."

"So, in this way, the god would least of all have many shapes."

"Least of all, surely."

"But would he be the one to transform and alter himself?"

"It's plain," he said, "if he's altered at all."

"Does he transform himself into what's better and fairer, or what's worse and uglier than himself?"

"Necessarily into what's worse," he said, "if he's altered at all. For surely we won't say that the god is wanting in beauty or virtue."

"What you say is very right," I said. "And, if this is so, in your opinion, Adeimantus, does anyone, either god or human being, willingly make himself worse in any way at all?"

"It's impossible," he said.

"Then it's impossible," I said, "for a god to want to alter himself, but since, as it seems, each of them is as fair and as good as possible, he remains forever simply in his own shape."

"That's entirely necessary, in my opinion at least," he said.

"Then, you best of men," I said, "let none of the poets tell us that

> The gods, like wandering strangers,
> Take on every sort of shape and visit
> the cities[1]

and let none tell lies about Proteus and Thetis or bring on an altered Hera, either in tragedies or the other kinds of poetry, as a priestess

> Making a collection for the life-giving children
> of Inachus, Argos' river[2]

and let them not lie to us in many other such ways. Nor should the mothers, in their turn, be convinced by these things and frighten the children with tales badly told—that certain gods go around nights looking like all sorts of strangers—lest they slander the gods while at the same time making the children more cowardly."

THE REPUBLIC (C. –380)

Allegory of the Cave

Book VII, 514a-521b // Translated from Ancient Greek by Benjamin Jowett, 1888

[514] AND now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened:—Behold! human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

I see.

[1] Homer, *Odyssey*, XVII, 485.

[2] A line from *The Xantriai*, a lost play by Aeschylus.

[515] And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

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

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

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

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

Yes, he said.

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

Very true.

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

No question, he replied.

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

That is certain.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision,—what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them,—will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

Far truer.

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

True, he said.

[516] And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Not all in a moment, he said.

He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

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

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

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

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

Certainly, he would.

And if they were in the habit of conferring honours among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honours and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer,

'Better to be the poor servant of a poor master,'

and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner?

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

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

To be sure, he said.

[517] And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady (and the time which would be needed to acquire this new habit of sight might be very considerable) would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

No question, he said.

This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world according to my poor belief, which, at your desire, I have expressed—whether rightly or wrongly God knows. But, whether true or false, my opinion

is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and, when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

I agree, he said, as far as I am able to understand you.

Moreover, I said, you must not wonder that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted.

Yes, very natural.

And is there anything surprising in one who passes from divine contemplations to the evil state of man, misbehaving himself in a ridiculous manner; if, while his eyes are blinking and before he has become accustomed to the surrounding darkness, he is compelled to fight in courts of law, or in other places, about the images or the shadows of images of justice, and is endeavouring to meet the conceptions of those who have never yet seen absolute justice?

[518] Anything but surprising, he replied.

Any one who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter life, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light. And he will count the one happy in his condition and state of being, and he will pity the other; or, if he have a mind to laugh at the soul which comes from below into the light, there will be more reason in this than in the laugh which greets him who returns from above out of the light into the den.

That, he said, is a very just distinction.

But then, if I am right, certain professors of education must be wrong when they say that they can put a knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes.

They undoubtedly say this, he replied.

Whereas, our argument shows that the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being, and of the brightest and best of being, or in other words, of the good.

Very true.

And must there not be some art which will effect conversion in the easiest and quickest manner; not implanting the faculty of sight, for that exists already, but has been turned in the wrong direction, and is looking away from the truth?

Yes, he said, such an art may be presumed.

[519] And whereas the other so-called virtues of the soul seem to be akin to bodily qualities, for even when they are not originally innate they can be implanted later by habit and exercise, the virtue of wisdom more than anything else contains a divine element which always remains, and by this conversion is rendered useful and profitable; or, on the other hand, hurtful and useless. Did you never observe the narrow intelligence flashing from the keen eye of a clever rogue—how eager he is, how clearly his paltry soul sees the way to his end; he is the reverse of blind, but his keen eyesight is forced into the service of evil, and he is mischievous in proportion to his cleverness?

Very true, he said.

But what if there had been a circumcision of such natures in the days of their youth; and they had been severed from those sensual pleasures, such as eating and drinking, which, like leaden weights, were attached to them at their birth, and which drag them down and turn the vision of their souls upon the things that are below—if, I say, they had been released from these impediments and turned in the opposite direction, the very same faculty in them would have seen the truth as keenly as they see what their eyes are turned to now.

Very likely.

Yes, I said; and there is another thing which is likely, or rather a necessary inference from what has preceded, that neither the uneducated and uninformed of the truth, nor yet those who never make an end of their education, will be able ministers of State; not the former, because they have no single aim of duty which is the rule of all their actions, private as well as public; nor the latter, because they will not act at all except upon compulsion, fancying that they are already dwelling apart in the islands of the blest.

Very true, he replied.

Then, I said, the business of us who are the founders of the State will be to compel the best minds to attain that knowledge which we have already shown to be the greatest of all—they must continue to ascend until they arrive at the good; but when they have ascended and seen enough we must not allow them to do as they do now.

What do you mean?

I mean that they remain in the upper world: but this must not be allowed; they must be made to descend again among the prisoners in the den, and partake of their labours and honours, whether they are worth having or not.

But is not this unjust? he said; ought we to give them a worse life, when they might have a better?

[520] You have again forgotten, my friend, I said, the intention of the legislator, who did not aim at making any one class in the State happy above the rest; the happiness was to be in the whole State, and he held the citizens together by persuasion and necessity, making them benefactors of the State, and therefore benefactors of one another; to this end he created them, not to please themselves, but to be his instruments in binding up the State.

True, he said, I had forgotten.

Observe, Glaucon, that there will be no injustice in compelling our philosophers to have a care and providence of others; we shall explain to them that in other States, men of their class are not obliged to share in the toils of politics: and this is reasonable, for they grow up at their own sweet will, and the government would rather not have them. Being self-

taught, they cannot be expected to show any gratitude for a culture which they have never received. But we have brought you into the world to be rulers of the hive, kings of yourselves and of the other citizens, and have educated you far better and more perfectly than they have been educated, and you are better able to share in the double duty. Wherefore each of you, when his turn comes, must go down to the general underground abode, and get the habit of seeing in the dark. When you have acquired the habit, you will see ten thousand times better than the inhabitants of the den, and you will know what the several images are, and what they represent, because you have seen the beautiful and just and good in their truth. And thus our State which is also yours will be a reality, and not a dream only, and will be administered in a spirit unlike that of other States, in which men fight with one another about shadows only and are distracted in the struggle for power, which in their eyes is a great good. Whereas the truth is that the State in which the rulers are most reluctant to govern is always the best and most quietly governed, and the State in which they are most eager, the worst.

Quite true, he replied.

And will our pupils, when they hear this, refuse to take their turn at the toils of State, when they are allowed to spend the greater part of their time with one another in the heavenly light?

Impossible, he answered; for they are just men, and the commands which we impose upon them are just; there can be no doubt that every one of them will take office as a stern necessity, and not after the fashion of our present rulers of State.

[521] Yes, my friend, I said; and there lies the point. You must contrive for your future rulers another and a better life than that of a ruler, and then you may have a well-ordered State; for only in the State which offers this, will they rule who are truly rich, not in silver and gold, but in virtue and wisdom, which are the true blessings of life. Whereas if they go to the administration of public affairs, poor and hungering after their own private advantage, thinking that hence they are to snatch the chief good, order there can never be; for they will be fighting about office, and the civil and domestic broils which thus arise will be the ruin of the rulers themselves and of the whole State.

Most true, he replied.

And the only life which looks down upon the life of political ambition is that of true philosophy. Do you know of any other?

Indeed, I do not, he said.

[…]

PHAEDRUS (C. –370)

The Invention of Writing

274b-276a // Translated from Ancient Greek by Robin Waterfield, 2002.

SOCRATES: But don't we still have to discuss whether or not writing is desirable—what makes it acceptable and what makes it undesirable?

PHAEDRUS: Yes.

SOCRATES: So do you know the best way for either a theoretical or a practical approach to speech to please god?

PHAEDRUS: No, I don't. Do you?

SOCRATES: Well, I can pass on something I've heard from our predecessors. Only they know the truth of the matter, but if we had made this discovery by ourselves, would we any longer have the slightest interest in mere human conjectures?

PHAEDRUS: What an absurd question! Please tell me what you say you've heard.

SOCRATES: All right. The story I heard is set in Naucratis in Egypt, where there was one of the ancient gods of Egypt—the one to whom the bird they call the 'ibis' is sacred, whose name is Theuth. This deity was the inventor of number, d arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, of games involving draughts and dice—and especially of writing. At the time, the king of the whole of Egypt around the capital city of the inland region (the city the Greeks call 'Egyptian Thebes'[1]), was Thamous, or Amon, as the Greeks call him.† Theuth came to Thamous and showed him the branches of expertise he had invented, and suggested that they should be spread throughout Egypt. Thamous asked him what good each one would do, and subjected Theuth's explanations to e criticism if he thought he was going wrong and praise if thought he was right. The story goes that Thamous expressed himself at length to Theuth about each of the branches of expertise, both for and against them. It would take a long time to go through all Thamous' views, but when it was the turn of writing, Theuth said, 'Your highness, this science will increase the intelligence of the people of Egypt and improve their memories. For this invention is a potion for memory and intelligence.' But Thamous replied, 'You are most ingenious, Theuth. But one person has the ability to bring branches of expertise into existence, another to assess the extent to which they will harm or benefit those who use them. The loyalty you feel to writing, as its originator, has just led you to tell me the opposite of its true effect. It will atrophy people's memories. Trust in writing will make them remember things by relying on marks made by others, from outside themselves, not on their own inner resources, and so writing will make the things they have learnt disappear from their minds. Your invention is a potion for jogging the memory, not for remembering. You provide your students with the appearance of intelligence, not real intelligence. Because your students will be widely read, though without any contact with a teacher, they will seem to be men of wide knowledge, when they will usually be ignorant. And this spurious appearance of intelligence will make them difficult company.'

PHAEDRUS: Socrates, it doesn't take much for you to make up stories from Egypt and anywhere else in the world you feel like.

[1] *Egyptian Thebes*: to distinguish it from the main city of Boeotia on the Greek mainland, which had (and still has) the same name.

SOCRATES: Well, my friend, the people at the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona say that the original prophecies there were spoken by an oak.[1] In those days people weren't as clever as you young ones nowadays, and they were so foolish that they happily listened to oak and rock, as long as they told the truth. But perhaps it matters to you who the speaker is, or what country he's from, because you are not concerned only with whether or not he is right.

PHAEDRUS: You're right to have told me off—and, yes, I think the Theban king was correct about writing.

SOCRATES: So anyone who thinks he can get a branch of expertise to survive by committing it to writing—and also anyone who inherits the work with the assumption that writing will give him something clear and reliable—would be behaving in a thoroughly foolish manner and really would be ignorant of Amon's prediction, if he supposed that written words could do more than jog the memory of someone who already knows the topic that has been written about.

PHAEDRUS: Quite so.

SOCRATES: Yes, because there's something odd about writing, Phaedrus, which makes it exactly like painting. The offspring of painting stand there as if alive, but if you ask them a question they maintain an aloof silence.[2] It's the same with written words: you might think they were speaking as if they had some intelligence, but if you want an explanation of any of the things they're saying and you ask them about it, they just go on and on for ever giving the same single piece of information. Once any account has been written down, you find it all over the place, hobnobbing with completely inappropriate people no less than with those who understand it, and completely failing to know who it should and shouldn't talk to. And faced with rudeness and unfair abuse it always needs its father to come to its assistance, since it is incapable of defending or helping itself.

PHAEDRUS: Again, you're quite right.

SOCRATES: Well, is there any other way of using words? Does the written word have a legitimate brother? Can we see how it is born, and how much better and stronger it grows than its brother?

PHAEDRUS: What is this way of using words? How is it born, do you think?

SOCRATES: It is the kind that is written along with knowledge in the soul of a student. It is capable of defending itself, and it knows how to speak to those it should and keep silent in the company of those to whom it shouldn't speak.

PHAEDRUS: You're talking about the living, ensouled speech of a man of knowledge. We'd be right to describe the written word as a mere image of this.

[…]

[1] *spoken by an oak*: in a trance, the priestesses would interpret the rustling of the leaves of an oak tree.

[2] *an aloof silence*: one might also add that the written word ignores all the unspoken aspects such as body language, tone of voice, and so on, which constitute a major proportion of communication.

PHAEDRUS (C. –370)

The Chariot Allegory

244a-250c // Translated from Ancient Greek by Robin Waterfield, 2002.

[…] 'First we have to understand the truth about the nature of the soul, whether divine or human, by considering what happens to it and what it causes to happen. This gives us the following starting-point for our proof. Every soul is immortal, because anything that is ever-moving is immortal, whereas anything which causes motion elsewhere and is moved from elsewhere stops living when it stops moving. It is only something which moves itself that never stops moving, because it never abandons itself. Such a thing is also the original source of motion for everything else that moves. Now, a source is ungenerated, because everything that is generated is necessarily generated from a source, but there is nothing for a source to be generated from. For if a source were generated from anything, it would stop being a source. Since a source is ungenerated, it is also necessarily imperishable, because a defunct source can never be generated from anything else nor can it bring about generation in anything else, given that everything is generated from a source. And so it is a self-mover that is a source of motion, and a self-mover can neither perish nor be generated, or else the entire universe and the whole of creation will inevitably run down and stop, and will never again find anything to act as a source of motion and generation. Now, we have already shown that a self-mover is immortal, and so no one need hesitate to claim that selfmovement is the essence and principle of soul. For no body which is moved from outside itself has a soul, while every body which is moved from within itself, from its own resources, has a soul, since this is what it is to be soul. If this is so—if souls and only souls are self-movers—it necessarily follows that soul is ungenerated and immortal.

'That is enough about the soul's immortality. I must now say something about its character. It would take too long—and beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt require a god—to explain its character, but the use of an analogy will make the task within lesser human powers. So let's do that. In my analogy, a soul is like an organic whole made up of a charioteer and his team of horses. Now, while the horses and charioteers of gods are always thoroughly good, those of everyone else are a mixture. Although our inner ruler drives a pair of horses, only one of his horses is thoroughly noble and good, while the other is thoroughly the opposite. This inevitably makes driving, in our case, difficult and disagreeable.

'Next I must try to explain how one living creature is called "immortal" while another is called "mortal". It is the job of soul in general to look after all that is inanimate, and souls patrol the whole universe, taking on different forms at different times. A complete soul—which is to say, one that is winged—journeys on high and controls the whole world, but one that has lost its wings is carried along until it seizes upon something solid, and it takes up residence there. The earthy body of which it takes control seems to move itself, but that is the effect of the soul, and the whole unit of soul and body conjoined is called a "living creature", and also "mortal". No one who has thought the matter through could call a living creature "immortal", but because we have never seen a god, and have an inadequate conception of godhood, we imagine a kind of immortal living creature, possessing both soul and body in an everlasting combination. Anyway, we can leave the facts of this matter to be and be expressed however the gods like, but we have to come to some understanding of what causes a soul to shed and lose its wings. It is something like this.

‘The natural property of a wing is to carry something heavy aloft, up on high to the abode of the gods. There is a sense in which, of all the things that are related to the body, wings have more of the divine in them. Anything divine is good, wise, virtuous, and so on, and so these qualities are the best source of nourishment and growth for the soul’s wings, but badness and evil and so on cause them to shrink and perish.

‘The supreme leader in the heavens is Zeus. He goes at the head, in a winged chariot, arranging and managing everything, and behind him comes the host of gods and spirits, in an orderly array of eleven squadrons. For Hestia stays alone in the gods’ house, while each of the other gods who have been assigned one of the twelve positions takes his place at the head of the rank to which he has been assigned. So there are many glorious sights to be seen within heaven, and many wonderful paths along which the favoured company of gods go and return, each performing his proper function, and the gods are accompanied by everyone who wants to join them and is capable of doing so, because meanness has no place in the gods’ choir. When they turn to food and go to one of their banquets, they journey skyward to the rim of the heavenly vault. Although the way is steep, the gods’ chariots make light of the journey, since they are well balanced and easy to handle, but the other chariots find it hard, because the troublesome horse weighs them down. Any charioteer who has trained this horse imperfectly finds that it pulls him down towards the earth and holds him back, and this is the point at which a soul faces the worst suffering and the hardest struggle.

‘When the souls we call “immortal” reach the rim, they make their way to the outside and stand on the outer edge of heaven, and as they stand there the revolution carries them around, while they gaze outward from the heaven. The region beyond heaven has never yet been adequately described in any of our earthly poets’ compositions, nor will it ever be. But since one has to make a courageous attempt to speak the truth, especially when it is truth that one is speaking about, here is a description. This region is filled with true being. True being has no colour or form; it is intangible, and visible only to intelligence, the soul’s guide. True being is the province of everything that counts as true knowledge. So since the mind of god is nourished by intelligence and pure knowledge (as is the mind of every soul which is concerned to receive its proper food), it is pleased to be at last in a position to see true being, and in gazing on the truth it is fed and feels comfortable, until the revolution carries it around to the same place again. In the course of its circuit it observes justice as it really is, self-control, knowledge—not the kind of knowledge that is involved with change and differs according to which of the various existing things (to use the term “existence” in its everyday sense) it makes its object, but the kind of knowledge whose object is things as they really are. And once it has feasted its gaze in the same way on everything else that really is, it sinks back into the inside of heaven and returns home. Once back home, the soul’s charioteer reins in his horses by their manger, throws them ambrosia to eat, and gives them nectar to wash the ambrosia down.

‘This is how the gods live. As for the other souls, any that have closely followed a god and have come to resemble him most raise the heads of their charioteers into the region outside and are carried around along with the revolution, but they are disturbed by their horses and their view of things as they really are is uncertain. Others poke their heads through from time to time, but sink back down in between, and so they see some things, but miss others, depending on the resistance offered by their horses. The rest all long for the upper region and follow after, but they cannot break through, and they are carried around under the surface, trampling and bumping into one another as one tries to overtake another. So there is utter chaos, nothing but sweat and conflict. In the course of this confusion many souls are crippled as a result of the incompetence of the charioteers, and

many have their wings severely damaged, but even after all this effort none of them succeeds in seeing things as they really are before having to return and rely on specious nourishment.

'The reason why there is so much determination to see the whereabouts of the plain of truth is not only that the proper food for the best part of the soul happens to come from the meadow there, but also that it is in the nature of the wings which raise the soul to be nourished by this region. It is the decree of destiny that any soul which attends a god and catches even a glimpse of the truth remains free from injury until the next revolution, and if it is able to do this every time, it will continue to be free from harm. But souls which fall behind and lose their vision of the truth, and are for some unfortunate reason or another weighed down by being filled with forgetfulness and weakness, lose their wings thanks to this burden and fall to earth. At this point they are subject to a law that they are not to be planted into the bodies of animals in their first incarnation. The souls which have seen the most are to enter the seeds of men who will become philosophers, lovers of beauty, men of culture, men who are dedicated to love; the second group those of law-abiding kings or military commanders or civic leaders; the third group those of politicians, estate-managers or businessmen; the fourth group those of men who love exercising in a gymnasium or future experts in bodily health; the fifth group will live as prophets or as initiators into one of the mystery cults; the sixth group will most suitably live as poets or some other kind of representative artist, the seventh as artisans or farmers, the eighth as sophists or demagogues, and the ninth as tyrants.

'In all these cases anyone who has lived a moral life will obtain a better fate, and anyone who has lived an immoral life the opposite. For no soul returns to the place it fell from for ten thousand years—it takes that long for wings to grow again—except the soul of a man who has practised philosophy with sincerity or combined his love for a boy with the practice of philosophy. At the completion of the third thousand-year circuit, if these souls have chosen the philosophical life three times in succession, they regain their wings and in the threethousandth year they return. But all the other souls are judged after the end of their first life, and once they have been judged they either go to prisons in the underworld where they are punished, or are raised aloft by Justice to a certain place in the heavens and live as they deserve, depending on how they lived when they were in human form. But in the thousandth year both groups of souls come for the allotment and choice of their second life and each of them chooses the life it likes. This is the point at which a human soul can be reincarnated as an animal, and someone who was formerly human can be reborn as a human being once again, instead of being an animal. For a soul which has never seen the truth cannot enter into human form, because a man must understand the impressions he receives by reference to classes: he draws on the plurality of perceptions to combine them by reasoning into a single class. This is recollection of the things which our souls once saw during their journey as companions to a god, when they saw beyond the things we now say "exist" and poked their heads up into true reality. That is why only the mind of a philosopher deserves to grow wings, because it uses memory to remain always as close as possible to those things proximity to which gives a god his divine qualities. By making correct use of reminders of these things a man, being constantly initiated into the most perfect rites of all, becomes the only one who is truly perfect. But since he is remote from human concerns and close to divinity, he is criticized by the general run of mankind as deranged, because they do not realize that he is possessed by a god.

'Now we reach the point to which the whole discussion of the fourth kind of madness was tending. This fourth kind of madness is the kind which occurs when someone sees beauty here on earth and is reminded of true beauty. His wings begin to grow and he wants

to take to the air on his new plumage, but he cannot; like a bird he looks upwards, and because he ignores what is down here, he is accused of behaving like a madman. So the point is that this turns out to be the most thoroughly good of all kinds of possession, not only for the man who is possessed, but also for anyone who is touched by it, and the word "lover" refers to a lover of beauty who has been possessed by this kind of madness. For, as I have already said, the soul of every human being is bound to have seen things as they really are, or else it would not have entered this kind of living creature.

'But not every soul is readily prompted by things here on earth to recall those things that are real. This is not easy for souls which caught only a brief glimpse of things there, nor for those which after falling to earth have suffered the misfortune of being perverted and made immoral by the company they keep and have forgotten the sacred things they saw then. When the remaining few, whose memories are good enough, see a likeness here which reminds them of things there, they are amazed and beside themselves, but they do not understand what is happening to them because of a certain unclarity in their perceptions. But although the likenesses here on earth (of things which are precious to souls, such as justice and self-control) lack all lustre, and only a few people come to them and barely see, through dim sense organs, what it is that any likeness is a likeness of, yet earlier it was possible for them to see beauty in all its brilliance. That was when—we as attendants of Zeus and others of one of the other gods—as part of a happy company they saw a wonderful sight and spectacle and were initiated into what we may rightly call the most wonderful of the mysteries. When we celebrated these mysteries then, we were not only perfect beings ourselves, untouched by all the troubles which awaited us later, but we also were initiated into and contemplated things shown to us that were perfect, simple, stable, and blissful. We were surrounded by rays of pure light, being pure ourselves and untainted by this object we call a "body" and which we carry around with us now, imprisoned like shellfish.

[…]

Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 BCE), the most famous of Plato's students, left an immense corpus of writings covering many subjects. He studied logic, physics, biology and zoology, aesthetics, poetry and theatre, ethics and politics, rhetoric and psychology, and his treaties would have a lasting influence all over the Mediterranean Sea for the next two millennia. Since in many of his writings Aristotle compared what previous philosophers had thought, in order to confirm their opinion or contradict them, he is also an important secondary source for us today.

The *Nicomachean Ethics* is Aristotle's best-known work in the field of ethics. The central question – what is happiness and how can we reach it? – has inspired people beyond the boundaries of cultures and religions. In a reflection based on experience, the philosopher defined what is specifically human in order to distinguish the path that humans should take. Of the ten books that compose this work, only passages from the first one are reproduced here: in it, Aristotle builds the bases of his whole reflexion concerning human nature.

NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS (C. –330)

What is happiness?

1094a-1098b & 1102a-1103a // Translated from Ancient Greek by Roger Crisp,

Chapter 1

Every skill and every inquiry, and similarly every action and rational choice, is thought to aim at some good; and so the good has been aptly described as that at which everything aims. But it is clear that there is some difference between ends: some ends are activities, while others are products which are additional to the activities. In cases where there are ends additional to the actions, the products are by their nature better than the activities.

Since there are many actions, skills, and sciences, it happens that there are many ends as well: the end of medicine is health, that of shipbuilding, a ship, that of military science, victory, and that of domestic economy, wealth. But when any of these actions, skills, or sciences comes under some single faculty – as bridlemaking and other sciences concerned with equine equipment come under the science of horsemanship, and horsemanship itself and every action in warfare come under military science, and others similarly come under others – then in all these cases the end of the master science is more worthy of choice than the ends of the subordinate sciences, since these latter ends are pursued also for the sake of the former. And it makes no difference whether the ends of the actions are the activities themselves, or something else additional to them, as in the sciences just mentioned.

Chapter 2

So if what is done has some end that we want for its own sake, and everything else we want is for the sake of this end; and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (because this would lead to an infinite progression, making our desire fruitless and vain), then clearly this will be the good, indeed the chief good. Surely, then, knowledge of the good must be very important for our lives? And if, like archers, we have

a target, are we not more likely to hit the right mark? If so, we must try at least roughly to comprehend what it is and which science or faculty is concerned with it.

Knowledge of the good would seem to be the concern of the most authoritative science, the highest master science. And this is obviously the science of politics, because it lays down which of the sciences there should be in cities, and which each class of person should learn and up to what level. And we see that even the most honourable of faculties, such as military science, domestic economy, and rhetoric, come under it. Since political science employs the other sciences, and also lays down laws about what we should do and refrain from, its end will include the ends of the others, and will therefore be the human good. For even if the good is the same for an individual as for a city, that of the city is obviously a greater and more complete thing to obtain and preserve. For while the good of an individual is a desirable thing, what is good for a people or for cities is a nobler and more godlike thing. Our enquiry, then, is a kind of political science, since these are the ends it is aiming at.

Chapter 3

Our account will be adequate if its clarity is in line with the subject-matter, because the same degree of precision is not to be sought in all discussions, any more than in works of craftsmanship. The spheres of what is noble and what is just, which political science examines, admit of a good deal of diversity and variation, so that they seem to exist only by convention and not by nature. Goods vary in this way as well, since it happens that, for many, good things have harmful consequences: some people have been ruined by wealth, and others by courage. So we should be content, since we are discussing things like these in such a way, to demonstrate the truth sketchily and in outline, and, because we are making generalizations on the basis of generalizations, to draw conclusions along the same lines. Indeed, the details of our claims, then, should be looked at in the same way, since it is a mark of an educated person to look in each area for only that degree of accuracy that the nature of the subject permits. Accepting from a mathematician claims that are mere probabilities seems rather like demanding logical proofs from a rhetorician.

Each person judges well what he knows, and is a good judge of this. So, in any subject, the person educated in it is a good judge of that subject, and the person educated in all subjects is a good judge without qualification. This is why a young person is not fitted to hear lectures on political science, since our discussions begin from and concern the actions of life, and of these he has no experience. Again, because of his tendency to follow his feelings, his studies will be useless and to no purpose, since the end of the study is not knowledge but action. It makes no difference whether he is young in years or juvenile in character, since the deficiency is not related to age, but occurs because of his living and engaging in each of his pursuits according to his feelings. For knowledge is a waste of time for people like this, just as it is for those without self-restraint. But knowledge of the matters that concern political science will prove very beneficial to those who follow reason both in shaping their desires and in acting.

Let these comments – about the student, how our statements are to be taken, and the task we have set ourselves – serve as our preamble.

Chapter 4

Let us continue with the argument, and, since all knowledge and rational choice seek some good, let us say what we claim to be the aim of political science – that is, of all the good things to be done, what is the highest. Most people, I should think, agree about what it is called, since both the masses and sophisticated people call it happiness, understanding being happy as equivalent to living well and acting well. They disagree about substantive conceptions of happiness, the masses giving an account which differs from that of the philosophers. For the masses think it is something straightforward and obvious, like pleasure, wealth, or honour, some thinking it to be one thing, others another. Often the same person can give different accounts: when he is ill, it is health; when he is poor, it is wealth. And when people are aware of their ignorance, they marvel at those who say it is some grand thing quite beyond them. Certain thinkers used to believe that beyond these many good things there is something else good in itself, which makes all these good things good. Examining all the views offered would presumably be rather a waste of time, and it is enough to look at the most prevalent ones or those that seem to have something to be said for them.

Let us not forget, however, that there is a difference between arguments from first principles and arguments to first principles. For Plato rightly used to wonder about this, raising the question whether the way to go is from first principles or to first principles, as in the racecourse whether it is from the judges to the post or back again as well. For while we should begin from things known, they are known in two senses: known by us, and known without qualification. Presumably we have to begin from things known by us. This is why anyone who is going to be a competent student in the spheres of what is noble and what is just – in a word, politics – must be brought up well in his habits. For the first principle is the belief that something is the case, and if this is sufficiently clear, he will not need the reason why as well. Such a person is in possession of the first principles, or could easily grasp them. Anyone with neither of these possibilities open to him should listen to Hesiod:

> This person who understands everything for himself is the best of all,
> And noble is that one who heeds good advice.
> But he who neither understands it for himself nor takes to heart
> What he hears from another is a worthless man.[1]

Chapter 5

But let us begin from where we digressed. For people seem, not unreasonably, to base their conception of the good – happiness, that is – on their own lives. The masses, the coarsest people, see it as pleasure, and so they like the life of enjoyment. There are three especially prominent types of life: that just mentioned, the life of politics, and thirdly the life of contemplation. The masses appear quite slavish by rationally choosing a life fit only for cattle; but they are worthy of consideration because many of those in power feel the same as Sardanapallus.

Sophisticated people, men of action, see happiness as honour, since honour is pretty much the end of the political life. Honour, however, seems too shallow to be an object of our inquiry, since honour appears to depend more on those who honour than on the person honoured, whereas we surmise the good to be something of one's own that cannot easily be taken away. Again, they seem to pursue honour in order to convince themselves of their goodness; at least, they seek to be honoured by people with practical wisdom,

[1] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 293, 295-7.

among those who are familiar with them, and for their virtue. So it is clear that, to these people at least, virtue is superior.

One might, perhaps, suppose virtue rather than honour to be the end of the political life. But even virtue seems, in itself, to be lacking something, since apparently one can possess virtue even when one is asleep, or inactive throughout one's life, and also when one is suffering terribly or experiencing the greatest misfortunes; and no one would call a person living this kind of life happy, unless he were closely defending a thesis. But enough of this, because these issues have been sufficiently dealt with in our everyday discussions.

The third kind of life is that of contemplation, which we shall examine in what follows.

The life of making money is a life people are, as it were, forced into, and wealth is clearly not the good we are seeking, since it is merely useful, for getting something else. One would be better off seeing as ends the things mentioned before, because they are valued for themselves. But they do not appear to be ends either, and many arguments have been offered against them. So let us put them to one side.

Chapter 6

It would perhaps be quite a good idea to examine the notion of the universal and go through any problems there are in the way it is employed, despite the fact that such an inquiry turns out to be difficult going because those who introduced the Forms[3] are friends. It will presumably be thought better, indeed one's duty, to do away with even what is close to one's heart in order to preserve the truth, especially when one is a philosopher. For one might love both, but it is nevertheless a sacred duty to prefer the truth to one's friends.

Those who introduced this idea did not set up Forms for series in which they spoke of priority and posteriority, and this is why they did not postulate a Form of numbers. But the good is spoken of in the categories of substance, of quality and of relation; and that which exists in itself, namely, substance, is naturally prior to what is relative (since this seems like an offshoot and attribute of what is). So there could not be some common Form over and above these goods.

Again, good is spoken of in as many senses as is being: it is used in the category of substance, as for instance god and intellect, in that of quality – the virtues, in that of quantity – the right amount, in that of relation – the useful, in that of time – the right moment, and in that of place – the right locality, and so on. So it is clear that there could not be one common universal, because it would be spoken of not in all the categories, but in only one. Again, since there is a single science for the things answering to each individual Form, there should have been some single science for all the goods. But as it happens there are many sciences, even of the things in one category. For example, the right moment: in war, it is military science, in illness, medicine; or the right amount: in diet, it is medicine, in exercise, gymnastics.

One might also be puzzled about what on earth they mean by speaking of a `thing-in-itself ', since the definition of humanity is one and the same in humanity-in-itself and human being. Inasmuch as they are human, they will not differ. And if this is so, the same will be true of good.

Nor will a thing be any the more good by being eternal, since a long-lasting white thing is no whiter than a short-lived one.

The Pythagoreans seem to give a more plausible account of the good, when they place the one in their column of goods; and Speusippus seems to have followed them in this. But let this be the topic of another discussion.

An objection to what we have said might be that they did not speak about every good, and that things which are pursued and valued for their own sake are called good by reference to a single Form, while those that tend to be instrumental to these things or in some way to preserve them or prevent their contraries are called good for the sake of these – in a different way, in other words. Clearly, then, things should be called good in two senses: things good in themselves, and things good for the sake of things good in themselves. So let us distinguish things good in themselves from those that are means to them and see whether the former are called good with reference to a single Form. What sort of things should one put in the class of things good in themselves? Those that are sought even on their own, such as understanding, sight, certain types of pleasure, and honours? For even if we do seek these for the sake of something else, one would nevertheless put them in the class of things good in themselves. Perhaps nothing but the Form? Then the Form would be useless. But if those other things are in the class of things good in themselves, the same definition of the good will have to be exemplified in all of them, as is that of whiteness in snow and white lead. But the definitions of honour, practical wisdom and pleasure are distinct, and differ with respect to their being good. There is therefore no common good answering to a single Form.

But how, then, are things called good? For they do not seem like items that have the same name by chance. Is it through their all deriving from one good, or their all contributing to one good, or is it rather by analogy? For as sight is good in the body, so intellect is in the soul, and so on in other cases. But perhaps we should put these questions aside for the time being, since seeking precision in these matters would be more appropriate to another area of philosophy.

But the same is true of the Form. For even if there is some one good predicated across categories, or a good that is separate, itself in itself, clearly it could not be an object of action nor something attainable by a human being, which is the sort of thing we are looking for.

Perhaps someone might think that it would be better to understand it with an eye to those goods that are attainable and objects of action. For with this as a sort of paradigm we shall know better the goods that are goods for us, and if we know them, we shall attain them. This argument has some plausibility, but seems to be inconsistent with the sciences: they all aim at some good and seek to remedy any lack of the good, but they leave to one side understanding the universal good. And if there were such an important aid available, it is surely not reasonable to think that all practitioners of skills would be ignorant of it and fail even to look for it.

There is also a difficulty in seeing how a weaver or carpenter will be helped in practising his skill by knowing this good-in-itself, or how someone who has contemplated the Form itself will be a better doctor or general. For apparently it is not just health that the doctor attends to, but human health, or perhaps rather the health of a particular person, given that he treats each person individually.

That is enough on these issues.

Chapter 7

But let us return again to the good we are looking for, to see what it might be, since it appears to vary between different actions and skills: it is one thing in medicine, another in military science, and so on in all other cases. What then is the good in each case? Surely it is that for the sake of which other things are done? In medicine it is health, in military science, victory, in housebuilding, a house, and in other cases something else; in every action and rational choice the end is the good, since it is for the sake of the end that everyone does everything else. So if everything that is done has some end, this will be the good among things done, and if there are several ends, these will be the goods.

Our argument, then, has arrived at the same point by a different route, but we should try to make it still clearer. Since there appear to be several ends, and some of these, such as wealth, flutes, and implements generally, we choose as means to other ends, it is clear that not all ends are complete. But the chief good manifestly is something complete. So if there is only one end that is complete, this will be what we are looking for, and if there are several of them, the most complete. We speak of that which is worth pursuing for its own sake as more complete than that which is worth pursuing only for the sake of something else, and that which is never worth choosing for the sake of something else as more complete than things that are worth choosing both in themselves and for the sake of this end. And so that which is always worth choosing in itself and never for the sake of something else we call complete without qualification.

Happiness in particular is believed to be complete without qualification, since we always choose it for itself and never for the sake of anything else. Honour, pleasure, intellect, and every virtue we do indeed choose for themselves (since we would choose each of them even if they had no good effects), but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, on the assumption that through them we shall live a life of happiness; whereas happiness no one chooses for the sake of any of these nor indeed for the sake of anything else.

The same conclusion seems to follow from considering self-sufficiency, since the complete good is thought to be self-sufficient. We are applying the term `self-sufficient' not to a person on his own, living a solitary life, but to a person living alongside his parents, children, wife, and friends and fellow-citizens generally, since a human being is by nature a social being. We must, however, set some limit on these, since if we stretch things so far as to include ancestors and descendants and friends of friends we shall end up with an infinite series. But we must think about this later. For now, we take what is self-sufficient to be that which on its own makes life worthy of choice and lacking in nothing. We think happiness to be such, and indeed the thing most of all worth choosing, not counted as just one thing among others. Counted as just one thing among others it would clearly be more worthy of choice with even the least good added to it. For the good added would cause an increase in goodness, and the greater good is always more worthy of choice. Happiness, then, is obviously something complete and self- sufficient, in that it is the end of what is done.

But perhaps saying that happiness is the chief good sounds rather platitudinous, and one might want its nature to be specified still more clearly. It is possible that we might achieve that if we grasp the characteristic activity of a human being. For just as the good – the doing well – of a flute-player, a sculptor or any practitioner of a skill, or generally whatever has some characteristic activity or action, is thought to lie in its characteristic activity, so the same would seem to be true of a human being, if indeed he has a characteristic activity.

Well, do the carpenter and the tanner have characteristic activities and actions, and a human being none? Has nature left him without a characteristic activity to perform? Or, as there seem to be characteristic activities of the eye, the hand, the foot, and generally of each part of the body, should one assume that a human being has some characteristic activity over and above all these? What sort of thing might it be, then? For living is obviously shared even by plants, while what we are looking for is something special to a human being. We should therefore rule out the life of nourishment and growth. Next would be some sort of sentient life, but this again is clearly shared by the horse, the ox, indeed by every animal. What remains is a life, concerned in some way with action, of the element that possesses reason. (Of this element, one part has reason in being obedient to reason, the other in possessing it and engaging in thought.) As this kind of life can be spoken of in two ways, let us assume that we are talking about the life concerned with action in the sense of activity, because this seems to be the more proper use of the phrase.

If the characteristic activity of a human being is an activity of the soul in accordance with reason or at least not entirely lacking it; and if we say that the characteristic activity of anything is the same in kind as that of a good thing of the same type, as in the case of a lyre-player and a good lyre-player, and so on, without qualification, in the same way in every case, the superiority of the good one in virtue being an addition to the characteristic activity (for the characteristic activity of the lyre-player is to play the lyre, that of the good lyre-player to play it well); then if this is so, and we take the characteristic activity of a human being to be a certain kind of life; and if we take this kind of life to be activity of the soul and actions in accordance with reason, and the characteristic activity of the good person to be to carry this out well and nobly, and a characteristic activity to be accomplished well when it is accomplished in accordance with the appropriate virtue; then if this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are several virtues, in accordance with the best and most complete. Again, this must be over a complete life. For one swallow does not make a summer, nor one day. Neither does one day or a short time make someone blessed and happy.

So let this serve as an outline of the good, since perhaps we have first to make a rough sketch, and then fill it in later. One would think that anyone with a good outline can carry on and complete the details, and that in this task time will bring much to light or else offer useful assistance. This is how skills have come to advance, because anyone can fill in the gaps. But we must bear in mind what we said above, and not look for the same precision in everything, but in each case whatever is in line with the subject-matter, and the degree appropriate to the inquiry. A carpenter and a geometrician approach the right-angle in different ways: the carpenter in so far as it is useful for his work, while the geometrician seeks to know what it is, or what sort of thing it is, in that he aims to contemplate the truth. We should therefore do the same in every other case, so that side-issues do not dominate the tasks in hand. Nor should we demand an explanation in the same way in all cases. A sound proof that something *is* the case will suffice in some instances, as with first principles, where the fact itself is a starting-point, that is, a first principle. Some first principles we see by induction, some by perception, some by a kind of habituation, and others in other ways. We must try to investigate each type in the way appropriate to its nature, and take pains to define each of them well, because they are very important in what follows. The first principle seems to be more than half the whole thing, and to clarify many of the issues we are inquiring into. […]

Chapter 13

Since happiness is a certain kind of activity of the soul in accordance with complete virtue, we ought to look at virtue. For perhaps then we might be in a better position to consider happiness.

Besides, the true politician is thought to have taken special pains over this, since he wants to make citizens good and obedient to the laws. As an example, we have the lawgivers of the Cretans and the Spartans, and any others of that ilk. If this inquiry is a part of political science, pursuing it will clearly accord with our original purpose.

Clearly, it is human virtue we must consider, since we were looking for human good and human happiness. By human virtue, we mean that of the soul, not that of the body; and happiness we speak of as an activity of the soul. If this is right, the politician clearly must have some understanding of the sphere of the soul, as the person who is to attend to eyes must have some understanding of the whole body; more so, indeed, in that political science is superior to medicine, and held in higher esteem, and even among doctors, the sophisticated ones go to a great deal of effort to understand the body. The politician, then, must consider the soul, and consider it with a view to understanding virtue, just to the extent that is required by the inquiry, because attaining a higher degree of precision is perhaps too much trouble for his current purpose.

Some aspects of the soul have been dealt with competently in our popular works as well, and we should make use of these. It is said, for example, that one element of the soul has reason, while another lacks it. It does not matter for the moment whether these elements are separate like the parts of the body or anything else that can be physically divided, or whether they are naturally inseparable but differentiated in thought, like the convex and concave aspects of a curved surface.

Of the element without reason, one part seems to be common: the vegetative, the cause of nutrition and growth. For one should assume such a capacity of the soul to exist in everything that takes in nutrition, even embryos, and to be the same in fully grown beings, since this is more reasonable than assuming that they have a different capacity.

The virtue of this element is clearly something shared and not specific to human beings. For this part and its capacity are thought more than others to be active during sleep, and the good and bad person to be hardest to distinguish when they are asleep (hence the saying that the happy are no different from the wretched for half of their lives – which makes sense, since sleep is a time when the soul is not engaged in the things that lead to its being called good or bad), except that in some way certain movements on a small scale reach the soul, and make the dreams of good people better than those of ordinary people. But enough of this. Let us leave the nutritive capacity aside, since by nature it plays no role in human virtue.

But there does seem to be another natural element in the soul, lacking reason, but nevertheless, as it were, partaking in it. For we praise the reason of the self-controlled and of the incontinent, that is, the part of their soul with reason, because it urges them in the right direction, towards what is best; but clearly there is within them another natural element besides reason, which conflicts with and resists it. For just as paralysed limbs, when one rationally chooses to move them to the right, are carried off in the opposite direction to the left, so also in the soul: the impulses of incontinent people carry them off in the opposite direction. In the body we do indeed see the lack of control, while in the soul we do not see it; but I think that we should nevertheless hold that there is some element in the soul besides reason, opposing and running counter to it. In what way it is distinct from the other elements does not matter. But it does seem to partake in reason, as we said. The element in the soul of the self-controlled person, at least, obeys reason and

presumably in the temperate and the brave person it is still more ready to listen, since in their case it is in total harmony with reason.

So the element without reason seems itself to have two parts. For the vegetative part has no share at all in reason, while the part consisting in appetite and desire in general does share in it in a way, in so far as it listens to and obeys it. So it has reason in the sense that a person who listens to the reason of his father and his friends is said to have reason, not reason in the mathematical sense. That the element without reason is in some way persuaded by reason is indicated as well by the offering of advice, and all kinds of criticism and encouragement. And if we must say that this element possesses reason, then the element with reason will also have two parts, one, in the strict sense, possessing it in itself, the other ready to listen to reason as one is ready to listen to the reason of one's father.

Virtue is distinguished along the same lines. Some virtues we say are intellectual, such as wisdom, judgement and practical wisdom, while others are virtues of character, such as generosity and temperance. For when we are talking about a person's character, we do not say that he is wise or has judgement, but that he is even-tempered or temperate. Yet we do praise the wise person for his state, and the states worthy of praise we call virtues.

Lucretius

Titus Lucretius Casus (c. 99-55 BCE) was a Latin poet and philosopher, who lived during a period of tumult and civil strife: the last days of the Roman Republic. Little is known about his life, but his influence was immense, firstly on poets of 1st century BCE like Virgil and Horace, secondly on many thinkers throughout the centuries, who took from his materialist description of the universe several elements on which to build new ways of thinking.

His only known work is a philosophical poem called *De rerum natura*, usually translated as *On the Nature of Things*. In it, Lucretius defended and developed the tenets of a movement born two centuries earlier in Greece under the impulse of the philosopher Epicurus. Since almost all the writings from the latter were lost, it is thanks to Lucretius that Epicureanism has remained in the world's memory, influencing philosophers, scientists, artists and politicians alike.

In his poem, Lucretius argues for a rational and empirical knowledge of the cosmos, describing the nature of atoms, giving a complete account of the human soul from a materialist perspective, and fighting against religions inasmuch as they cow people's spirits, rather than elevate them to a joyful state of tranquillity (*ataraxia*).

The following selection of extracts begins with the philosopher's understanding of the soul and the body – they are born together, grow and die together, as inextricable "co-partners in life" – and ends with a diatribe against the fear of death and its instrumentalisation.

DE RERUM NATURA (C. –50)
On the Nature of Things

Book III (extracts) // Translated from Latin by M. F. Smith, 1969

In the first place, I declare that the mind, or the intelligence as we often term it, in which the reasoning and governing principle of life resides, is part of a person no less than the hand and foot and eyes are seen to be parts of a whole living creature.

[…]

Now, the substance of the soul is encased by the whole body and is in its turn the custodian of the body and the cause of its safety; for the two are twined together by common roots and evidently cannot be disentangled without being destroyed. It is no easier matter to extricate the substance of the mind and spirit from the whole body without causing general disintegration than it is to extract the scent from lumps of incense without destroying the substance in the process. Having their constituent atoms inextricably intertwined from the moment of their creation, body and soul are co-partners in life; and it is evident that neither of them is capable of experiencing sensation independently, without the help of the other: rather it is by the united motions of both together that sensation is kindled and fanned into flame in every part of our flesh. Besides, the body is never born without the soul, never grows up without it, and manifestly never lives on without it after death.

[…]

Moreover, we are aware that the mind is born with the body, develops with it, and declines with it. A toddling child possesses a feeble intellect that matches the weakness and delicacy of its body. Then, when maturity is attained and strength is robust, judgment and mental power are correspondingly more fully developed. Later, when the body is shaken by the stern strength of time and the frame droops with forces dulled, the intellect halts, the tongue raves, the mind staggers; everything fades and fails at once. So it is natural to infer that the substance of the spirit too is all dissolved, like smoke, into the breezy air aloft, since we observe that it is born with the body, develops with it, and, as I have shown, succumbs with it to the stress and strain of age.

There is the further point that, just as the body suffers dreadful diseases and pitiless pain, so the mind manifestly experiences the gripe of cares, grief, and fear; so the natural inference is that it has an equal share in death.

Even during the body's sicknesses the mind often wanders from the path of reason: patients are demented and mutter deliriously and sometimes, severely comatose, sink with drooping eyelids and nodding head into a deep and endless sleep, from which they do not hear the voices and cannot recognize the features of those who, with faces and cheeks bedewed with tears, stand around and implore them to return to life. Therefore, seeing that the mind is susceptible to the infection of disease, you are bound to admit that it suffers dissolution like the body. For pain and disease are the architects of death—a lesson that the fate of millions in the past has inculcated upon us.

Again, when the piercing potency of wine has penetrated into people, and its warmth has been distributed and channelled into the veins, the limbs become heavy; they reel about with staggering steps; the tongue drawls, the mind is sodden, and the eyes swim; they bawl, belch, and brawl more and more violently. What is the reason for these and all the other similar symptoms of drunkenness, if it is not that the potent punch of the wine invariably has the effect of confounding the spirit within the body? And the very fact that things can be confounded and crippled always signifies that, if a slightly stronger force were to insinuate itself into them, the result would be destruction and debarment from further life.

Often too people are seized before our very eyes by a sudden fit of epilepsy and fall to the ground as though stuck by lightning. They foam at the mouth and groan; their limbs are convulsed; they lose their reason; their muscles grow rigid; they writhe, gasp fitfully, and weary their limbs with spasmic movements. The fact is that the spirit in every part of their frame is so distracted by the violence of the seizure that it surges and foams, just as the waves of the salt sea seethe beneath the furious force of the winds. The groaning is wrung from them, because their limbs are suffering pain, and in general because vocal particles are ejected and swept in a body from the mouth, using their habitual egress and what one might call their highway. Loss of reason comes about, because the mind and spirit with their powers are confounded and, as I have shown, are disparted, dispersed, and distracted by that same poison. Afterward, when the cause of the fit has withdrawn and the acrid humor of the distempered body has retired to its lairs, then and only then the patient totteringly rises, gradually recovers all the senses, and regains possession of the spirit.

Since the mind and spirit, even while encased in the body, are shaken by such serious maladies and are wretchedly distracted and distressed, how can you believe that they can continue to live outside the body in the open air, exposed to the whirling winds?

Moreover, the fact that the mind, like the body, manifestly can be cured of sickness and can respond to the influence of medicine is another intimation of its mortality. For it is

fair to assume that every endeavor to transform the mind, and indeed every attempt to alter any other substance, entails the addition of parts or the transposition of the existing parts or the subtraction of at least some tittle from the sum. But an immortal substance does not allow its parts to be transposed, nor does it permit one jot to be added or to steal away. For every change that involves a thing outstepping its own limits means the instantaneous death of what previously existed. Therefore, as I have shown, whether the mind falls sick or responds to the influence of medicine, it betrays its mortal nature.

[…]

Furthermore, the body and mind as vital forces owe their energy and enjoyment of life to their interconnection: divorced from the body, the substance of the mind cannot by itself produce vital motions; and the body, once abandoned by the spirit, cannot live on and experience sensation. The fact is that, just as an eye, ripped from its roots and detached from the rest of the body, is unable to see anything, so the spirit and mind evidently have no power by themselves. Doubtless the reason is that, in their interpenetration of the veins and flesh and sinews and bones, their elements are confined by the whole body and are unable to spring apart freely to considerable distances; and because they are thus pent in, they perform sensory motions – motions that, after death and their expulsion from the body into the breezy air, they cannot perform, since they are not then confined in the same manner. Indeed air would be an animate body, if the spirit could maintain its cohesion and restrict itself to those motions that it performed previously in the sinews and in the body itself. So I insist that, when the whole bodily encasement has disintegrated and the vital breath has been expelled, you must acknowledge that the mind and the spirit with their powers of sensation suffer dissolution, since body and soul are interdependent.

[…]

Again, a tree cannot exist in the sky, or clouds in the depths of the sea; fish cannot live in fields; blood is not found in timber, or sap in stones. The place where each thing may grow and exist is fixed and determined. Thus the substance of the mind cannot come to birth alone without the body or exist separated from sinews and blood. But even if this were possible, the mind could far more easily reside in the head or the shoulders or the base of the heels, or be born in any other part of the body, and so at least remain within the same person, within the same vessel. However, since even within our body it is evident that a special place is firmly fixed and reserved for the existence and growth of the spirit and mind, it is all the more necessary for us to deny that they could survive or come to birth wholly outside the body. Therefore, when the body has died, you must acknowledge that the soul too has perished, torn to pieces all through the body.

[…]

Death, then, is nothing to us and does not affect us in the least, now that the nature of the mind is understood to be mortal. And as in time past we felt no distress when the advancing Punic hosts were threatening Rome on every side, when the whole earth, rocked by the terrifying tumult of war, shudderingly quaked beneath the coasts of high heaven, while the entire human race was doubtful into whose possession the sovereignty of the land and the sea was destined to fall; so, when we are no more, when body and soul, upon whose union our being depends, are divorced, you may be sure that nothing at all will have the power to affect us or awaken sensation in us, who shall not then exist—not even if the earth be confounded with the sea, and the sea with the sky.

[…]

If it happens that people are to suffer unhappiness and pain in the future, they themselves must exist at that future time for harm to be able to befall them; and since death takes away this possibility by preventing the existence of those who might have been visited by troubles, you may be sure that there is nothing to fear in death, that those who no longer exist cannot become miserable, and that it makes not one speck of difference whether or not they have ever been born once their mortal life has been snatched away by deathless death.

So, when you see people indignant at the thought that after death they will either rot in the grave or be devoured by flames or the jaws of wild beasts, you may be sure that, however emphatically they themselves deny belief that they will retain any feeling in death, their words do not ring true, and that deep in their hearts they are pricked by some secret fear. In my judgment, they grant neither the conclusion they profess to grant, nor the premise from which it is derived; they do not completely uproot and detach themselves from life, but unconsciously suppose that something of themselves survives. Whenever people in life imagine that in death their body will be torn to pieces by birds and beasts of prey, they feel sorry for themselves. This is because they do not separate themselves from the body or dissociate themselves sufficiently from the outcast corpse; they identify themselves with it and, as they stand by, impregnate it with their own feelings. Hence their indignation at having been created mortal; hence their failure to see that in real death there will be no second self alive to lament their own end, and to stand by and grieve at the sight of them lying there, being torn to pieces or burned. I mention being burned, because, if in death it is disastrous to be mauled by the devouring jaws of wild beasts, I cannot see why it is not calamitous to be laid upon a funeral pyre and consumed by scorching flames, or to be embalmed in stifling honey, or to grow stiff with cold, reclining on the smooth surface of an icy slab of stone, or to be pulverized by a crushing weight of earth above one.

[…]

Furthermore, suppose that nature suddenly burst into speech, and personally addressed the following rebuke to one of us: “What distresses you so deeply, mortal creature, that you abandon yourself to these lamentations? Why do you bemoan and beweep death? If your past life has been a boon, and if not all your blessings have flowed straight through you and run to waste like water poured into a riddled vessel, why, you fool, do you not retire from the feast of life like a satisfied guest and with equanimity resign yourself to undisturbed rest'? If, however, all your enjoyments have been poured away and lost, and if life is a thorn, why do you seek to prolong your existence, when the future, just as surely as the past, would be ruined and utterly wasted? Why not rather put an end to life and trouble? There is nothing further that I can devise and discover for your pleasure: all things are always the same. Though your body is not yet shrunk with age, and your limbs are not exhausted and enfeebled, all things remain the same yes, even if in length of life you should outlast all generations, or indeed even if you should be destined never to die.” What can we say in reply, save that nature's complaint is just, and that in her plea she sets out a true case?

[…]

Finally, what is this perverse passion for life that condemns us to such a feverish existence amid doubt and danger? The fact is that a sure end of life is fixed for mortals: we cannot avoid our appointment with death. Moreover, our environment is always the same, and no new pleasure is procured by the prolongation of life. The trouble is that, so long as the object of our desire is wanting, it seems more important than anything else; but later,

when it is ours, we covet some other thing; and so an insatiable thirst for life keeps us always open mouthed. Then again, we cannot tell what fortune the future will bring us, or what chance will send us, or what end is in store for us. By prolonging life we do not deduct a single moment from the time of our death, nor can we diminish its duration by subtracting anything from it. Therefore, however many generations your life may span, the same eternal death will still await you; and one who ended life with today's light will remain dead no less long than one who perished many months and years ago.

Epictetus

Epictetus (c. 55-135 CE) was born in Phrygia (present-day western Turkey), and spent his childhood and young adulthood as a slave in Rome. With the permission of his owner – who had himself been a slave but then became a freedman and a personal assistant to Emperor Nero – he studied Stoic philosophy, in which he would soon excel and become a teacher.

Soon after Nero's death, Epictetus was freed; but Nero's successor, Domitian, banished all philosophers from Rome, wanting to be the only moral authority in the city. Epictetus moved to Greece where he founded his own philosophical school in Nicopolis. Domitian's successor at the head of the Empire, Hadrian, is believed to have come there to listen to him speak.

Although Epictetus didn't write anything, his student Arrian transcribed some of his talks in *The Discourses*, of which half only remain in our possession. Arrian also compiled a shorter version, a handbook (Greek *Enchiridion*) to use for practical life. Based on self-knowledge, Epictetus' philosophy focused on distinguishing between what is in our power and what is not. By this measure of our will, we cultivate an attitude that leads to freedom and happiness.

ENCHIRIDION (C. 125)

A Handbook of Stoical Ethics

Translated from Ancient Greek by P.E. Matheson, 1916

1. Of all existing things some are in our power, and others are not in our power. In our power are thought, impulse, will to get and will to avoid, and, in a word, everything which is our own doing. Things not in our power include the body, property, reputation, office, and, in a word, everything which is not our own doing. Things in our power are by nature free, unhindered, untrammelled; things not in our power are weak, servile, subject to hindrance, dependent on others. Remember then that if you imagine that what is naturally slavish is free, and what is naturally another's is your own, you will be hampered, you will mourn, you will be put to confusion, you will blame gods and men; but if you think that only your own belongs to you, and that what is another's is indeed another's, no one will ever put compulsion or hindrance on you, you will blame none, you will accuse none, you will do nothing against your will, no one will harm you, you will have no enemy, for no harm can touch you.

Aiming then at these high matters, you must remember that to attain them requires more than ordinary effort; you will have to give up some things entirely, and put off others for the moment. And if you would have these also—office and wealth—it may be that you will fail to get them, just because your desire is set on the former, and you will certainly fail to attain those things which alone bring freedom and happiness.

Make it your study then to confront every harsh impression with the words, 'You are but an impression, and not at all what you seem to be'. Then test it by those rules that you possess; and first by this—the chief test of all—'Is it concerned with what is in our power or with what is not in our power?' And if it is concerned with what is not in our power, be ready with the answer that it is nothing to you.

2. Remember that the will to get promises attainment of what you will, and the will to avoid promises escape from what you avoid; and he who fails to get what he wills is unfortunate, and he who does not escape what he wills to avoid is miserable. If then you try to avoid only what is unnatural in the region within your control, you will escape from all that you avoid; but if you try to avoid disease or death or poverty you will be miserable.

Therefore let your will to avoid have no concern with what is not in man's power; direct it only to things in man's power that are contrary to nature. But for the moment you must utterly remove the will to get; for if you will to get something not in man's power you are bound to be unfortunate; while none of the things in man's power that you could honourably will to get is yet within your reach. Impulse to act and not to act, these are your concern; yet exercise them gently and without strain, and provisionally.

3. When anything, from the meanest thing upwards, is attractive or serviceable or an object of affection, remember always to say to yourself, 'What is its nature?' If you are fond of a jug, say you are fond of a jug; then you will not be disturbed if it be broken. If you kiss your child or your wife, say to yourself that you are kissing a human being, for then if death strikes it you will not be disturbed.

4. When you are about to take something in hand, remind yourself what manner of thing it is. If you are going to bathe put before your mind what happens in the bath—water pouring over some, others being jostled,. some reviling, others stealing; and you will set to work more securely if you say to yourself at once: 'I want to bathe, and I want to keep my will in harmony with nature,' and so in each thing you do; for in this way, if anything turns up to hinder you in your bathing, you will be ready to say, 'I did not want only to bathe, but to keep my will in harmony with nature, and I shall not so keep it, if I lose my temper at what happens'.

5. What disturbs men's minds is not events but their judgements on events: For instance, death is nothing dreadful, or else Socrates would have thought it so. No, the only dreadful thing about it is men's judgement that it is dreadful. And so when we are hindered, or disturbed, or distressed, let us never lay the blame on others, but on ourselves, that is, on our own judgements. To accuse others for one's own misfortunes is a sign of want of education; to accuse oneself shows that one's education has begun; to accuse neither oneself nor others shows that one's education is complete.

6. Be not elated at an excellence which is not your own. If the horse in his pride were to say, 'I am handsome', we could bear with it. But when you say with pride, 'I have a handsome horse', know that the good horse is the ground of your pride. You ask then what you can call your own. The answer is—the way you deal with your impressions. Therefore when you deal with your impressions in accord with nature, then you may be proud indeed, for your pride will be in a good which is your own.

7. When you are on a voyage, and your ship is at anchorage, and you disembark to get fresh water, you may pick up a small shellfish or a truffle by the way, but you must keep your attention fixed on the ship, and keep looking towards it constantly, to see if the Helmsman calls you; and if he does, you have to leave everything, or be bundled on board

with your legs tied like a sheep. So it is in life. If you have a dear wife or child given you, they are like the shellfish or the truffle, they are very well in their way. Only, if the Helmsman call, run back to your ship, leave all else, and do not look behind you. And if you are old, never go far from the ship, so that when you are called you may not fail to appear.

8. Ask not that events should happen as you will, but let your will be that events should happen as they do, and you shall have peace.

9. Sickness is a hindrance to the body, but not to the will, unless the will consent. Lameness is a hindrance to the leg, but not to the will. Say this to yourself at each event that happens, for you shall find that though it hinders something else it will not hinder you.

10. When anything happens to you, always remember to turn to yourself and ask what faculty you have to deal with it. If you see a beautiful boy or a beautiful woman, you will find continence the faculty to exercise there; if trouble is laid on you, you will find endurance; if ribaldry, you will find patience. And if you train yourself in this habit your impressions will not carry you away.

11. Never say of anything, 'I lost it', but say, 'I gave it back'. Has your child died? It was given back. Has your wife died? She was given back. Has your estate been taken from you? Was not this also given back? But you say, 'He who took it from me is wicked'. What does it matter to you through whom the Giver asked it back? As long as He gives it you, take care of it, but not as your own; treat it as passers-by treat an inn.

12. If you wish to make progress, abandon reasonings of this sort: 'If I neglect my affairs I shall have nothing to live on'; 'If I do not punish my son[1], he will be wicked.' For it is better to die of hunger, so that you be free from pain and free from fear, than to live in plenty and be troubled in mind. It is better for your son to be wicked than for you to be miserable. Wherefore begin with little things. Is your drop of oil spilt? Is your sup of wine stolen? Say to yourself, 'This is the price paid for freedom from passion; this is the price of a quiet mind.' Nothing can be had without a price. When you call your slave-boy, reflect that he may not be able to hear you, and if he hears you, he may not be able to do anything you want. But he is not so well off that it rests with him to give you peace of mind.

13. If you wish to make progress, you must be content in external matters to seem a fool and a simpleton; do not wish men to think you know anything, and if any should think you to be somebody, distrust yourself. For know that it is not easy to keep your will in accord with nature and at the same time keep outward things; if you attend to one you must needs neglect the other.

[1] Matheson's translation of παῖδα as 'son' here and at the beginning of chapter 12 can hardly be correct. Throughout the whole section it should be rendered as 'slave-boy'. The reading 'son' imposes unnecessarily upon Stoicism a brutality and lack of normal human sympathy and affection which it can ill afford to carry.

14. It is silly to want your children and your wife and your friends to live for ever, for that means that you want what is not in your control to be in your control, and what is not your own to be yours. In the same way if you want your servant to make no mistakes, you are a fool, for you want vice not to be vice but something different. But if you want not to be disappointed in your will to get, you can attain to that.

Exercise yourself then in what lies in your power. Each man's master is the man who has authority over what he wishes or does not wish, to secure the one or to take away the other. Let him then who wishes to be free not wish for anything or avoid anything that depends on others; or else he is bound to be a slave.

15. Remember that you must behave in life as you would at a banquet. A dish is handed round and comes to you; put out your hand and take it politely. It passes you; do not stop it. It has not reached you; do not be impatient to get it, but wait till your turn comes. Bear yourself thus towards children, wife, office, wealth, and one day you will be worthy to banquet with the gods. But if when they are set before you, you do not take them but despise them, then you shall not only share the gods' banquet, but shall share their rule. For by so doing Diogenes and Heraclitus and men like them were called divine and deserved the name.

16. When you see a man shedding tears in sorrow for a child abroad or dead, or for loss of property, beware that you are not carried away by the impression that it is outward ills that make him miserable. Keep this thought by you: 'What distresses him is not the event, for that does not distress another, but his judgement on the event.' Therefore do not hesitate to sympathize with him so far as words go, and if it so chance, even to groan with him; but take heed that you do not also groan in your inner being.

17. Remember that you are an actor in a play, and the Playwright chooses the manner of it: if he wants it short, it is short; if long, it is long. If he wants you to act a poor man you must act the part with all your powers; and so if your part be a cripple or a magistrate or a plain man. For your business is to act the character that is given you and act it well; the choice of the cast is Another's.

18. When a raven croaks with evil omen, let not the impression carry you away, but straightway distinguish in your own mind and say, 'These portents mean nothing to me; but only to my bit of a body or my bit of property or name, or my children or my wife. But for me all omens are favourable if I will, for, whatever the issue may be, it is in my power to pt benefit therefrom.'

19. You can be invincible, if you never enter on a contest where victory is not in your power. Beware then that when you see a man raised to honour or great power or high repute you do not let your impression carry you away. For if the reality of good lies in what is in our power, there is no room for envy or jealousy. And you will not wish to be praetor, or prefect or consul, but to be free; and there is but one way to freedom—to despise what is not in our power.

20. Remember that foul words or blows in themselves are no outrage, but your judgement that they are so. So when any one makes you angry, know that it is your own thought that has angered you. Wherefore make it your first endeavour not to let your impressions carry you away. For if once you gain time and delay, you will find it easier to control yourself.

21. Keep before your eyes from day to day death and exile and all things that seem terrible, but death most of all, and then you will never set your thoughts on what is low and will never desire anything beyond measure.

Augustine of Hippo

Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), also known as Saint Augustine, wrote a number of books that would have an immense influence over the future developments of Christian dogmas.

Born in the Roman province of Numidia (today's Algeria), he studied rhetoric in Carthage and led a famously hedonistic life before moving to Rome and Milan where he became a teacher. At the age of 31, he then experienced a mystical transformation and converted to Christianity (he recounts it in the *Confessions*, cf. below). From that moment, his whole life would be dedicated to priesthood and theology. In 396, he became the bishop of Hippo Regius (today Annaba, in Algeria), where he relentlessly tried to convert the people of the city to Christianity. After the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410, he wrote *The City of God*, a major work in which he exposed and clarified his doctrine of the *original sin* and of the notion of *free will*.

In 430, while the Vandals were besieging Hippo, Augustine, aged 75, died from illness. He wouldn't be there to witness them burn and destroy the whole city, save the cathedral and library built under his authority. Eight centuries later, Augustine was canonized by popular acclaim and the same year recognized a *Doctor of the Church* by Pope Boniface VIII in 1298.

CONFESSIONS (401)

The Birthpangs of Conversion

Book VIII, 11-12 // Translated from Latin by Henry Chadwick, 1991.

---

[11] (25) Such was my sickness and my torture, as I accused myself even more bitterly than usual. I was twisting and turning in my chain until it would break completely: I was now only a little bit held by it, but I was still held. You, Lord, put pressure on me in my hidden depths with a severe mercy wielding the double whip of fear and shame, lest I should again succumb, and lest that tiny and tenuous bond which still remained should not be broken, but once more regain strength and bind me even more firmly. Inwardly I said to myself: Let it be now, let it be now. And by this phrase I was already moving towards a decision; I had almost taken it, and then I did not do so. Yet I did not relapse into my original condition, but stood my ground very close to the point of deciding and recovered my breath. Once more I made the attempt and came only a little short of my goal; only a little short of it—yet I did not touch it or hold on to it. I was hesitating whether to die to death and to live to life. Ingrained evil had more hold over me than unaccustomed good. The nearer approached the moment of time when I would become different, the greater the horror of it struck me. But it did not thrust me back nor turn me away, but left me in a state of suspense.

(26) Vain trifles and the triviality of the empty-headed, my old loves, held me back. They tugged at the garment of my flesh and whispered: 'Are you getting rid of us?' And 'from this moment we shall never be with you again, not for ever and ever'. And 'from this moment this and that are forbidden to you for ever and ever.' What they were suggesting in what I have called 'this and that'—what they were suggesting, my God, may your mercy avert from the soul of your servant! What filth, what disgraceful things they were suggesting! I was listening to them with much less than half my attention. They were not frankly confronting me face to face on the road, but as it were whispering behind my back,

as if they were furtively tugging at me as I was going away, trying to persuade me to look back. Nevertheless they held me back. I hesitated to detach myself, to be rid of them, to make the leap to where I was being called. Meanwhile the overwhelming force of habit was saying to me: 'Do you think you can live without them?'

(27) Nevertheless it was now putting the question very half-heartedly. For from that direction where I had set my face and towards which I was afraid to move, there appeared the dignified and chaste Lady Continence, serene and cheerful without coquetry, enticing me in an honourable manner to come and not to hesitate. To receive and embrace me she stretched out pious hands, filled with numerous good examples for me to follow. There were large numbers of boys and girls, a multitude of all ages, young adults and grave widows and elderly virgins. In every one of them was Continence herself, in no sense barren but 'the fruitful mother of children' (Ps. 112: 9), the joys born of you, Lord, her husband. And she smiled on me with a smile of encouragement as if to say: 'Are you incapable of doing what these men and women have done? Do you think them capable of achieving this by their own resources and not by the Lord their God? Their Lord God gave me to them. Why are you relying on yourself, only to find yourself unreliable? Cast your-self upon him, do not be afraid. He will not withdraw himself so that you fall. Make the leap without anxiety; he will catch you and heal you.'

I blushed with embarrassment because I was still listening to the mutterings of those vanities, and racked by hesitations I remained undecided. But once more it was as if she said: ' "Stop your ears to your impure members on earth and mortify them" (Col. 3: 5). They declare delights to you, but "not in accord with the law of the Lord your God" ' (Ps. 118: 85). This debate in my heart was a struggle of myself against myself. Alypius stood quite still at my side, and waited in silence for the outcome of my unprecedented state of agitation.

[12] (28) From a hidden depth a profound self-examination had dredged up a heap of all my misery and set it 'in the sight of my heart' (Ps. 18: 15). That precipitated a vast storm bearing a massive downpour of tears. To pour it all out with the accompanying groans, I got up from beside Alypius (solitude seemed to me more appropriate for the business of weeping), and I moved further away to ensure that even his presence put no inhibition upon me. He sensed that this was my condition at that moment. I think I may have said something which made it clear that the sound of my voice was already choking with tears. So I stood up while in profound astonishment he remained where we were sitting. I threw myself down somehow under a certain figtree, and let my tears flow freely. Rivers streamed from my eyes, a sacrifice acceptable to you (Ps. 50: 19), and (though not in these words, yet in this sense) I repeatedly said to you: 'How long, O Lord? How long, Lord, will you be angry to the uttermost? Do not be mindful of our old iniquities.' (Ps. 6: 4). For I felt my past to have a grip on me. It uttered wretched cries: 'How long, how long is it to be?' 'Tomorrow, tomorrow.' 'Why not now? Why not an end to my impure life in this very hour?'

(29) As I was saying this and weeping in the bitter agony of my heart, suddenly I heard a voice from the nearby house chanting as if it might be a boy or a girl (I do not know which), saying and repeating over and over again 'Pick up and read, pick up and read.' At once my countenance changed, and I began to think intently whether there might be some sort of children's game in which such a chant is used. But I could not remember having heard of one. I checked the flood of tears and stood up. I interpreted it solely as a divine command to me to open the book and read the first chapter I might find. For I had heard how Antony happened to be present at the gospel reading, and took it as an admonition addressed to himself when the words were read: 'Go, sell all you have, give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me' (Matt. 19: 21). By such an

inspired utterance he was immediately 'converted to you' (Ps. 50: 15). So I hurried back to the place where Alypius was sitting. There I had put down the book of the apostle when I got up. I seized it, opened it and in silence read the first passage on which my eyes lit: 'Not in riots and drunken parties, not in eroticism and indecencies, not in strife and rivalry, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh in its lusts' (Rom. 13: 13–14).

I neither wished nor needed to read further. At once, with the last words of this sentence, it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart. All the shadows of doubt were dispelled.

(30) Then I inserted my finger or some other mark in the book and closed it. With a face now at peace I told everything to Alypius. What had been going on in his mind, which I did not know, he disclosed in this way. He asked to see the text I had been reading. I showed him, and he noticed a passage following that which I had read. I did not know how the text went on; but the continuation was 'Receive the person who is weak in faith' (Rom. 14: 1). Alypius applied this to himself, and he made that known to me. He was given confidence by this admonition. Without any agony of hesitation he joined me in making a good resolution and affirmation of intention, entirely congruent with his moral principles in which he had long been greatly superior to me. From there we went in to my mother, and told her. She was filled with joy. We told her how it had happened. She exulted, feeling it to be a triumph, and blessed you who 'are powerful to do more than we ask or think' (Eph. 3: 20). She saw that you had granted her far more than she had long been praying for in her unhappy and tearful groans.

The effect of your converting me to yourself was that I did not now seek a wife and had no ambition for success in this world. I stood firm upon that rule of faith on which many years before you had revealed me to her. You 'changed her grief into joy' (Ps. 29: 12) far more abundantly than she desired, far dearer and more chaste than she expected when she looked for grandchildren begotten of my body.

ON THE GRACE OF CHRIST, AND ON ORIGINAL SIN (427)

Response to Albina, Pinianus, and Melania

Book II (extracts) // Translated from Latin by Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, 1887.

34 — No Man Ever Saved Save by Christ.

Now, whoever maintains that human nature at any period required not the second Adam for its physician, because it was not corrupted in the first Adam, is convicted as an enemy to the grace of God; not in a question where doubt or error might be compatible with soundness of belief, but in that very rule of faith which makes us Christians. How happens it, then, that the human nature, which first existed, is praised by these men as being so far less tainted with evil manners? How is it that they overlook the fact that men were even then sunk in so many intolerable sins, that, with the exception of one man of God and his wife, and three sons and their wives, the whole world was in God's just judgment destroyed by the flood, even as the little land of Sodom was afterwards with fire? From the moment, then, when by "one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all sinned" [Romans 5:12], the entire mass of our nature was ruined beyond doubt, and fell into the possession

of its destroyer. And from him no one — no, not one — has been delivered, or is being delivered, or ever will be delivered, except by the grace of the Redeemer.

37 — In What Sense Christ is Called "Sin".

[…] The propagation of a condemned origin condemns us, unless we are cleansed by the likeness of sinful flesh, in which He was sent without sin, who nevertheless concerning sin condemned sin, having been made sin for us. Accordingly the apostle says: "We beseech you in Christ's stead, be reconciled unto God. For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." [2 Corinthians 5:20-21] God, therefore, to whom we are reconciled, has made Him to be sin for us — that is to say, a sacrifice by which our sins may be remitted; for by sins are designated the sacrifices for sins. And indeed He was sacrificed for our sins, the only one among men who had no sins, even as in those early times one was sought for among the flocks to prefigure the Faultless One who was to come to heal our offenses. On whatever day, therefore, an infant may be baptized after his birth, he is as if circumcised on the eighth day; inasmuch as he is circumcised in Him who rose again the third day indeed after He was crucified, but the eighth according to the weeks. He is circumcised for the putting off of the body of sin; in other words, that the grace of spiritual regeneration may do away with the debt which the contagion of carnal generation contracted. "For no one is pure from uncleanness" (what uncleanness, pray, but that of sin?), "not even the infant, whose life is but that of a single day upon the earth." [Job 14:4-5]

38 — Original Sin Does Not Render Marriage Evil.

But they argue thus, saying: "Is not, then, marriage an evil, and the man that is produced by marriage not God's work?" As if the good of the married life were that disease of concupiscence with which they who know not God love their wives — a course which the apostle forbids; and not rather that conjugal chastity, by which carnal lust is reduced to the good purposes of the appointed procreation of children. Or as if, forsooth, a man could possibly be anything but God's work, not only when born in wedlock, but even if he be produced in fornication or adultery. In the present inquiry, however, when the question is not for what a Creator is necessary, but for what a Saviour, we have not to consider what good there is in the procreation of nature, but what evil there is in sin, whereby our nature has been certainly corrupted. No doubt the two are generated simultaneously — both nature and nature's corruption; one of which is good, the other evil. The one comes to us from the bounty of the Creator, the other is contracted from the condemnation of our origin; the one has its cause in the good-will of the Supreme God, the other in the depraved will of the first man; the one exhibits God as the maker of the creature, the other exhibits God as the punisher of disobedience: in short, the very same Christ was the maker of man for the creation of the one, and was *made* man for the healing of the other.

46 — Man's Vice is a Beast's Nature.

No one should feel surprise, and ask: "Why does God's goodness create anything for the devil's malignity to take possession of?" The truth is, God's gift is bestowed on the seminal elements of His creature with the same bounty wherewith "He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." [Matthew 5:45] It is with so large a bounty that God has blessed the very seeds, and by blessing has constituted them. Nor has this blessing been eliminated out of our excellent nature by a

fault which puts us under condemnation. Owing, indeed, to God's justice, who punishes, this fatal flaw has so far prevailed, that men are born with the fault of original sin; but yet its influence has not extended so far as to stop the birth of men. Just so does it happen in persons of adult age: whatever sins they commit, do not eliminate his manhood from man; nay, God's work continues still good, however evil be the deeds of the impious. For although "man being placed in honour abides not; and being without understanding, is compared with the beasts, and is like them", yet the resemblance is not so absolute that he becomes a beast. There is a comparison, no doubt, between the two; but it is not by reason of nature, but through vice— not vice in the beast, but in nature. For so excellent is a man in comparison with a beast, that man's vice is beast's nature; still man's nature is never on this account changed into beast's nature. God, therefore, condemns man because of the fault wherewithal his nature is disgraced, and not because of his nature, which is not destroyed in consequence of its fault. Heaven forbid that we should think beasts are obnoxious to the sentence of condemnation! It is only proper that they should be free from our misery, inasmuch as they cannot partake of our blessedness.

What, then, is there surprising or unjust in man's being subjected to an impure spirit — not on account of nature, but on account of that impurity of his which he has contracted in the stain of his birth, and which proceeds, not from the divine work, but from the will of man — since also the impure spirit itself is a good thing considered as spirit, but evil in that it is impure? For the one is of God, and is His work, while the other emanates from man's own will. The stronger nature, therefore, that is, the angelic one, keeps the lower, or human, nature in subjection, by reason of the association of vice with the latter. Accordingly the Mediator, who was stronger than the angels, became weak for man's sake. So that the pride of the Destroyer is destroyed by the humility of the Redeemer; and he who makes his boast over the sons of men of his angelic strength, is vanquished by the Son of God in the human weakness which He assumed.

ON GRACE AND FREE WILL (427)

Response to Valentine and his monks

1.1-2.3 // Translated from Latin by Peter King, 2010.

On account of those who preach and defend human free choice in such a way that they dare to deny and try to get rid of the grace of God – the grace by which we are called to Him and are set free from our evil deserts, and through which we acquire good deserts by which we might attain eternal life – I have already examined a number of points and written about them, as far as the Lord found worthwhile to grant to me. But since there are some people who defend the grace of God in such a way that they deny human free choice, or who hold that free choice is denied when grace is defended, I have for this reason been inspired by our mutual charity to take the trouble to write something on this issue to Your Charity, brother Valentine, and to the others who serve God with you. Word about you has reached me, brothers, from some members of your community who came to me (and by whom I have sent along this work), that there are disagreements among you on these matters.

Therefore, dearly beloved, I advise you first to thank God for what you do understand, so that the obscurity of the question not disturb you. As for anything still beyond the reach of your mind's effort, pray for understanding from the Lord while maintaining peace and

charity among yourselves. Until He brings you to those matters you do not yet understand, walk along the path you have been able to reach. This is the advice of the Apostle Paul who, shortly after declaring he was not yet perfect,1 says: "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded" [Phl. 3:15]. That is: we are "perfect" to the extent that we have not yet come to the perfection that is enough for us. He immediately adds: "If in any thing you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this to you as well; nevertheless, let us walk along the path we have reached" [Phl. 3:15–16]. In fact, by walking "along the path we have reached" we shall be able to reach what we have not yet reached – with God revealing it to us, if we are of another mind about anything, as long as we do not abandon what He has already revealed.

Now God has revealed to us through His own Scripture that human beings have free choice of the will. I shall remind you how He revealed this, not with my human words but rather with His divine eloquence. First of all, the divine precepts would themselves be pointless for human beings unless we had free choice of the will, by which we might reach the promised rewards through carrying them out. For the precepts were given to human beings in order that they not have an excuse on the grounds of ignorance, as the Lord says of the Jews in the gospel: "Had I not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin" [Jn. 15:22]. Of what sin is He speaking if not the great one He foreknew would be theirs when He said these things, that is, the sin in which they were going to put Him to death? For they had no sin before Christ came in the flesh to them.

Again, the Apostle Paul says [Rom. 1:18–20]:

> The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all the irreligiousness and injustice of those people who in their iniquity hold back the truth; for what is known of God is evident to them, since God has made it evident to them. Indeed, from the world's creation His invisible features are clearly seen and understood through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity, so that they are without excuse.

What does he mean by "without excuse" other than the excuse that human pride typically offers: "If I had known I would have done it; hence because I did not know, I did not do it" or "If I knew I would do it; hence because I do not know, I am not doing it"? This excuse is taken away from them once a precept is given, or the knowledge how not to sin is made evident.

Yet there are people who try to use God Himself to excuse themselves. To them the Apostle James says [Jas. 1:13–15]:

> Let no one say when he is tempted, "I have been tempted by God"; for God is not tempted by evils, nor does He tempt anyone. But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is accomplished, brings forth death.

Again, Solomon's book of Proverbs gives an answer to those who wish to excuse themselves on the basis of God Himself: "The folly of a man perverts his ways, and in his heart he holds God to blame" [Prv. 19:3]. The book of Ecclesiasticus declares [Sir. 15:12–18 (15:11–17 rsv)]:

> Say not: "It is through the Lord that I fell away," for you should not do the things He hates. Say not: "He Himself has caused me to err," for He has no need of the sinner. The Lord hates all abomination, and those

> who fear God love it not. It was He Who made human beings from the beginning, and left them in the hand of their own counsel. If you are willing, you shall keep the commandments and keep good faith with His pleasure. He sets fire and water before you: stretch forth your hand to whichever you will. Before us is life and death, and whichever you please shall be given you.

We see expressed here most clearly the free choice of the human will.

[…]

Medieval & Renaissance Philosophy

*

Boethius

Ibn Sīnā

Thomas Aquinas

Meister Eckhart

Christine de Pizan

Pico della Mirandola

Martin Luther

Boethius

Anicius Manlius Torquatus Severinus Boëthius (c. 477-524 CE) was born in Rome a year after the fall. He is believed to have studied in Athens or Alexandria before returning to his native city, where he would soon become a senator, aged 25, and entered – thanks to his erudition – into the service of Theodoric the Great, king of the Ostrogoths and ruler of the Kingdom of Italy.

As the last philosopher of Antiquity or the first philosopher of the Middle Ages, he was certainly at the crossroads of several traditions. A Neo-Platonist and a Christian, fluent in Greek, he created a bridge between Greek/Roman and Christian culture in his many writings (he was the author of treatises about arithmetic, logic, philosophy and theology, as well as many translations from the Greek into Latin and commentaries of Aristotle's works).

In 524, Theodoric condemned him to death on the charge of treason[1]. While under house arrest prior to his execution, Boethius wrote his last book, *De consolatione philosophiae*. Written in the form of an imaginary dialogue between him and Philosophy, personified by a woman, its main themes are the questions of human nature, virtues and free will, at the crossroads of natural philosophy and theology. For centuries to come, at a time when the texts of Aristotle and Plato were nowhere to be found, Boethius' works were an essential source of knowledge for scholars, and some of the most influential philosophical works of the medieval period.

THE CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY (524)

Each rejoices in their own Return

Book III & IV (extracts) // Translated from Latin by W. V. Cooper, 1902

'The bough which has been downward thrust by force of strength to bend its top to earth, so soon as the pressing hand is gone, looks up again straight to the sky above.

'Phoebus sinks into the western waves, but by his unknown track he turns his car once more to his rising in the east.

'All things must find their own peculiar course again, and each rejoices in his own return. Not one can keep the order handed down to it, unless in some way it unites its rising to its end, and so makes firm, immutable, its own encircling course.

[…]

'Do you see then, how in knowledge of all things, the subject uses its own standard of capability, and not those of the objects known? And this is but reasonable, for every judgment formed is an act of the person who judges, and therefore each man must of necessity perform his own action from his own capability and not the capability of any other.

[…]

[1] Boethius, at the time, was trying to reconcile the two branches of Christianity, the Roman See and the Constantinople See. To that effect, he corresponded with Justin I, the Eastern Roman Emperor. This was treason enough for King Theodoric, who, in a time of international tensions, justified his decision against Boethius by saying that the latter was preparing a coup. Boethius denied, but to no avail.

If therefore we, who have our share in possession of reason, could go further and possess the judgment of the mind of God, we should then think it most just that human reason should yield itself to the mind of God, just as we have determined that the senses and imagination ought to yield to reason.

'Let us therefore raise ourselves, if so be that we can, to that height of the loftiest intelligence. For there reason will see what it cannot of itself perceive, and that is to know how even such things as have uncertain results are perceived definitely and for certain by foreknowledge; and such foreknowledge will not be mere opinion, but rather the single and direct form of the highest knowledge unlimited by any finite bounds.

'In what different shapes do living beings move upon the earth! Some make flat their bodies, sweeping through the dust and using their strength to make therein a furrow without break; some flit here and there upon light wings which beat the breeze, and they float through vast tracks of air in their easy flight. 'Tis others' wont to plant their footsteps on the ground, and pass with their paces over green fields or under trees. Though all these thou seest move in different shapes, yet all have their faces downward along the ground, and this doth draw downward and dull their senses. Alone of all, the human race lifts up its head on high, and stands in easy balance with the body upright, and so looks down to spurn the earth. If thou art not too earthly by an evil folly, this pose is as a lesson. Thy glance is upward, and thou dost carry high thy head, and thus thy search is heavenward: then lead thy soul too upward, lest while the body is higher raised, the mind sink lower to the earth.

'Since then all that is known is apprehended, as we just now shewed, not according to its nature but according to the nature of the knower, let us examine, so far as we lawfully may, the character of the divine nature, so that we may be able to learn what its knowledge is. 'The common opinion, according to all men living, is that God is eternal. Let us therefore consider what is eternity. For eternity will, I think, make clear to us at the same time the divine nature and knowledge.' Eternity is the simultaneous and complete possession of infinite life. This will appear more clearly if we compare it with temporal things. All that lives under the conditions of time moves through the present from the past to the future; there is nothing set in time which can at one moment grasp the whole space of its lifetime. It cannot yet comprehend to-morrow; yesterday it has already lost. And in this life of to-day your life is no more than a changing, passing moment. And as Aristotle[74] said of the universe, so it is of all that is subject to time; though it never began to be, nor will ever cease, and its life is co-extensive with the infinity of time, yet it is not such as can be held to be eternal. For though it apprehends and grasps a space of infinite lifetime, it does not embrace the whole simultaneously; it has not yet experienced the future. What we should rightly call eternal is that which grasps and possesses wholly and simultaneously the fullness of unending life, which lacks naught of the future, and has lost naught of the fleeting past; and such an existence must be ever present in itself to control and aid itself, and also must keep present with itself the infinity of changing time. Therefore, people who hear that Plato thought that this universe had no beginning of time and will have no end, are not right in thinking that in this way the created world is co-eternal with its creator[75] For to pass through unending life, the attribute which Plato ascribes to the universe is one thing; but it is another thing to grasp simultaneously the whole of unending life in the present; this is plainly a peculiar property of the mind of God.

'And further, God should not be regarded as older than His creations by any period of time, but rather by the peculiar property of His own single nature. For the infinite changing of temporal things tries to imitate the ever simultaneously present immutability of His life: it cannot succeed in imitating or equalling this, but sinks from immutability into change, and falls from the single directness of the present into an infinite space of future and past.

And since this temporal state cannot possess its life completely and simultaneously, but it does in the same manner exist for ever without ceasing, it therefore seems to try in some degree to rival that which it cannot fulfil or represent, for it binds itself to some sort of present time out of this small and fleeting moment; but inasmuch as this temporal present bears a certain appearance of that abiding present, it somehow makes those, to whom it comes, seem to be in truth what they imitate. But since this imitation could not be abiding, the unending march of time has swept it away, and thus we find that it has bound together, as it passes, a chain of life, which it could not by abiding embrace in its fullness. And thus if we would apply proper epithets to those subjects, we can say, following Plato, that God is eternal, but the universe is continual.

'Since then all judgment apprehends the subjects of its thought according to its own nature, and God has a condition of ever-present eternity, His knowledge, which passes over every change of time, embracing infinite lengths of past and future, views in its own direct comprehension everything as though it were taking place in the present. If you would weigh the foreknowledge by which God distinguishes all things, you will more rightly hold it to be a knowledge of a never-failing constancy in the present, than a foreknowledge of the future. Whence Providence is more rightly to be understood as a looking forth than a looking forward, because it is set far from low matters and looks forth upon all things as from a lofty mountain-top above all. Why then do you demand that all things occur by necessity, if divine light rests upon them, while men do not render necessary such things as they can see? […] And God looks in His present upon those future things which come to pass through free will. Therefore if these things be looked at from the point of view of God's insight, they come to pass of necessity under the condition of divine knowledge; if, on the other hand, they are viewed by themselves, they do not lose the perfect freedom of their nature. Without doubt, then, all things that God foreknows do come to pass, but some of them proceed from free will; and though they result by coming into existence, yet they do not lose their own nature, because before they came to pass they could also not have come to pass.

[…]

Thus, therefore, mortal men have their freedom of judgment intact. And since their wills are freed from all binding necessity, laws do not set rewards or punishments unjustly. God is ever the constant foreknowing overseer, and the ever-present eternity of His sight moves in harmony with the future nature of our actions, as it dispenses rewards to the good, and punishments to the bad. Hopes are not vainly put in God, nor prayers in vain offered: if these are right, they cannot but be answered. Turn therefore from vice: ensue virtue: raise your soul to upright hopes: send up on high your prayers from this earth. If you would be honest, great is the necessity enjoined upon your goodness, since all you do is done before the eyes of an all-seeing Judge.'

Ibn Sīnā

Abū ʿAlī al-Husayn ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Hasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Sīnā (c. 980-1037 CE), known in the Western world as **Avicenna**, was a Persian Muslim polymath regarded as one of the most significant scientists, physicians and philosophers of the Islamic Golden Age (that lasted from the 8th to the 14th century CE). Born in a village near Bukhara (present-day Uzbekistan), he wrote around 450 works, half of which have survived until today.

His works, written mostly in Arabic, had a strong and lasting influence on the Islamic world and later on Christian Europe: translated into Latin, they were famous in the Medieval and Renaissance periods. His most important titles include *The Book of Healing*, a philosophical and scientific volume whose purpose was "to heal ignorance"; and *The Canon of Medicine*, an authoritative medical encyclopaedia that remained in use until the 17th century. The scope of his writings, however, comprised logic, metaphysics, theology, mathematics, natural sciences, medicine, psychology, astrology, alchemy, music and poetry.

Islamic intellectuals built their knowledge upon translations from Greek, Roman, Persian and Indian texts. Ibn Sīnā was influenced in particular by Aristotle, whose works he commented and criticized, encouraging debate in the spirit of the Islamic *itijad* (= independent reasoning).

The following text is an extract from Ibn Sīnā's most important work in Persian: the *Danishnama-i 'Alai* ("the Book of Knowledge for [Prince] 'Ala ad-Daulah"), written between 1021 and 1037. It is interesting to note that he created, in this encyclopaedic volume, new scientific vocabulary that had not previously existed in Persian[1]. The book begins with a pedagogical introduction to Aristotelian logic.

THE BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE (1037)

Part One: Treatise on Logic

Extract // Translated from Persian by Farhang Zabeeh, 1971

"Thanks and salutation to God, the creator and bestower of wisdom – salutation to his chosen messenger, Mohamed Mostafa – his family and friends.

I received the great order of our master, the just King Ez-Din Ala-Dule Abu-Jafar Mohamed ibn Dushmanziar. May his life be long and his fortune increase – the master who provided me with all the objects of my desires such as security, magnanimity – engagement with science and presence in court – to compose for him and his courtiers a very concise book in Persian on five traditional and philosophical sciences, namely:

First on the science of Logic which is the science of scales (or canon).[2]

[1] More specifically in "Duri", the first form of the Persian written language. It was the language of rulers at the end of the Sasanian epoch (before the Arabic conquest of Persia) and later evolved and was used in the court of the Sasanids in northern and eastern Persia.

[2] In his Arabic *Najat*, Ibn Sina writes that "Logic is to speculation as grammar is to discourse and prose to verse" and that "Logic is an instrument to all sciences." By calling logic 'an instrument' Ibn Sina follows the Aristotelian logicians who designated the word 'Organon' meaning 'instrument', to refer to Aristotle's logical treatises. By

Second on Natural Philosophy which is the science of sensible objects – moving and growing.

Third, the science of Astronomy – Cosmology – the essence and form and movement of skies and stars, as it is reported and examination of these reports.

Fourth, the science of Music and discussion of modes, melodies, harmonies of songs.

And the Fifth, Metaphysics, discussion of those things which are outside of Nature.

Our plan started with the subject of Logic which is a pure (higher) and formal science and gradually led to less pure and formal sciences (lower), (unlike the prevailing custom). It was possible to start with less formal and lower sciences.

Thus I, the servant, though never regarding myself as an expert in this science, obeyed the order of my master hoping that with God's help I could bring it to a successful completion.

The Purpose and Use of Logic

There are two kinds of cognition: One is called intuitive or perceptive or apprehensive (Tasāwor in Arabic). For example, if someone says, 'Man,' or 'Fairy,' or 'Angel,' or the like, you will understand, conceive and grasp what he means by the expression. The other kind of cognition is judgment (Tasdiq in Arabic). As for example, when you acknowledge that angels exist or human beings are under surveillance and the like.

Cognition can again be analysed into two kinds. One is the kind that may be known through Intellect; it is known necessarily by reasoning through itself. For example, there are the intuitive cognitions of the whatness of the soul, and judgments about what is grasped by intuitive cognition, such as, the soul is eternal.

The other kind of cognition is one that is known by intuition. Judgments about these intuitions, however, are made, not by Intellect, or by reason but by the First Principle. For example, it is known that if two things are equal to the same thing then those things are equal to each other. Then there is the kind of cognition known by the senses, such as, the knowledge that the sun is bright. Also, there is the knowledge that is received from authority such as those received from sages and prophets. And the kind that is obtained from the general opinion and those we are brought by it, for example, that it is wrong to lie and injustice ought not to be done. And still other kinds – which may be named later.

Whatever is know by Intellect, whether it is simple intuitive cognition, or judgment about intuitive cognition, or cognitive judgment, should be based on something which is known prior to the thing (a posteriori).

An example of an intuitive or perceptual cognition is this: If we don't know what 'man' means, and someone tells us that man is an animal who talks, we first have to know the meaning of 'animal' and 'talking', and we must have intuitive cognition of these things before we can learn something we didn't know before about man.

An example of a judgment acquired by Intellect is this: If we don't know the meaning of 'the world was created,' and someone tells us that the world possesses color, and

---

calling it 'scales,' Ibn Sina means that logic weighs the validity and soundness of any argument and since arguments, proofs and demonstrations are an essential part of any science, science (including mathematics, is presupposed by logic. The word 'logic' in its modern sense was used by Alexander Aphrodisias 500 years after Aristotle. The Arabic word 'Mantiq' which is used for 'logic', is a construction of 'Notq' which means 'speech' in Arabic.

whatever possesses color is created; then, and only then, can we know what we didn't know before about the world.

Thus, whatever is not known but desired to be known, can be known through what is known before. But it is not the case that whatever is known can be a ground for knowing what is unknown. Because for everything that is unknown there is a proper class of known things that can be used for knowing the unknown.

There is a method by which one can discover the unknown from what is known. It is the science of logic. Through it one may know how to obtain the unknown from the known. This science is also concerned with the different kinds of valid, invalid, and near valid inferences.

The science of logic is the science of scales. Other sciences are practical, they can give direction in life. The salvation of men lies in their purity of soul. This purity of soul is attainable by contemplating the pure form and avoiding this-worldly inclinations. And the way to these two are through science. And no science which cannot be examined by the balance of logic is certain and exact. Thus, without the acquisition of logic, nothing can be truly called science. Therefore, there is no way except learning the science of logic. It is characteristic of the ancient sciences that the student, at the beginning of his study, is unable to see the use or application of the sciences. This is so, because only after a thorough study of the whole body of science will the real value of his endeavor become apparent. Thus I pray that the reader of this book will not grow impatient in reading things which do not appear of use upon first sight.

The Beginning of the Science of Logic, and a Discussion of What is Called Simple Expressions and Simple Meanings

It should be known that there are two kinds of expressions: One is simple, the other compound[1]. A simple expression is one which has no part signifying a part of the meaning of the expression, i.e., 'Zid,' 'Mohammed,' 'Man,' and 'Wise.' A compound expression is one which has some part of it denoting some part of the meaning of the expression, such as when you say, "Human beings are wise," or "The wise people." An inquiry into the nature of compound expressions first requires a discussion of the nature of simple expressions.

A Discussion of Simple and Compound Expressions

Every simple expression is either universal or individual. A universal expression is one whose meaning applies to many entities. For example, 'man' signifies the same meaning when applied to Zid, Omar and Mohammed. However, even if a universal expression applies to only one entity it can be used in such a way as to indicate many entities, since it is possible to imagine, by understanding the meaning of that term, many other entities. For example, by knowing the meaning of 'sun' and 'moon,' you can imagine many suns and moons.

An individual expression is one which signifies a single entity. It is such that it cannot be imagined that the same expression could be applied to many entities. When you say 'Zid,' 'Zid' signifies only Zid. If you call some other entities 'Zid' you are giving the term another meaning. The business of the scientists is not to deal with individual expressions

[1] The topic of simple and complex expression and universal or individual or common name and proper name corresponds to Aristotle's statements in the *Categories*.

and their meanings, but to investigate the nature of universals. No doubt, each universal has many particular instances.

A Discussion of Essential and Accidental Universals

The universal contains its particular either (a) essentially or (b) accidentally. The Essential Universal and its Particulars are apprehended if, at least, three conditions are fulfilled:

(1) The particular has meaning. Thus, if you know the meaning of 'animal,' 'man,' 'number,' and 'number four,' you cannot help knowing the meaning of the expressions, 'man is an animal' and 'four is a number.' But if you add 'exists' or 'is white' to the word 'animal' and 'number,' you will not understand the meaning of the resulting expressions "man exists," "number four exists," or "man is not white" or "man is white".

(2) The existence of the Essential Universal is prerequisite for the existence of its Particular. For example, there should first be animal in order that animal be man, and first there should be number in order that number be four, and first there should be human being in order that human being be Zid.

(3) Nothing gives meaning to a particular, rather its meaning is derived from its essence. For example, nothing makes human being animal, and nothing makes four number, except its essence. For if it were otherwise, if the essence of a thing did not exist, there could be a man which is not animal, and there could be four, but no number; but this is impossible.

To further elaborate what has been said, take the saying "something may make some other thing." Its meaning is this: a thing can not be in its essence another thing, but only could be that other thing by means of something else which is accidental to it. If it is impossible for a thing to be what another thing is, nothing could make it that thing. That thing which makes man, man, makes animal, animal. But it does not make man, animal, since man in itself is animal, and four in itself is number. But this relation does not exist between whiteness and man. Hence, there should be something which makes man, white.

Thus, when every meaning has the above three characteristics it is essential. Whatever does not have all these characteristics is accidental. Accidental qualities are those which can never arise from the essence of a thing, not even by imagination. Therefore, they are unlike kinds of deduction that are made in the case of number thousand which is an even number or in the case of a triangle, the sum total of whose angles is equal to two rights angles. An example of an accidental quality is laughter, an attribute of men. This problem will be discussed later on.

And I should have mentioned also that a human being has two characteristics: essential and accidental. His essential characteristic may be exemplified by his ability to speak, because this property is the essence of his soul. An accidental quality of his is laughter, because it is the character of man, on seeing or hearing a strange and unfamiliar thing, (unless hindered by instinct or habit), to perchance laugh. But before there be wonder and laughter there must be a soul for a man, in order that this soul be united with a body and man becomes a man. First, there should be a soul in order that there be a man; not first, there should be laughter in order that there be a soul. Thus, the characteristic which comes first is essential, and whatever does not come from a man is not essential, but accidental. When you say, "Zid is seated," "Zid slept," "Zid is old," and "Zid is young," these characteristics, without doubt, are accidental, no matter what their temporal sequence be.

A Discussion of Genus, Species, Differentia, and Common and Special Accidents

There are five types of Universals: Three are Essential, and two are Accidental. Essential universals fall into two groups. In the first group are those which answer the question "what kind of things are some entities?" What is being asked for is the meaning of the entity. The answer would be a definition of its essence. For example, when you ask, "What is man? cow and horse?," you will be told "animals." When you ask, "What is blackness, redness, whiteness?," you will be told "qualities." When you ask, "What is three, five, and ten?," you will be told "numbers". And when you ask, "What is Zid, Kaled, and Omar?," you will be told, "man". Thus "animal," "quality," "number," and "man," are answers to the question "What kind of things are they?" And when you ask "Which number is four?," you will be told, "It is a number which when twice divided is one." And "Which animal is man?," you will be told, "Talking animal." Thus an Essential Universal answers the question, "What is that?"

In the other group fall those Essential Universals which answer the question "What thing is?" This question is more general and more special that the first question which is a definition of essence. For example, solid is more general than animal, and more special than substance. Animal is more general than man, and more special than solid. Likewise, number is more special than quantity, and more general than even. Evenness is more special than number, and more general than four. Four is more special than even, and more general than this and that particular four. Thus, whatever is the more general is the more special genus. Whatever is the more particular universal is the general species.

There are some things that are both genus and species. And there are other things that are only genus; they are not under any species. Take, in the above example, substance, quantity, and quality. They are not the genus of any species. This is so, because, under these categories, there is no Essential Universal which is an answer to the question "What is that thing?" Rather, under these categories, there are only particulars, such as man, four, and blackness. There is no substantial difference between this blackness and that blackness. The difference that could exist would be in external conditions. For example, the blackness of the crow is different from the blackness of the pencil. The crow and the pencil are things outside the quality of blackness. The blackness of the crow is not the essential attribute of blackness itself, in spite of the fact that this blackness could not be separated from the crow. However, in the imagination, it could be separated. Thus, the difference between Zid and Omar is that Zid is taller and whiter than Omar, that he is the son of another, and was born in another town. These qualities are all accidental attributes. The nature of the species that cannot be a genus can now be understood. This kind of species is called a Species of Species. It is the species of all the species which come under it. Thus, it is understood why the essential universal is either genus, species, or differentia.

The Accidental Universal can belong either to a particular universal or to more than one universal. An example of the former is laughability. An example of the latter is movement, which moves men and other things, or blackness which belongs to the crow and other things. This universal is called Common Accident.

Thus, any universal term is either genus, such as animal, or species, such as man, or differentia, such as the ability to talk, or proper (special), such as laughability, or common accidental, such as movement, blackness, and whiteness.

A Discussion of the Nature of Definition and Description

The purpose of definition is to know the true essence of a thing. Distinction follows from definition (Limitation). The purpose of a description is to denote a thing; description may be given even when the true essence of a thing may not be known. And to denote a thing is to separate that thing. Definition is a description of the essence of a thing.

To define something is to find something which is closest to that thing, such as animal which is closest to man. Then find that thing's essential differentia, such as the ability to talk. Then define 'man' as an animal who talks. 'Four' can be defined as that number, which when twice divided, is reduced to one.

Description is exemplified by the following: man is crying and laughing animal with wide nails; four is a number which when multiplied by itself results in sixteen; or four is a number that is a result of multiplying two by two.

There are four possible mistakes that could be made in defining and describing. All four possibilities could be realized by violating the following principle: All known things ought to be made known by means of something more knowable than themselves.

The four mistakes are the following:

(**1**) To use the thing being defined in the definiens of the definition (circular definition). For example, consider the meaning of 'time' when defined as a duration of movement. Obviously duration and time are the same thing. And one who cannot understand the meaning of 'time,' will not know its meaning any better when defined in terms of an equally obscure concept of duration.

(**2**) To define something by means of another thing similar to the first in respect to clarity and obscurity. For example, when you define 'blackness' as that color which is the opposite of whiteness. This definition is not any better than a definition of 'whiteness' as the opposite of blackness. For whiteness and blackness are similar to each other in respect of clarity and obscurity.

(**3**) To define something by using another thing which is more obscure than the thing to be defined. For example, when you define 'fire' as a material object resembling psyche. Surely psyche is a less clearer notion than fire.

(**4**) To define something by means of a thing which cannot be known unless defined itself. Such as when you define 'sun' as that planet which shows in the daytime. 'Sun' is defined in terms of day; yet people define 'day' in terms of sun. In fact, day is the time during which the sun rises. Thus, if it is hard to define 'sun,' it is harder to define 'day.'

The four pitfalls, enumerated above, should be avoided in any definition or description.

[…]

Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE) was a Dominican[1] friar, priest, theologian and philosopher. He is to this day one of the most important authorities of the Catholic Church. Born in Italy, he travelled throughout Europe, taught in Paris and Rome, provoking many controversies with his notion that reason is found in God and that *revealed* truths can be demonstrated.

At the time, many works from Aristotle that had been lost reappeared – through Muslim Spain – in Western Europe and were translated into Latin. On the one hand, Thomas embraced a number of the ideas of "the Philosopher", provoking the ire of those who wanted to get rid of *pagan* philosophy. On the other hand, Thomas fought against radical Aristotelians who wanted to think independently from religious *revealed* truths. Although he was canonized fifty years after his death, his influence goes well beyond the sphere of religion.

In his two major works – the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologica* –, Thomas attempted to use the arguments of human reason in order to convince non-believers and teach beginners. His writings are a model of scholastic methodology: the focus is placed on dialectical reasoning, rigorous conceptual analysis and the careful drawing of distinctions.

Of the extracts below, all taken from the *Summa Theologica*, the first is centred on the virtue of *charity*. For Christianity, charity (Latin *caritas*) is the virtue that presides over all the acts of love that believers would address to God and to their neighbours. This love is in fact a part of the all-encompassing love from God, which means that it is only through God that the believers can truly love their neighbours. But as we can read in the second and third extracts on *heresy*, human charity has limits: when a heretic doesn't change his mind, he is "admonished" twice, but the third time he will be killed, for the herd of the believers must be protected from the heretic's corruption (leitmotiv: the "good wheat" has to be separated from the "cockle").

SUMMA THEOLOGICA (1274)

Charity & Heresy

Extracts translated from Latin by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 1947

Whether the perfection of the Christian life consists chiefly in charity?

Objection 1. It would seem that the perfection of the Christian life does not consist chiefly in charity. For the Apostle [Paul] says [1 Cor. 14:20]: "Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature." But charity regards not the senses but the affections. Therefore it would seem that the perfection of the Christian life does not chiefly consist in charity.

[1] The Dominican Order, also known as the Order of Preachers, was founded by the Spanish priest Dominic of Caleruega at the beginning of the 13th century CE. As a mendicant Catholic religious order, its members adopted a lifestyle of poverty. They didn't live in seclusion, but in urban areas where they would preach and assume ministry to the poors. The Order is famous for its intellectual tradition, and also for having been in charge of the Inquisition from the 13th to the mid-15th century, whose aim was to combat heresy (= any form of denial, disbelief or perverted understanding of any dogma acknowledged by the Church).

Objection 2. Further,'it is written [Saint Paul: Eph. 6:13]: “Take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist when the evil comes, and to stand in all things perfect”; and the text continues [Eph. 6:14,16], speaking of the armor of God: “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place […] and take up the shield of faith.” Therefore the perfection of the Christian life consists not only in charity, but also in other virtues.

Objection 3. Further, virtues like other habits, are specified by their acts. Now it is written [James 1:4] that “patience accomplishes a perfect work.” Therefore seemingly the state of perfection consists more specially in patience.

On the contrary: It is written [Saint Paul: Col. 3:14]: “Above all things have charity, which is the bond of perfection,” because it binds, as it were, all the other virtues together in perfect unity.

I answer that, a thing is said to be perfect in so far as it attains its proper end, which is the ultimate perfection thereof. Now it is charity that unites us to God, Who is the last end of the human mind, since “whoever lives in charity lives in God, and God in them.” [1 Jn. 4:16]. Therefore the perfection of the Christian life consists radically in charity.

Reply to Objection 1. The perfection of the human senses would seem to consist chiefly in their concurring together in the unity of truth, according to [1 Cor. 1:10], “That you be perfectly united in the same mind, and in the same judgment.” Now this is effected by charity which operates consent in us men. Wherefore even the perfection of the senses consists radically in the perfection of charity.

Reply to Objection 2. A man may be said to be perfect in two ways. First, simply: and this perfection regards that which belongs to a thing's nature, for instance an animal may be said to be perfect when it lacks nothing in the disposition of its members and in such things as are necessary for an animal's life. Secondly, a thing is said to be perfect relatively: and this perfection regards something connected with the thing externally, such as whiteness or blackness or something of the kind. Now the Christian life consists chiefly in charity whereby the soul is united to God; wherefore it is written [1 Jn. 3:14]: “Anyone who does not love remains in death.” Hence the perfection of the Christian life consists simply in charity, but in the other virtues relatively. And since that which is simply, is paramount and greatest in comparison with other things, it follows that the perfection of charity is paramount in relation to the perfection that regards the other virtues.

Reply to Objection 3. Patience is stated to accomplish a perfect work in relation to charity, in so far as it is an effect of the abundance of charity that someone bears hardships patiently, according to [Saint Paul: Rm. 8:35], “Who . . . shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? Or distress?”

Whether heresy is a species of unbelief?

Objection 1. It would seem that heresy is not a species of unbelief. […] Now heresy would seem not to pertain to the understanding, but rather to the appetitive power; for Jerome says on [Gal. 5:19]: “The works of the flesh are manifest: Heresy is derived from a Greek word meaning choice, whereby a man makes choice of that school which he deems best.” But choice is an act of the appetitive power […]. Therefore heresy is not a species of unbelief.

Objection 2. Further, vice takes its species chiefly from its end; hence the Philosopher says [Ethic. v, 2] that “he who commits adultery that he may steal, is a thief rather than an

adulterer." Now the end of heresy is temporal profit, especially lordship and glory, which belong to the vice of pride or covetousness: for Augustine says that "a heretic is one who either devises or follows false and new opinions, for the sake of some temporal profit, especially that he may lord and be honored above others." Therefore heresy is a species of pride rather than of unbelief.

Objection 3. Further, since unbelief is in the understanding, it would seem not to pertain to the flesh. Now heresy belongs to the works of the flesh, for the Apostle says [Gal. 5:19]: "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness," and among the others, he adds, "dissensions, sects," which are the same as heresies. Therefore heresy is not a species of unbelief.

On the contrary, Falsehood is contrary to truth. Now a heretic is one who devises or follows false or new opinions. Therefore heresy is opposed to the truth, on which faith is founded; and consequently it is a species of unbelief.

I answer that, the word heresy as stated in the first objection denotes a choosing. Now choice […] is about things directed to the end, the end being presupposed. Now, in matters of faith, the will assents to some truth, as to its proper good […]: wherefore that which is the chief truth, has the character of last end, while those which are secondary truths, have the character of being directed to the end.

Now, whoever believes, assents to someone's words; so that, in every form of unbelief, the person to whose words assent is given seems to hold the chief place and to be the end as it were; while the things by holding which one assents to that person hold a secondary place. Consequently he that holds the Christian faith aright, assents, by his will, to Christ, in those things which truly belong to His doctrine.

Accordingly there are two ways in which a man may deviate from the rectitude of the Christian faith. First, because he is unwilling to assent to Christ: and such a man has an evil will, so to say, in respect of the very end. This belongs to the species of unbelief in pagans and Jews. Secondly, because, though he intends to assent to Christ, yet he fails in his choice of those things wherein he assents to Christ, because he chooses not what Christ really taught, but the suggestions of his own mind.

Therefore heresy is a species of unbelief, belonging to those who profess the Christian faith, but corrupt its dogmas. […]

Reply to Objection 3. Just as heresy is so called from its being a choosing [*From the Greek *airein*, 'to cut off'], so does sect derive its name from its being a cutting off [*Latin *secando*]. Wherefore heresy and sect are the same thing, and each belongs to the works of the flesh, not indeed by reason of the act itself of unbelief in respect of its proximate object, but by reason of its cause, which is either the desire of an undue end in which way it arises from pride or covetousness, as stated in the second objection, or some illusion of the imagination (which gives rise to error, as the Philosopher states [in Metaph. iv]), for this faculty has a certain connection with the flesh, in as much as its act is independent on a bodily organ.

Whether heretics ought to be tolerated?

Objection 1. It seems that heretics ought to be tolerated. For the Apostle says [2 Tim. 2:24,25]: "The servant of the Lord must not wrangle . . . with modesty admonishing them that resist the truth, if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil." Now if heretics are not

tolerated but put to death, they lose the opportunity of repentance. Therefore it seems contrary to the Apostle's command.

Objection 2. Further, whatever is necessary in the Church should be tolerated. Now heresies are necessary in the Church, since the Apostle says [1 Cor. 11:19]: "There must be . . . heresies, that they . . . who are reproved, may be manifest among you." Therefore it seems that heretics should be tolerated.

Objection 3. Further, the Master commanded his servants to suffer the cockle "to grow until the harvest," i.e. the end of the world, as a gloss explains it. Now holy men explain that the cockle denotes heretics. Therefore heretics should be tolerated.

On the contrary, The Apostle says [Titus 3:10,11]: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid: knowing that he, that is such an one, is subverted."

I answer that, with regard to heretics two points must be observed: one, on their own side; the other, on the side of the Church. On their own side there is the sin, whereby they deserve not only to be separated from the Church by excommunication, but also to be severed from the world by death. For it is a much graver matter to corrupt the faith which quickens the soul, than to forge money, which supports temporal life. Wherefore if forgers of money and other evil-doers are forthwith condemned to death by the secular authority, much more reason is there for heretics, as soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated but even put to death.

On the part of the Church, however, there is mercy which looks to the conversion of the wanderer, wherefore she condemns not at once, but "after the first and second admonition," as the Apostle directs: after that, if he is yet stubborn, the Church no longer hoping for his conversion, looks to the salvation of others, by excommunicating him and separating him from the Church, and furthermore delivers him to the secular tribunal to be exterminated thereby from the world by death. For Jerome commenting on Gal. 5:9, "A little leaven," says: "Cut off the decayed flesh, expel the mangy sheep from the fold, lest the whole house, the whole paste, the whole body, the whole flock, burn, perish, rot, die. Arius was but one spark in Alexandria, but as that spark was not at once put out, the whole earth was laid waste by its flame."

Reply to Objection 1. This very modesty demands that the heretic should be admonished a first and second time: and if he be unwilling to retract, he must be reckoned as already "subverted," as we may gather from the words of the Apostle quoted above.

Reply to Objection 2. The profit that ensues from heresy is beside the intention of heretics, for it consists in the constancy of the faithful being put to the test, and "makes us shake off our sluggishness, and search the Scriptures more carefully," as Augustine states. What they really intend is the corruption of the faith, which is to inflict very great harm indeed. Consequently we should consider what they directly intend, and expel them, rather than what is beside their intention, and so, tolerate them.

Reply to Objection 3. According to Decret. [xxiv, qu. iii, can. Notandum], "to be excommunicated is not to be uprooted." A man is excommunicated, as the Apostle says [1 Cor. 5:5] that his "spirit may be saved in the day of Our Lord." Yet if heretics be altogether uprooted by death, this is not contrary to Our Lord's command, which is to be understood as referring to the case when the cockle cannot be plucked up without plucking up the wheat, […] when treating of unbelievers in general.

Meister Eckhart

Eckhart von Hochheim (c. 1260 – c. 1328 CE) was a German theologian and philosopher. Aged 15, he joined the Dominican Order in Erfurt (present-day Germany, then part of the Holy Roman Empire). Around 5 years later, we find him studying theology in Cologne, and 15 years later in charge of the Order's convents in Thuringia, then Bohemia. The legend shows us a man walking the land from one community to the other, overseeing their organisation and addressing his sermons – i.e. theological speeches – to the monks or the nuns present.

During his lifetime, Eckhart was appointed two times by the head of the Order (the *General Chapter*) to take up the chair of theology in Paris. This is where his title of *magister* (the Latin equivalent of *master*, German *Meister*) comes from. Yet, what makes Eckhart even more interesting is that he was at the centre of what the tradition has labelled German mysticism.

A mystic is someone who goes beyond a religion's dogmas to live a direct experience of the divine, of a reality that is hidden, remote from our everyday vision of the world. Maurice O'C. Walshe, Eckhart's latest translator into English, gives us some background: "The specifically Christian mystical tradition can be traced back with some certainty to Alexandria. Its direct source was the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus (ca. 204-270), who in his *Enneads* taught that all things emanate from the One, the return to which can be achieved by the contemplative path of detachment from all compounded things and a turning to pure simplicity." Meister Eckhart also followed the path of detachment, of which the sermon below indicates the stages.

This would prove not to be to everybody's liking. Indeed, in 1325, Eckhart was accused of heresy by his own Order—an action that speaks about the difficulties that the Catholic authority encountered during these times, and the violent repression with which it reacted to divergent thinking. He responded to the accusations but was nonetheless convicted. Eckhart then appealed to the Pope, but died before the latter gave his final verdict. In the end, several of Eckhart's theses were found to diverge from the Church orthodoxy.

[SERMON 87] (C. 1300)

The Purest Poverty

Translated from Middle High German by Maurice O'C. Walshe, 1979

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
(Matthew 5:3)

Beatitude itself opened its mouth of wisdom and said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." All angels, all saints, and everything that was ever born must keep silent when the wisdom of the Father speaks: for all the wisdom of angels and all creatures is pure folly before the unfathomable wisdom of God. This wisdom has declared that the poor are blessed.

Now there are two kinds of poverty. The one is external poverty, and this is good and much to be commended in the man who practices it voluntarily for the love of our Lord

Jesus Christ, for he himself possessed this on earth. About this poverty I shall say no more now. But there is another poverty, an interior poverty, to which this word of our Lord applies when he says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

Now I beg you to be like this in order that you may understand this sermon: for by the eternal truth I tell you that unless you are like this truth we are about to speak of, it is not possible for you to follow me.

Some people have asked me what poverty is in itself, and what a poor man is. This is how we shall answer.

Bishop Albert says a poor man is one who finds no satisfaction in all things God ever created, and this is well said. But we shall speak better, taking poverty in a higher sense: a poor man is one who wants nothing, knows nothing, and has nothing. We shall now speak of these three points, and I beg you for the love of God to understand this wisdom if you can; but if you can't understand it, don't worry, because I am going to speak of such truth that few good people can understand.

Firstly, we say that a poor man is one who *wants* nothing. There are some who do not properly understand the meaning of this: these are the people who cling with attachment to penances and outward practices, making much of these. May God have mercy on such folk for understanding so little of divine truth! These people are called holy from their outward appearances, but inwardly they are asses, for they are ignorant of the actual nature of divine truth. These people say that a poor man is one who wants nothing and they explain it this way: A man should so live that he never does his own will in anything, but should strive to do the dearest will of God. It is well with these people because their intention is right, and we commend them for it. May God in His mercy grant them the kingdom of heaven! But by God's wisdom I declare that these folk are not poor men or similar to poor men. They are much admired by those who know no better, but I say that they are asses with no understanding of God's truth. Perhaps they will gain heaven for their good intentions, but of the poverty we shall now speak of they have no idea.

If, then, I were asked what *is* a poor man who wants nothing, I should reply as follows. As long as a man is so disposed that it is his *will* with which he would do the most beloved will of God, that man has not the poverty we are speaking about: for that man has a *will* to serve God's will - and that is not true poverty! For a man to possess true poverty he must be as free of his created will as he was when he was not. For I declare by the eternal truth, as long as you have the *will* to do the will of God, and longing for eternity and God, you are not poor: for a poor man is one who wills nothing and desires nothing.

While I yet stood in my first cause, I *had* no God and was my own cause: then I wanted nothing and desired nothing, for I was bare being and the knower of myself in the enjoyment of truth. Then I wanted myself and wanted no other thing: what I wanted I was and what I was I wanted, and thus I was free of God and all things. But when I left my free will behind and received my created being, *then* I had a God. For before there were creatures, God was not 'God': He was That which He was. But when creatures came into existence and received their *created* being, then God was not 'God' in Himself He was 'God' in creatures.

Now we say that God, inasmuch as He is 'God,' is not the supreme goal of creatures, for the same lofty status is possessed by the least of creatures in God. And if it were the case that a fly had reason and could intellectually plumb the eternal abysm of God's being out of which it came, we would have to say that God with all that makes Him 'God' would be unable to fulfil and satisfy that fly ! Therefore let us pray to God that we may be free of

God that we may gain the truth and enjoy it eternally, there where the highest angel, the fly, and the soul are equal, there where I stood10 and wanted what I was, and was what I wanted. We conclude, then: if a man is to be poor of will, he must will and desire as little as he willed and desired when he was not. And this is the way for a man to be poor by not wanting.

Secondly, he is a poor man who *knows* nothing. We have sometimes said that a man should live as if he did not live either for himself, or for truth, or for God. But now we will speak differently and go further, and say, For a man to possess *this* poverty he must live so that he is *unaware* that he does not live for himself, or for truth, or for God. He must be so lacking in all knowledge that he neither knows nor recognizes nor feels that God lives in him: more still, he must be free of all the understanding that lives in him. For when that man stood in the eternal being of God, nothing *else* lived in him: what lived there was himself. Therefore we declare that a man should be as free from his own knowledge as he was when he was not. That man should let God work as He will, and himself stand idle.

For all that ever came out of God, a pure activity is appointed. The proper work of man is to love and to know. Now the question is, Wherein does blessedness lie most of all? Some masters have said it lies in knowing, some say that it lies in loving: others say it lies in knowing and loving, and they say better. But we say it lies neither in knowing nor in loving: for there is something in the soul from which both knowledge and love flow: but it does not itself know or love in the way the powers of the soul do. Whoever knows this, knows the seat of blessedness. This has neither before nor after, nor is it expecting anything to come, for it can neither gain nor lose. And so it is deprived of the knowledge that God is at work in it: rather, it just is itself, enjoying itself God-fashion. It is in this manner, I declare, that a man should be so acquitted and free that he neither knows nor realizes that God is at work in him: in that way can a man possess poverty.

The masters say God is a being, an intellectual being that knows all things. But we say God is not a being and not intellectual and does not know this or that. Thus God is free of all things, and so He *is* all things. To be poor in spirit, a man must be poor of all his own knowledge: not knowing any *thing*, not God, nor creature nor himself. For this it is needful that a man should desire to know and understand nothing of the works of God. In this way a man can be poor of his own knowledge.

Thirdly, he is a poor man who *has* nothing. Many people have said that perfection is attained when one has none of the material things of the earth, and this is true in one sense - when it is voluntary. But this is not the sense in which I mean it. I have said before, the poor man is not he who wants to fulfil the will of God but he who lives in such a way as to be free of his own will and of God's will, as he was when he was not. Of this poverty we declare that it is the *highest* poverty. Secondly, we have said he is a poor man who does not know of the working of God within him. He who stands as free of knowledge and understanding as God stands of all things, has the purest poverty. But the third is the *straitest* poverty, of which we shall now speak: that is when a man *has* nothing.

Now pay earnest attention to this! I have often said, and eminent authorities say it too, that a man should be so free of all things and all works, both inward and outward, that he may be a proper abode for God where God can work. Now we shall say something else. If it is the case that a man is free of all creatures, of God and of self, and if it is still the case that God finds a place *in him* to work, then we declare that as long as this is *in* that man, he is not poor with the strictest poverty. For it is not God's intention in His works that a man should have a place within himself for God to work in: for poverty of spirit means being so free of God and all His works, that God, if He wishes to work in the soul, is Himself

the place where He works - and this He gladly does. For, if he finds a man so poor, then God performs His own work, and the man is passive to God within him, and God is His own place of work, being a worker in Himself. It is just here, in *this* poverty, that man enters into that eternal essence that once he was, that he is now and evermore shall remain.

This is the word of St. Paul. He says, “All that I am, I am by the grace of God” (1 Cor. 15:10). Now this sermon seems to rise above grace and being and understanding and will and all desire - so how can St. Paul's words be true? The answer is that St. Paul's words *are* true: it was needful for the grace of God to be in him, for the grace of God effected in him that the accidental in him was perfected as essence. When grace had ended and finished its work, Paul remained that which he *was*.

So we say that a man should be so poor that he neither is nor has any place for God to work in. To preserve a place is to preserve distinction. Therefore I pray to God to make me free of God, for my essential being is above God, taking God as the origin of creatures. For in that essence of God in which God is above being and distinction, there I was myself and knew myself so as to make this man. Therefore I am my own cause according to my essence, which is eternal, and not according to my becoming, which is temporal. Therefore I am unborn, and according to my unborn mode I can never die. According to my unborn mode I have eternally been, am now, and shall eternally remain. That which I am by virtue of birth must die and perish, for it is mortal, and so must perish with time. In my birth all things were born, and I was the cause of myself and all things: and if I had so willed it, I would not have been, and all things would not have been. If I were not, God would not be either. I am the cause of God's being God: if I were not, then God would not be God. But you do not need to know this.

A great master says that his breaking-through is nobler than his emanation, and this is true. When I flowed forth from God, all creatures declared, 'There is a God'; but *this* cannot make me blessed, for with this I acknowledge myself as a creature. But in my breaking-through, where I stand free of my own will, of God's will, of all His works, and of God himself, *then* I am above all creatures and am neither God nor creature, but I am that which I was and shall remain for evermore. There I shall receive an imprint that will raise me above all the angels. By this imprint I shall gain such wealth that I shall not be content with God inasmuch as He is God, or with all His divine works: for this breaking-through guarantees to me that I and God are one. *Then* I am what I was, then I neither wax nor wane, for then I am an unmoved cause that moves all things. Here, God finds no place *in* man, for man by his poverty wins for himself what he has eternally been and shall eternally remain. Here, God is one with the spirit, and that is the strictest poverty one can find.

If anyone cannot understand this sermon, he need not worry. For so long as a man is not equal to this truth, he cannot understand my words, for this is a naked truth which has come direct from the heart of God.

That we may so live as to experience it eternally, may God help us. Amen.

Christine de Pizan

Christine de Pizan (1364-1430 CE) was a French moral and political philosopher, who led a life complicated by the fact that she was a woman in a world dominated by men.

At her birth, her father was employed as an astrologer and Councillor of the Republic of Venice; he was to move, four years later, to the court of Charles V of France as the king's astrologer. Christine therefore received the education of the women of the court, but she went far beyond that and would soon be known for her erudition. At the age of 15, her father arranged her marriage with a man from a minor noble house, a scholar with whom she lived a period of happiness and gave birth to three children. But in 1387, her father died and soon after her husband, taken away by the plague. Aged 24, Christine was left to take care of her three children and her own mother alone. At the time, the custom for a widow was either to remarry or to become a nun; she did neither. Instead, she decided to become a writer. As the profession was usually reserved for men, she had, in her words, "to become male" in order to follow her heart's desire. She first wrote lyrical and scholarly poetry, and later treatises on political, moral, military and philosophical matters. As of 1410, she had made a solid reputation for herself.

The following extract is taken from *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*, published in Paris in 1405. In it, Christine de Pizan discusses the destiny of women across the centuries—from Mary Magdalene to Sappho and from Medea to Isabelle of Valois, she chose historical as well as mythical characters, poets, noblewomen, philosophers and religious women alike. Exposing the life and feats of each of them, she defended them and gave them the place she saw fit.

Indeed, the book begins with the apparition of three godly figures, Justice, Reason and Righteousness, who will charge her with a task: to build a city where all women can enjoy a respected life, whatever they choose to be, without having to suffer the gendered inequality of the world. *La Cité des Dames* would become a part of the feminist canon in the 20th century.

THE BOOK OF THE CITY OF LADIES (1405)

An Extraordinary Task

Part I // Translated from Middle French by Rosalind Brown-Grant, 1999

1. Here begins the Book of the City of Ladies, the first chapter of which explains why and for what purpose the book was written.

One day, I was sitting in my study surrounded by many books of different kinds, for it has long been my habit to engage in the pursuit of knowledge. My mind had grown weary as I had spent the day struggling with the weighty tomes of various authors whom I had been studying for some time. I looked up from my book and decided that, for once, I would put aside these difficult texts and find instead something amusing and easy to read from the works of the poets. As I searched around for some little book, I happened to chance upon a work which did not belong to me but was amongst a pile of others that had been placed in my safekeeping. I opened it up and saw from the title that it was by Matheolus. With a smile, I made my choice. Although I had never read it, I knew that, unlike many other works, this one was said to be written in praise of women. Yet I had scarcely begun to read

it when my dear mother called me down to supper, for it was time to eat. I put the book to one side, resolving to go back to it the following day.

The next morning, seated once more in my study as is my usual custom, I remembered my previous desire to have a look at this book by Matheolus. I picked it up again and read on a little. But, seeing the kind of immoral language and ideas it contained, the content seemed to me likely to appeal only to those who enjoy reading works of slander and to be of no use whatsoever to anyone who wished to pursue virtue or to improve their moral standards. I therefore leafed through it, read the ending, and decided to switch to some more worthy and profitable work. Yet, having looked at this book, which I considered to be of no authority, an extraordinary thought became planted in my mind which made me wonder why on earth it was that so many men, both clerks and others, have said and continue to say and write such awful, damning things about women and their ways. I was at a loss as to how to explain it. It is not just a handful of writers who do this, nor only this Matheolus whose book is neither regarded as authoritative nor intended to be taken seriously. It is all manner of philosophers, poets and orators too numerous to mention, who all seem to speak with one voice and are unanimous in their view that female nature is wholly given up to vice.

As I mulled these ideas over in my mind again and again, I began to examine myself and my own behaviour as an example of womankind. In order to judge in all fairness and without prejudice whether what so many famous men have said about us is true, I also thought about other women I know, the many princesses and countless ladies of all different social ranks who have shared their private and personal thoughts with me. No matter which way I looked at it and no matter how much I turned the question over in my mind, I could find no evidence from my own experience to bear out such a negative view of female nature and habits. Even so, given that I could scarcely find a moral work by any author which didn't devote some chapter or paragraph to attacking the female sex, I had to accept their unfavourable opinion of women since it was unlikely that so many learned men, who seemed to be endowed with such great intelligence and insight into all things, could possibly have lied on so many different occasions. It was on the basis of this one simple argument that I was forced to conclude that, although my understanding was too crude and ill-informed to recognize the great flaws in myself and other women, these men had to be in the right. Thus I preferred to give more weight to what others said than to trust my own judgement and experience.

I dwelt on these thoughts at such length that it was as if I had sunk into a deep trance. My mind became flooded with an endless stream of names as I recalled all the authors who had written on this subject. I came to the conclusion that God had surely created a vile thing when He created woman. Indeed, I was astounded that such a fine craftsman could have wished to make such an appalling object which, as these writers would have it, is like a vessel in which all the sin and evil of the world has been collected and preserved. This thought inspired such a great sense of disgust and sadness in me that I began to despise myself and the whole of my sex as an aberration in nature.

With a deep sigh, I called out to God: 'Oh Lord, how can this be? Unless I commit an error of faith, I cannot doubt that you, in your infinite wisdom and perfect goodness, could make anything that wasn't good. Didn't you yourself create woman especially and then endow her with all the qualities that you wished her to have? How could you possibly have made a mistake in anything? Yet here stand women not simply accused, but already judged, sentenced and condemned! I just cannot understand this contradiction. If it is true, dear Lord God, that women are guilty of such horrors as so many men seem to say, and as you yourself have said that the testimony of two or more witnesses is conclusive, how can

I doubt their word? Oh God, why wasn't I born a male so that my every desire would be to serve you, to do right in all things, and to be as perfect a creature as man claims to be? Since you chose not to show such grace to me, please pardon and forgive me, dear Lord, if I fail to serve you as well as I should, for the servant who receives fewer rewards from his lord is less obligated to him in his service.'

Sick at heart, in my lament to God I uttered these and many other foolish words since I thought myself very unfortunate that He had given me a female form.

2. Christine tells how three ladies appeared to her, and how the first of them spoke to her and comforted her in her distress.

Sunk in these unhappy thoughts, my head bowed as if in shame and my eyes full of tears, I sat slumped against the arm of my chair with my cheek resting on my hand. All of a sudden, I saw a beam of light, like the rays of the sun, shine down into my lap. Since it was too dark at that time of day for the sun to come into my study, I woke with a start as if from a deep sleep. I looked up to see where the light had come from and all at once saw before me three ladies, crowned and of majestic appearance, whose faces shone with a brightness that lit up me and everything else in the place. As you can imagine, I was full of amazement that they had managed to enter a room whose doors and windows were all closed. Terrified at the thought that it might be some kind of apparition come to tempt me, I quickly made the sign of the cross on my forehead.

With a smile on her face, the lady who stood at the front of the three addressed me first: 'My dear daughter, don't be afraid, for we have not come to do you any harm, but rather, out of pity on your distress, we are here to comfort you. Our aim is to help you get rid of those misconceptions which have clouded your mind and made you reject what you know and believe in fact to be the truth just because so many other people have come out with the opposite opinion. You're acting like that fool in the joke who falls asleep in the mill and whose friends play a trick on him by dressing him up in women's clothing. When he wakes up, they manage to convince him that he is a woman despite all evidence to the contrary! My dear girl, what has happened to your sense? Have you forgotten that it is in the furnace that gold is refined, increasing in value the more it is beaten and fashioned into different shapes? Don't you know that it's the very finest things which are the subject of the most intense discussion? Now, if you turn your mind to the very highest realm of all, the realm of abstract ideas, think for a moment whether or not those philosophers whose views against women you've been citing have ever been proven wrong. In fact, they are all constantly correcting each other's opinions, as you yourself should know from reading Aristotle's *Metaphysics* where he discusses and refutes both their views and those of Plato and other philosophers. Don't forget the Doctors of the Church either, and Saint Augustine in particular, who all took issue with Aristotle himself on certain matters, even though he is considered to be the greatest of all authorities on both moral and natural philosophy. You seem to have accepted the philosophers' views as articles of faith and thus as irrefutable on every point.

'As for the poets you mention, you must realize that they sometimes wrote in the manner of fables which you have to take as saying the opposite of what they appear to say. You should therefore read such texts according to the grammatical rule of *antiphrasis*, which consists of interpreting something that is negative in a positive light, or vice versa. My advice to you is to read those passages where they criticize women in this way and to turn them to your advantage, no matter what the author's original intention was. It could be that Matheolus is also meant to be read like this because there are some passages in

his book which, if taken literally, are just out-and-out heresy. As for what these authors – not just Matheolus but also the more authoritative writer of the *Romance of the Rose* – say about the God-given, holy state of matrimony, experience should tell you that they are completely wrong when they say that marriage is insufferable thanks to women. What husband ever gave his wife the power over him to utter the kind of insults and obscenities which these authors claim that women do? Believe me, despite what you've read in books, you've never actually seen such a thing because it's all a pack of outrageous lies. My dear friend, I have to say that it is your naivety which has led you to take what they come out with as the truth. Return to your senses and stop worrying your head about such foolishness. Let me tell you that those who speak ill of women do more harm to themselves than they do to the women they actually slander.'

3. Christine recounts how the lady who had spoken to her told her who she was, what her function and purpose was, and how she prophesied that Christine would build a city with the help of the three ladies.

On receiving these words from the distinguished lady, I didn't know which of my senses was the more struck by what she said: whether it was my ears as I took in her stirring words, or my eyes as I admired her great beauty and dress, her noble bearing and face. It was the same for the other ladies too: my gaze darted back and forth from one to the other since they were all so alike that you could hardly tell them apart. All except for the third lady, who was no less imposing than the other two. This lady had such a stern face that whoever glanced into her eyes, no matter how brazen they were, would feel afraid of committing some misdeed since she seemed to threaten punishment to all wrongdoers. Out of respect for the ladies' noble appearance, I stood up before them but was far too dumbfounded to utter a single word. I was extremely curious to know who they were and would have dearly loved to dare ask them their names, where they were from, why they had come, and what the priceless symbols were that each of them held like a sceptre in her right hand. Yet I didn't think myself worthy to put these questions to such honourable ladies as these, so I held my tongue and carried on gazing at them. Though still frightened, I was also in part reassured, for the lady's words had already begun to assuage my fears.

Presently, the wise lady who had addressed me first seemed to read my mind and began to answer my unspoken questions with these words: 'My dear daughter, you should know that it is by the grace of God, who foresees and ordains all things, that we, celestial creatures though we may be, have been sent down to earth in order to restore order and justice to those institutions which we ourselves have set up at God's command. All three of us are His daughters, for it was He who created us. My task is to bring back men and women when they drift away from the straight and narrow. Should they go astray but yet have the sense to know me when they see me, I come to them in spirit and speak to their conscience, instructing them in the error of their ways and showing them how exactly it is that they have done wrong. Then I teach them to follow the correct road and to avoid doing what is undesirable. Because it is my role to light their way to the true path and to teach both men and women to acknowledge their flaws and weaknesses, you see me here holding up a shining mirror like a sceptre in my right hand. You can be sure that whoever looks into this mirror, no matter who they may be, will see themselves as they truly are, such is its great power. Not for nothing is it encrusted with precious stones, as you can see. With the help of this mirror, I can determine the nature, quantity and essence of all things and can take full measure of them. Without this mirror, nothing can come to good. Since you obviously want to know what function my two sisters perform, each of them will

shortly speak to you in turn and will add her weight to my words by giving you a clear explanation of both her name and her powers.

'First, however, I will tell you exactly why we are here. I want you to know that, as we do nothing without good reason, our appearance here today has a definite purpose. Though we do not attempt to be known in all places, since not everyone strives to acquaint themselves with us, we have none the less come to visit you, our dear friend. Because you have long desired to acquire true knowledge by dedicating yourself to your studies, which have cut you off from the rest of the world, we are now here to comfort you in your sad and dejected state. It is your own efforts that have won you this reward. You will soon see clearly why it is that your heart and mind have been so troubled.

'Yet we also have a further, more important reason for coming to visit you, which we'll now go on to tell you about. Our wish is to prevent others from falling into the same error as you and to ensure that, in future, all worthy ladies and valiant women are protected from those who have attacked them. The female sex has been left defenceless for a long time now, like an orchard without a wall, and bereft of a champion to take up arms in order to protect it. Indeed, this is because those trusty knights who should by right defend women have been negligent in their duty and lacking in vigilance, leaving womankind open to attack from all sides. It's no wonder that women have been the losers in this war against them since the envious slanderers and vicious traitors who criticize them have been allowed to aim all manner of weapons at their defenceless targets. Even the strongest city will fall if there is no one to defend it, and even the most undeserving case will win if there is no one to testify against it. Out of the goodness and simplicity of their hearts, women have trusted in God and have patiently endured the countless verbal and written assaults that have been unjustly and shamelessly launched upon them. Now, however, it is time for them to be delivered out of the hands of Pharaoh. For this reason, we three ladies whom you see before you have been moved by pity to tell you that you are to construct a building in the shape of a walled city, sturdy and impregnable. This has been decreed by God, who has chosen you to do this with our help and guidance. Only ladies who are of good reputation and worthy of praise will be admitted into this city. To those lacking in virtue, its gates will remain forever closed.'

4. How, before the lady revealed her name, she spoke at greater length about the city which Christine was destined to build, and explained that she was entrusted with the task of helping her to construct the enclosure and external walls.

'So you see, my dear daughter, that you alone of all women have been granted the honour of building the City of Ladies. In order to lay the foundations, you shall draw fresh water from us three as from a clear spring. We will bring you building materials which will be stronger and more durable than solid, uncemented marble. Your city will be unparalleled in splendour and will last for all eternity.

'Haven't you read that King Tros founded the city of Troy with the help of Apollo, Minerva and Neptune, whom the people of that time believed to be gods? Haven't you also heard of Cadmus, who created the city of Thebes at the gods' command? Yet, in the course of time, even these cities fell into ruin and decay. However, in the manner of a true sibyl, I prophesy to you that this city which you're going to build with our help will never fall or be taken. Rather, it will prosper always, in spite of its enemies who are racked by envy. Though it may be attacked on many sides, it will never be lost or defeated.

'In the past, as the history books tell you, certain courageous ladies who refused the yoke of servitude founded and established the realm of Amazonia. For many years afterwards, this realm was maintained under the rule of various queens, all of whom were noble ladies chosen by the women themselves, and who governed well and wisely, making every effort to keep their country safe. These women were very strong and powerful, having extended their rule over many of the lands of the east and having subjugated to their will all the neighbouring countries. They were feared by everyone, even the Greeks, who were the bravest nation in the world at that time. None the less, even the Amazons' power began to crumble in due course, as is the way with all earthly rulers. Now, the only trace that is left of that proud realm is its name.

'By contrast, the city which you're going to build will be much more powerful than these. As has been decided amongst the three of us, it is my task to help you begin by giving you tough, indestructible cement which you will need to set the mighty foundations and to support the great walls that you must raise all around. These walls should have huge high towers, solid bastions surrounded by moats, and outer forts with both natural and manmade defences. This is what a powerful city must have in order to resist attack. On our advice, you will sink these foundations deep in order to make them as secure as possible, and you will construct such high walls that the city inside will be safe from assault. Dear Christine, I have now told you all about why we have come. However, in order to convince you to give greater weight to my words, I'm going to reveal my name to you. The very sound of it should reassure you that, if you follow my instructions, you will find me to be an infallible guide to you in all your endeavours. I am called Lady Reason, so rest assured that you are in good hands. For the moment, I will say no more.'

5. Christine tells how the second lady gave her name, explained what her role was, and revealed how she would help Christine to lay out the buildings of the City of Ladies.

When the first lady had finished, and before I could say anything, the second lady began to speak: 'My name is Rectitude and I dwell in heaven more than on earth. However, like a shining ray of light sent down by God, I bring with me the message of His goodness. When I visit those who are just, I encourage them to do good in all things, to strive as far as possible to give each person his or her due, to speak and preserve the truth, to protect the rights of the poor and the innocent, to refrain from stealing from others, and to uphold the good name of those who are wrongfully accused. I am the shield and defender of those who serve God and I help to prevent the wicked from abusing their power. I make sure that those who are industrious and charitable are rewarded for their efforts. Through me, God reveals His secrets to those He loves, and it is I who am their advocate in heaven. This splendid rule that you see me holding in my right hand like a sceptre is the yardstick of truth which separates right from wrong and distinguishes between good and evil. Whoever follows my yardstick cannot go astray. It is the rod of peace, used by the just who rally to its cause, and which also strikes down those who do evil. What more can I tell you? With this rule, whose powers are infinite, all things are measured out. As far as you are concerned, this rule will help you to plan the city which you have been commissioned to build. You'll have good need of it in order to lay out the interior of the city and to build its high temples, palaces and houses, its roads, squares and marketplaces; in fact, everything that is needed to accommodate its inhabitants. It is in this capacity that I have come to help you. Don't be put off by the vast circumference of the enclosure walls. With the help of God and us three, you will build the city, covering the whole area with beautiful buildings and houses and leaving no space unfilled.'

6. Christine tells how the third lady revealed her name and outlined what her role was, then explained that she would help to finish off the high turrets of the towers and palaces and would bring Christine a queen for her city accompanied by a host of noble ladies.

Next, it was the turn of the third lady to speak: 'My dear friend Christine, I am Justice, the most beloved of God's daughters since my being arises directly from His own. I live in heaven, on earth, and in hell: in heaven I exalt the glory of the saints and the blessed spirits; on earth I divide up and allot to each person their share of the good or bad that each has done; and in hell I punish the wicked. I am ineluctable and immovable, having neither friend nor enemy who can overcome my will either by pity or by cruelty. My task is purely and simply to judge and repay everyone according to their just deserts. It is I who keep things in order, since without me nothing remains stable. I am part of God and God is part of me: in effect, we amount to the same thing. Whoever follows me cannot go wrong, since my way is the true way. First and foremost, I teach all men and women who are of sound judgement and who believe in me to look into and correct themselves, to do as they would be done by, to apportion goods without showing favouritism, to speak the truth, to avoid and detest falsehood, and to shun all forms of vice. This vessel of pure gold that you see me holding in my right hand is like a measuring cup, given to me by God my father, which I use to share out to each person exactly what he or she deserves. It is engraved with the *fleur de lys* of the Holy Trinity and, since it never gives out wrong measure, there are no grounds for anyone to complain about their lot. Mortal men have their own measuring cups which they claim to have derived from mine, but their judgement is never accurate as they always give out too much to some and too little to others.

'I could tell you even more about my powers and my function but for now let me just say that, of all the Virtues, I am the most important since they all culminate in me. We three ladies whom you see before you are one and the same, in the sense that one cannot act independently of the others. What the first lady decides, the second one puts into effect and then I, the third one, bring all to completion. I have been chosen by the three of us to help you finish off your city, my task being to construct the high turrets of the great towers, houses and palaces which will all be covered in bright gold. I will not only fill the city full of worthy ladies for you but I will also bring you their noble queen who shall be revered and honoured above all the other great ladies present. Before I hand you the keys to your finished city, I will need your help to fortify it and make it safe with strong gates that will be brought down for you from heaven.'

7. Christine tells how she replied to the three ladies.

Once I finished listening to the words spoken by the three ladies, which had commanded my complete attention and had totally dispelled the dismay that I had been feeling before their arrival, I threw myself fully face down in front of them, not just on to my knees, out of respect for their noble status. Kissing the ground they stood on, I adored them as if they were great goddesses, praising them with these words: 'Oh noble and worthy ladies, light of the heavens and of the earth, fountains of paradise bringing joy to the blessed, how is it that you have deigned to come down from your lofty seats and shining thrones to visit me, a simple and ignorant scholar, in my dark and gloomy retreat? How could one ever thank you enough for such graciousness? The sweet rain and dew of your words have already sunk into my arid mind, refreshing and replenishing my thoughts which are now ready to take seed and to put forth new shoots which will bear fruit of great virtue

and delicious flavour. But what have I done to be chosen to undertake the task of building a new city on earth that you have just described to me? I am no Saint Thomas the Apostle who, by the grace of God, created a fine palace in the heavens for the king of India. Nor does my poor brain have any idea of art or geometry, let alone of the theory and practice of construction. Even if I could learn the rudiments of these things, my weak female body would hardly be strong enough for such an undertaking. Yet, honoured ladies, though I'm still daunted by the prospect of this extraordinary task, I know that nothing is impossible for God. Nor should I be afraid that anything which was undertaken with your help and advice could not be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. I therefore thank both God and you with all my heart for having entrusted me with such a noble task, one which I accept with great pleasure. Behold your handmaiden, ready to do your bidding. I will obey your every command, so be it unto me according to your word.'

Pico della Mirandola

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494 CE) was a humanist philosopher, theologian, cabalist[1] and poet from the Italian Renaissance. Born into a very rich noble family, and later under the protection of Lorenzo de' Medici, he spent his life looking for the *philosophia perennis* – the idea that all myths, religions and philosophies are based on the same ancient wisdom – while leading an erudite and at times tumultuous life between Rome and Florence.

Reputed for his astounding memory, speaking Latin, Greek, Arabic and Hebrew, Pico read all the sacred texts in the original. He was also a student and friend of Marsilio Ficino, the first translator of Plato's complete works into Latin, who also translated many texts from the Neo-Platonist and Hermetic traditions. Pico's views are placed under the sign of an extreme *syncretism*, merging faiths and mythologies, looking for a path that would be all-encompassing.

At the age of 24, having written a sum of 900 theses that he published under the title *Conclusiones philosophicae, cabalasticae et theologicae*, he went to Rome with the intention of defending his views in a major public debate that would allow him to reveal the truth he had found. But Pope Innocent VIII forbade the debate from taking place, and mandated a commission to verify the orthodoxy of Pico's theses. Thirteen of them were deemed heretic; as a result, Pico had to flee to France… but the power of the Pope extended far away, and Pico would be arrested and jailed by the Duke of Savoy. Thanks to the influence of Lorenzo de' Medici, he was able to return to Florence. But his protector died in 1492, and, in a period of political instability – with many Christians desirous to expunge the influence of the "pagan" Renaissance from Italy – was eventually poisoned with arsenic two years later, at the age of 31.

The following text is the introduction of Pico's 900 theses, addressed to the Church fathers he wanted to convince. It has often been called the "Manifesto of the Renaissance".

ORATION ON THE DIGNITY OF MAN (1486)

Philosophia Perennis

§1-7 // Translated from Latin by Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, 1942

1. I have read in the records of the Arabians, reverend Fathers, that Abdala the Saracen[2], when questioned as to what on this stage of the world, as it were, could be seen most worthy of wonder, replied: "There is nothing to be seen more wonderful than man." In agreement with this opinion is the saying of Hermes Trismegistus: "A great miracle, Asclepius, is man."[3] But when I weighed the reason for these maxims, the many grounds

[1] Pico della Mirandola was the founder of the Christian Cabbala. On the model of the Jewish Kabbalah, it is a discipline that looks at the sacred texts (the *Torah* for the Jews, the *New Testament* for the Christians) with the aim of unveiling its secrets, through a specific use of numbers and synthetic diagrams.

[2] Abdala, that is, Abd Allah, probably the cousin of Mohammed.

[3] *Ascelpius*, i.6 (Hermetica, ed. W. Scott, I, 294).
In the Renaissance, the supposed author of the *Asclepius* and the *Corpus Hermeticum* was thought to have been an all wise Egyptian priest and a contemporary of Moses. However, Isaac Casaubon, an English scholar and philologist from the late 16th century, came to the conclusion that these writings couldn't be older than the 2nd or 3rd century CE. It is now believed to be the work of several unknown Greek authors, mixing Platonism and Stoicism with some Jewish and Persian influences.

for the excellence of human nature reported by many men failed to satisfy me—that man is the intermediary between creatures, the intimate of the gods, the king of the lowers beings, by the acuteness of his senses, by the discernment of his reason, and by the light of his intelligence the interpreter of nature, the interval between fixed eternity and fleeting time, and (as the Persians say) the bond, nay, rather, the marriage song of the world, on David's testimony but little lower than the angels.[1] Admittedly great through these reasons be, they are not the principal grounds, that is, those which may rightfully claim for themselves the privilege of the highest admiration. For why should we not admire more the angels themselves and the blessed choirs of heaven? At last it seems to me I have come to understand why man is the most fortunate of creatures and consequently worthy of all admiration and what precisely is that rank which is his lot in the universal chain of Being—a rank to be envied not only by brutes but even by the stars and by minds beyond this world. It is a matter past faith and wondrous one. Why should it not be? For it is on this very account that man is rightly called and judged a great miracle and a wonderful creature indeed.

2. But hear, Fathers, exactly what this rank is and, as friendly auditors, conformably to your kindness, do me this favour. God the Father, the supreme Architect, had already built this cosmic home we behold, the most sacred temple of His godhead, by the laws of His mysterious wisdom. The region above the heavens He had adorned with Intelligences, the heavenly spheres He had quickened with eternal souls, and the excrementary and filthy parts of the lower world He had filled with a multitude of animals of every kind. But, when the work was finished, the Craftsman kept wishing that there were someone to ponder the plan of so great a work, to love its beauty, and to wonder at its vastness. Therefore, when everything was done (as Moses and Timaeus bear witness), He finally took thought concerning the creation of man. But there was not among His archetypes that from which He could fashion a new offspring, nor was there in His treasure-houses anything which He might bestow on His new son as an inheritance, nor was there in the seats of all the world a place where the latter might sit to contemplate the universe. All was now complete; all things had been assigned to the highest, the middle, and the lowest orders.[2] But in its final creation it was not the part of the Father's power to fail as though exhausted. It was not the part of His wisdom to waver in a needful matter through poverty of counsel. It was not the part of His kindly love that he who was to praise God's divine generosity in regard to others should be compelled to condemn it in regard to himself.

3. At last the best of artisans ordained that that creature to whom He had been able to give nothing proper to himself should have joint possession of whatever had been peculiar to each of the different kinds of being. He therefore took man as a creature of indeterminate nature, assigning him a place in the middle of the world, addressed him thus: "Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thyself have we given thee, Adam, to the end that according to thy longing and according to thy judgement thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of all other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own [free will][3], in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the

[1] Psalms 8:5.

[2] Cf. Plato, *Protagoras*, 321c ff.

[3] The Latin original reads: *pro tuo arbitrio*.
There's no cause for identifying this expression with the Augustinian notion of Free Will (Latin *liberum arbitrium*), which would take us into Augustine's interpretation of the responsibility of Evil, cf. *De libero arbitrio*, I, 16, 35. For Pico proposed here a more affirmative notion of choice and of freedom, from which stems the responsibility for humans to posit their own limits and a different conception of God. (MC)

limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's [center][1] that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgement, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine."

4. O supreme generosity of God the Father, O highest and most marvellous felicity of man! To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills. Beasts as soon as they are born (so says Lucilius[2]) bring with them from their mother's womb all they will ever possess. Spiritual beings, either from the beginning or soon thereafter, become what they are to be for ever and ever. On man when he came into life the Father conferred the seeds of all kinds and the germs of every way of life. Whatever seeds each man cultivates will grow to maturity and bear in him their own fruit. If they be vegetative, he will be like a plant. If sensitive, he will become brutish. If rational, he will grow into a heavenly being. If intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God[3]. And if, happy in the lot of no created thing, he withdraws [into the center of his own unity][4], his spirit, made one with God, in the solitary darkness of God, who is set above all things, shall surpass them all. Who should not admire this our chameleon? Or who could more greatly admire aught else whatever? It is man who Asclepius of Athens, arguing from his mutability of character and from his self-transforming nature, on just grounds says was symbolized by Proteus in the mysteries. Hence those metamorphoses renowned among the Hebrews and the Pythagoreans.

5. For the occult theology of the Hebrews sometimes transforms the holy Enoch into an angel of divinity whom they call מלאך השכיגה ["Mal'akh Adonay Shebaoth"], and sometimes transforms others into other divinities.[5] The Pythagoreans degrade impious men into brutes and, if one is to believe Empedocles, even into plants. Mohammed, in imitation, often had this saying on his tongue: "They who have deviated from divine law become beasts," and surely he spoke justly. For it is not the bark that makes the plant but its senseless and insentient nature; neither is it the hide that makes the beast of burden but its irrational, sensitive soul; neither is it the orbed form that makes the heavens but its undeviating order; nor is it the sundering from body but his spiritual intelligence that makes the angel. For if you see one abandoned to this appetites crawling on the ground, it is a plant and not a man you see; if you see one blinded by the vain illusions of imagery, as it were of Calypso, and, softened by their gnawing allurement, delivered over to his senses, it is a beast and not a man you see. If you see a philosopher determining all things by means of right reason, him you shall reverence: he is a heavenly being and not of this earth. If you see a pure contemplator, one unaware of the body and confined to the inner reaches of the mind, he is neither an earthly nor a heavenly being; he is a more reverend divinity vested with human flesh.

6. Are there any who would not admire man, who is, in the sacred writings of Moses and the Christians, not without reason described sometimes by the name of "all flesh,"

---

[1] The Latin original reads: *Medium te mundi posui, ut circumspiceres inde comodius quicquid est in mundo*. To translate *medium* by 'center' could actually be misleading, since it would indicate a direction, an origin or an organizing principle. The English 'middle' would therefore better match Pico's view, since the word evokes the notion that humanity is *in the midst of* Creation. (MC)

[2] Frag. 623 (Marx).

[3] Cf. Ficino, *Theologia Platonica*, xiv,3.

[4] The Latin original reads: *in unitatis centrum*.

[5] Book of Enoch, 40:8.

sometimes by that of "every creature," inasmuch as he himself molds, fashions, and changes himself into the form of all flesh into the character of every creature? For this reason the Persian Euanthes, in describing the Chaldaean theology, writes that man has no semblance that is inborn and his very own but many that are external and foreign to him; whence this saying of the Chaldaeans: [אגוש הוא שגוים וכמה מכעוח כעלהי "Hanorish tharah sharinas,"] that is, "Man is a being of varied, manifold, and inconstant nature."[1] But why do we emphasize this? To the end that after we have been born to this condition—that we can become what we will—we should understand that we ought to have especial care to this, that is should never be said against us that, although born to a privileged position, we failed to recognize it and became like unto wild animals and senseless beasts of burden but that rather the saying of Asaph the prophet should apply: "Ye are all angels and sons of the Most High,"[2] and that we may not, by abusing the most indulgent generosity of the Father, make for ourselves that [freedom of choice][3] He has given into something harmful instead of salutary. Let a certain holy ambition invade our souls, so that, not content with the mediocre, we shall pant after the highest and (since we may if we wish) toil with all our strength to obtain it.

7. Let us disdain earthly things, despise heavenly things, and, finally, esteeming less whatever is of the world, hasten to that court which is beyond the world and nearest to the Godhead. There, as the sacred mysteries relate, Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones hold the first places; let us, incapable of yielding to them, and intolerant of a lower place, emulate their dignity and their glory. If we have willed it, we shall be second to them in nothing.

[…]

[1] The source of this quotation could not be discovered.

[2] Cf. Psalms 82:6.

[3] The Latin reads: *liberam optionem*. Humans owe their distinction to their freedom. (MC)

Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE) was a German theologian, priest and composer. He is best remembered for his crucial role in the Protestant Reform and for his translation of the Bible from Latin into German, which made it accessible directly to the common people.

Luther became a Catholic priest in 1507, and within ten years would affirm his dissensions with the Church of Rome. His first fight took place against the indulgences: by visiting holy places, making prayers or giving money to the Church, it was possible to reduce the punishments one had to undergo in order to pay for one's sins. As a result of his critiques, Luther was excommunicated. But this turn of events only convinced him that he was right.

At the basis of the Lutheran Reformation was the idea that *salvation* could not be obtained through "good deeds," but only by the grace of God. Therefore, Martin Luther came to criticize the hierarchical organization of the Catholic Church: in his views, the Bible was the only source of sacred knowledge, and every baptized Christian was to be considered as a priest in their own right. Hence the importance of a German translation of the Bible: until then, only the priests learned in Latin could read the Holy Scripture and therefore be of authority. The Reformation thus brought an important change in the spread and discussion of ideas, along with the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg around 1439. Books, theretofore only in the hands of an elite of noblemen and priests, would now be available to the laity.

In the treatise *Von den guten Werken* (On Good Works/Deeds) published in 1520, Luther defends his main idea: only faith can bring salvation[1]. As a result, works in themselves cannot be good: it takes a good person, with an authentic faith, to produce works that are good.

TREATISE ON GOOD WORKS (1520)

The True Believer vs. the Hypocrite

Extracts // Translated from German by Johann Michael Reu, c. 1930

VI. [...] When a man and a woman love and are pleased with each other, and thoroughly believe in their love, who teaches them how they are to behave, what they are to do, leave undone, say, not say, think? Confidence alone teaches them all this, and more. They make no difference in works: they do the great, the long, the much, as gladly as the small, the short, the little, and vice versa; and that too with joyful, peaceful, confident hearts, and each is a free companion of the other. But where there is a doubt, search is made for what is best; then a distinction of works is imagined whereby a man may win favor; and yet he goes about it with a heavy heart, and great disrelish; he is, as it were, taken captive, more than half in despair, and often makes a fool of himself.

So a Christian who lives in this confidence toward God, he knows all things, can do all things, undertakes all things that are to be done, and does everything cheerfully and freely; not that he may gather many merits and good works, but because it is a pleasure for him to please God thereby, and he serves God purely for nothing, content that his service

[1] Not any faith, but the faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ. Martin Luther was strongly anti-Semite, especially at the end of his life, accusing the Jews of being responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

pleases God. On the other hand, he who is not at one with God, or doubts, hunts and worries in what way he may do enough and with many works move God. He runs to St. James of Compostella, to Rome, to Jerusalem, hither and yon, prays St. Bridget's prayer and the rest, fasts on this day and on that, makes confession here, and makes confession there, questions this man and that, and yet finds no peace. He does all this with great effort, despair and disrelish of heart, so that the Scriptures rightly call such works in Hebrew Avenama, that is, labor and travail. And even then they are not good works, and are all lost. Many have been crazed thereby; their fear has brought them into all manner of misery. […]

VII. […] This faith they do not know at all, and give up, thinking that God has forsaken them and is become their enemy; they even lay the blame of their ills on men and devils, and have no confidence at all in God. For this reason, too, their suffering is always an offence and harmful to them, and yet they go and do some good works, as they think, and are not aware of their unbelief.

But they who in such suffering trust God and retain a good, firm confidence in Him, and believe that He is pleased with them, these see in their sufferings and afflictions nothing but precious merits and the rarest possessions, the value of which no one can estimate. For faith and confidence make precious before God all that which others think most shameful, so that it is written even of death in Psalm cxvi, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." And just as the confidence and faith are better, higher and stronger at this stage than in the first stage, so and to the same degree do the sufferings which are borne in this faith excel all works of faith. Therefore between such works and sufferings there is an immeasurable difference and the sufferings are infinitely better. […]

IX. Now this is the work of the First Commandment, which commands: "Thou shalt have no other gods," which means: "Since I alone am God, thou shalt place all thy confidence, trust and faith on Me alone, and on no one else." For that is not to have a god, if you call him God only with your lips, or worship him with the knees or bodily gestures; but if you trust Him with the heart, and look to Him for all good, grace and favor, whether in works or sufferings, in life or death, in joy or sorrow; as the Lord Christ says to the heathen woman, John iv: "I say unto thee, they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth." And this faith, faithfulness, confidence deep in the heart, is the true fulfilling of the First Commandment; without this there is no other work that is able to satisfy this Commandment. And as this Commandment is the very first, highest and best, from which all the others proceed, in which they exist, and by which they are directed and measured, so also its work, that is, the faith or confidence in God's favor at all times, is the very first, highest and best, from which all others must proceed, exist, remain, be directed and measured. Compared with this, other works are just as if the other Commandments were without the First, and there were no God. […]

X. Now you see for yourself that all those who do not at at all times trust God and do not in all their works or sufferings, life and death, trust in His favor, grace and good-will, but seek His favor in other things or in themselves, do not keep this Commandment, and practise real idolatry, even if they were to do the works of all the other Commandments, and in addition had all the prayers, fasting, obedience, patience, chastity, and innocence of all the saints combined. For the chief work is not present, without which all the others are nothing but mere sham, show and pretence, with nothing back of them; against which Christ warns us, Matthew vii: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing." Such are all who wish with their many good works, as they say, to make God favorable to themselves, and to buy God's grace from Him, as if He were a huckster or a day-laborer, unwilling to give His grace and favor for nothing. These are the most perverse people on earth, who will hardly or never be converted to the right way. Such too are all

who in adversity run hither and thither, and look for counsel and help everywhere except from God, from Whom they are most urgently commanded to seek it; […] they run away from Him to men, now to Egypt, now to Assyria, perchance also to the devil; and of such idolatry much is written in the same Prophet and in the Books of the Kings. This is also the way of all holy hypocrites when they are in trouble: they do not run to God, but flee from Him, and only think of how they may get rid of their trouble through their own efforts or through human help, and yet they consider themselves and let others consider them pious people. […]

XII. Note for yourself, then, how far apart these two are: keeping the First Commandment with outward works only, and keeping it with inward trust. For this last makes true, living children of God, the other only makes worse idolatry and the most mischievous hypocrites on earth, who with their apparent righteousness lead unnumbered people into their way, and yet allow them to be without faith, so that they are miserably misled, and are caught in the pitiable babbling and mummery. Of such Christ says, Matthew xxiv: "Beware, if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there"; and John iv: "I say unto thee, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship God, for the Father seeketh spiritual worshipers."

These and similar passages have moved me and ought to move everyone to reject the great display of bulls, seals, flags, indulgences, by which the poor folk are led to build churches, to give, to endow, to pray, and yet faith is not mentioned, and is even suppressed. For since faith knows no distinction among works, such exaltation and urging of one work above another cannot exist beside faith. For faith desires to be the only service of God, and will grant this name and honor to no other work, except in so far as faith imparts it, as it does when the work is done in faith and by faith. This perversion is indicated in the Old Testament, when the Jews left the Temple and sacrificed at other places, in the green parks and on the mountains. This is what these men also do: they are zealous to do all works, but this chief work of faith they regard not at all. […]

XIV. You might say: "Why then do we have so many laws of the Church and of the State, and many ceremonies of churches, monastic houses, holy places, which urge and tempt men to good works, if faith does all things through the First Commandment?" I answer: Simply because we do not all have faith or do not heed it. If every man had faith, we would need no more laws, but every one would of himself at all times do good works, as his confidence in God teaches him.

But now there are four kinds of men: the first, just mentioned, who need no law, of whom St. Paul says, I. Timothy i, "The law is not made for a righteous man," that is, for the believer, but believers of themselves do what they know and can do, only because they firmly trust that God's favor and grace rests upon them in all things. The second class want to abuse this freedom, put a false confidence in it, and grow lazy; of whom St. Peter says, I. Peter ii, "Ye shall live as free men, but not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness," as if he said: The freedom of faith does not permit sins, nor will it cover them, but it sets us free to do all manner of good works and to endure all things as they happen to us, so that a man is not bound only to one work or to a few. So also St. Paul, Galatians v: "Use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh." Such men must be urged by laws and hemmed in by teaching and exhortation. The third class are wicked men, always ready for sins; these must be constrained by spiritual and temporal laws, like wild horses and dogs, and where this does not help, they must be put to death by the worldly sword, as St. Paul says, Romans xiii: "The worldly ruler bears the sword, and serves God with it, not as a terror to the good, but to the evil." The fourth class, who are still lusty, and childish in their understanding of faith and of the spiritual life, must be coaxed like young children and tempted with external,

definite and prescribed decorations, with reading, praying, fasting, singing, adorning of churches, organ playing, and such other things as are commanded and observed in monastic houses and churches, until they also learn to know the faith. Although there is great danger here, when the rulers, as is now, alas! the case, busy themselves with and insist upon such ceremonies and external works as if they were the true works, and neglect faith, which they ought always to teach along with these works, just as a mother gives her child other food along with the milk, until the child can eat the strong food by itself.

XV. Since, then, we are not all alike, we must tolerate such people, share their observances and burdens, and not despise them, but teach them the true way of faith. So St. Paul teaches, Romans xiv: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, to teach him." […]

Modern Philosophy

*

Galileo Galilei

René Descartes

David Hume

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Immanuel Kant

Arthur Schopenhauer

Ludwig Feuerbach

Karl Marx

Friedrich Nietzsche

Hannah Arendt

Simone de Beauvoir

Gilles Deleuze

Michel Foucault

Galileo Galilei

Galileo Galilei (1564–1642 CE) was a physicist, astronomer and engineer from Pisa, Italy. He is famous for discovering the first elements of what would become the *principle of inertia*, and for his defence and further development of Copernicus' heliocentric model.

On the threshold between the Renaissance and the modern period, Galileo was certainly also a philosopher, more precisely a Platonist. On the one hand, it is thanks to his struggle against the Aristotelian model of the two worlds (the sublunary/ether distinction) that a continuous physical world could now be examined. On the other hand, the influence of Plato was probably what led Galileo to the geometrization of space-matter, which proved essential for the study of the planetary movements. His philosophical *realism* would indeed meet with an immense success, promulgating the idea that science consists in reading the truth "in this all-encompassing book that is constantly open before our eyes, that is the universe."

Last but not least, Galileo came back to direct experience, an empirical attitude which had been lost behind the respect for the authority of the ancients. Albert Einstein wrote in 1954: "Propositions arrived at by purely logical means are completely empty as regards reality. Because Galileo realised this, and particularly because he drummed it into the scientific world, he is the father of modern physics—indeed, of modern science altogether."[1]

HISTORY AND DEMONSTRATIONS CONCERNING SUNSPOTS (1613)

No Less Impossible

Extracts // Translated from Italian by Maurice A. Finocchiaro, 2008

§3.2 Heavenly Changes and Aristotelian Empiricism

[138] Now, to gather some fruit from the unexpected marvels that have remained hidden until our time, it will be good in the future to reconsider the wise philosophers who judged the heavenly substance differently from Aristotle, and from whom Aristotle himself would not have moved away if [139] he had been in possession of present day sensory observations. For he not only allowed plain sense experience among the means capable of yielding conclusions about natural phenomena, but he also gave it first place[2]. Thus, since he argued for the immutability of the heavens from the fact that no alteration had ever been seen there in past times, it is very reasonable to believe that if the senses had shown to him what they have shown to us, he would have followed the contrary opinion, to which we are now led by such marvelous discoveries.

Indeed I shall go further. I think that by holding the heavenly material to be alterable (based on the truth of present-day observations), I am opposing Aristotle's doctrine much less than those who would still want to claim it to be inalterable. For I am sure that he never regarded the conclusion of inalterability as certain as the principle that plain sense experience must have priority over any human theory. Thus, one will philosophize better by giving assent to conclusions dependent on clear observations than by persisting in

[1] Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, Crown Publishers, London, 1954, p.271.

[2] Cf. Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals,* III, 10, 750b27 and 760b31.

opinions that are repugnant to the senses and are confirmed only with probable or apparent reasons.

It is not difficult to understand the kind and the number of observed phenomena that lead us to more certain conclusions. Behold, to remove us from any ambiguity, a superior power [140] inspires someone to devise conclusive methods to understand that the generation of comets occurs in the heavenly region; but like a witness who quickly comes and goes, he is opposed by the majority of those who teach to others. Behold, we see new longer-lasting flames, looking like extremely bright stars, being produced and then dissipated in the farthest parts of the heavens; but this is not enough to convince those whose minds do not understand the necessity of geometrical demonstrations. Behold, finally, in the part of the heavens that deserves to be regarded as the purest and most genuine (that is, on the face of the sun itself), one discovers the constant production and quick dissipation of a countless multitude of dark, dense, and smoky spots. Here is a succession of things made and unmade that will not end any time soon; rather, lasting for all future ages, it will give human beings time to observe as much as they please and to learn doctrines that will make them certain about their place.

§3.3 Knowing Properties vs. Knowing Essences

[187] In my estimation, we should not totally refrain from the investigation of things, even if they are very far from us, unless we have first decided it best to postpone any speculative activity to all other occupations of ours. The reason is as follows.

Either we want, by theorizing, to try to penetrate the true and intrinsic essence of natural substances, or we want to limit ourselves to gain information about some of their properties. As for trying to penetrate the essence, I regard it as an undertaking and a job no less impossible and useless for the case of nearby elementary substances than for the case of heavenly and very remote substances. I feel equally ignorant about the substance of the earth and of the moon, of terrestrial clouds and of sunspots.

For understanding these nearby substances, I see no other advantage than the abundance of details; but these are equally not understood, and we keep searching through them with very little or no gain. If I ask what is the essence of clouds and am told that it is a humid vapor, next I will want to know what vapor is. Perhaps I will be told that it is water rarified by the action of heat and transformed accordingly. But equally unclear about what water is, I will ask for this, and finally I will hear that it is the fluid body which flows in rivers and which we constantly handle and deal with. But this information about water is merely more direct and dependent on more senses, but not more intrinsic than my earlier information about clouds. Similarly, I do not understand the true essence of earth or fire any more than that of the moon or the sun; this knowledge is reserved for our understanding when we reach the state of blessedness, [188] not before.

However, if we want to limit ourselves to knowledge of some properties, I do not think we should despair of being able to ascertain them in bodies that are extremely far from us as well as in those next to us; on the contrary, sometimes by chance we know more precisely a property of the former than one of the latter. Who does not know the periods of the motions of planets better than those of seawater? Who does not know that the spherical shape of the body of the moon was understood much earlier and more quickly than that of the earth? And is it not still controversial whether the earth remains motionless or goes wandering, whereas we are most certain about the motions of quite a few stars?

Thus, I want to conclude that although it would be fruitless to undertake the investigation of the essence of sunspots, it does not follow that we cannot know some of their properties, such as their location, motion, shape, size, opacity, mutability, production, and dissipation. These can then enable us to philosophize better about other more controversial questions regarding natural substances. Finally, lifting us to the final purpose of our efforts, namely, the love of the Divine Architect, they can sustain our hope of learning all other truths from Him, source of light and truth.

IL SAGGIATORE (1623)

The Language of the Universe

Extract // Translated from Italian by Maurice A. Finocchiaro, 2008

[…] He[1] asks angrily: Whom should he follow? Ptolemy, whose doctrine is falsified by the new observations of Mars? Copernicus, from whom everyone must turn away on account of the recently condemned hypothesis? Here I note several things. First, I reply that it is most false that I have ever blamed anyone for following Tycho, although I could have done so, as even his followers can see on account of Chiaramonti's *Anti-Tycho;* thus what Sarsi writes here is very far from being pertinent. The introduction of Ptolemy and Copernicus is even more irrelevant, for there is no evidence that they ever wrote a word about the distances, sizes, and motions of comets and the corresponding theories, whereas the topic of discussion was comets and nothing else. One might as well have interjected Sophocles, Bartolo, or Livy.

Furthermore, I seem to detect in Sarsi the firm belief that in philosophizing one must rely upon the opinions of some famous author, so that if our mind does not marry the thinking of someone else, it remains altogether sterile and fruitless. Perhaps he thinks that philosophy is the creation of a man, a book like the *Iliad* or *Orlando Furioso,* in which the least important thing is whether what is written in them is true. Mr. Sarsi, that is not the way it is. Philosophy is written in this all-encompassing book that is constantly open before our eyes, that is the universe; but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to understand the language and knows the characters in which it is written. It is written in mathematical language, and its characters are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures; without these it is humanly impossible to understand a word of it, and one wanders around pointlessly in a dark labyrinth. […]

DIALOGUE ON THE TWO CHIEF WORLD SYSTEMS (1632)

A Critique of Common Sense

§10.7 Day III // Translated from Italian by Maurice A. Finocchiaro, 2008

[1] "He" designates Orazio Grassi (1583-1654 CE), an Italian Jesuit priest and mathematician, later referred to by his pseudonym of Sarsi. He is one of the authors who took part in the controversy with Galileo Galilei on the nature of comets. Sarsi had adopted Tycho Brahe' geocentric system: the other planets orbit around the Sun, which, in turn, orbits around the Earth.

[…] SAGR. I see it very well. However, just as from this simplicity you infer a high probability for the truth of this system, others, on the other hand, might perhaps draw contrary conclusions; because such an arrangement is the very ancient one of the Pythagoreans and agrees so well with the observations, one might wonder (not without reason) how it could have had so few followers in the course of thousands of years, how it could have been rejected by Aristotle himself, and how even after Copernicus it could continue to suffer the same fate.

SALV. Sagredo, if you had ever happened to hear (as I have very many times) what kinds of stupidities suffice to make the common people stubbornly unwilling [355] to listen to (let alone accept) these novelties, I think you would wonder much less about the fact that there have been so few followers of this view. However, in my opinion, we should pay little attention to such brains; to confirm the earth's immobility and to remain unmoved in this belief, they regard as a very conclusive proof the fact that they cannot eat in Constantinople in the morning and have supper in Japan in the evening; and they are certain that the earth, being very heavy, cannot go up above the sun only to come back crashing down. We need not take into account these people, whose number is infinite, nor keep track of their stupidities; we need not try to gain the support of men whose definition contains only the genus but lacks the difference, in order to have them as companions in very subtle and delicate discussions. Moreover, what gain would you think you could ever make with all the demonstrations in the world when dealing with brains so dull that they are incapable of recognizing their extreme follies?

My wonderment, Sagredo, is much different from yours. You are surprised that there are so few followers of the Pythagorean opinion, whereas I am amazed at how there could ever have been anyone who accepted and followed it; nor can I ever sufficiently admire the eminence of mind of those who have accepted and regarded it as true, and who with the liveliness of their intellect have done violence to their own senses, so much so that they have been able to prefer what their theorizing told them over what their sensory experiences showed them very clearly to the contrary. We have already seen that the reasons against the earth's diurnal rotation, which have been examined, appear to be very good; the fact that they have been regarded as most conclusive by the Ptolemaics, Aristotelians, and all their followers is a very good argument for their effectiveness. However, the observations that clearly contradict its annual motion appear to be even more powerful, so much so that (I repeat it) there is no end to my admiration of how in Aristarchus and Copernicus their reason could have done so much violence to their senses as to become, in opposition to the latter, mistress of their belief. […]

TWO NEW SCIENCES (1638)

'La Prova'

Extract §10.7 Day III // Translated from Italian by Maurice A. Finocchiaro, 2008

[…] SALV. The request which you make, like a true scientist, is a very reasonable one. For this is the custom — and properly so — in those sciences where mathematical demonstrations are applied to natural phenomena; this is seen in the case of perspective, astronomy, mechanics, music, and others, which by sense experience confirm the principles that become the foundations of the entire superstructure. I hope therefore it will not appear to be a waste of time if we discuss at considerable length this first and most fundamental question upon which hinge numerous consequences; of these we have in this book only a small number, placed there by the Author [Galileo], who has done so much to open a pathway hitherto closed to minds of a speculative turn. As far as experiments go, they have not been neglected by the Author; and often, in his company, I have myself performed the test [*la prova*] to ascertain that the acceleration of naturally falling bodies is that above described. […]

René Descartes

René Descartes (1596–1650 CE) was a French mathematician, scientist and philosopher. Remembered today as one of the founders of modern philosophy, he was at the time best known for his scientific works in geometry and optics. The two are actually intimately connected.

The scientific revolution, of which Descartes was part (he supported the heliocentric model and revoked the arguments of authority), had indisputable effects on the development of philosophy. What can we hold for true with absolute certainty, asked Descartes? So much must have seemed doubtful, for him to take the decision to doubt absolutely everything, and make of this radical doubt experiment the pre-requisite of all possible knowledge. In Descartes' view – as is apparent in the text below – the future development of the sciences was at stake.

Written in French and in the first person, his *Discours de la méthode* was published in 1637 as an introduction to three scientific treatises (*Dioptrique*, *Météores* and *Géométrie*). In light of the trials Galileo had faced in 1633, Descartes decided to publish it anonymously.

His famous formula for proving the existence of the self – *cogito ergo sum* – and the existence of God, make of Descartes the first Rationalist. Indeed, his arguments left nothing to sense experience and put everything in the hands of reason. Never did he ask of people to believe him, but instead invited them to reproduce his own experiments; which mirrors his view that the development of techniques would ultimately validate scientific theories in practice.

A Discourse on the Method of Correctly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences (1637)

Extracts // Translated from French by Ian Maclean, 2006

PART ONE

Good sense is the most evenly distributed thing in the world; for everyone believes himself to be so well provided with it that even those who are the hardest to please in every other way do not usually want more of it than they already have. Nor is it likely that everyone is wrong about this; rather, what this shows is that the power of judging correctly and of distinguishing the true from the false (which is what is properly called good sense or reason) is naturally equal in all men, and that consequently the diversity of our opinions arises not from the fact that some of us are more reasonable than others, but solely that we have different ways of directing our thoughts, and do not take into account the same things. For it is not enough to possess a good mind; the most important thing is to apply it correctly. The greatest minds are capable of the greatest vices as well as the greatest virtues; those who go forward but very slowly can get further, if they always follow the right road, than those who are in too much of a hurry and stray off it.

For myself, I have never presumed my mind to be any way more accomplished than that of the common man. Indeed, I have often wished that my mind was as fast, my imagination as clear and precise, and my memory as well stocked and sharp as those of certain other people. And I personally know of no any other mental attributes that go to

make up an accomplished mind; for, as regards reason or good sense (insofar as it is the only thing that makes us human and distinguishes us from brute beasts), I am ready to believe that it is altogether complete in every one of us, and I am prepared to follow in this the agreed doctrine of those philosophers who say that differences of degree apply only to *accidents*, and not to *forms* or natures of *individuals* of the same *species*.

But I venture to claim that since my early youth I have had the great good fortune of finding myself taking certain paths that have led me to reflections and maxims from which I have fashioned a method by which, it seems to me, I have a way of adding progressively to my knowledge and raising it by degrees to the highest point that the limitations of my mind and the short span of life allotted to me will permit it to reach. For I have already reaped so many fruits from this method that I derive the highest satisfaction from the progress that I believe myself already to have made in my pursuit of truth, in spite of the fact that in appraising my own achievements I try always to err on the side of caution rather than that of presumption, and that when I cast a philosopher's eye over the various actions and undertakings of mankind, there is hardly a single one that does not seem to me to be vain and futile. And I conceive such hopes for the future that if, among the purely human occupations, there is one that is really good and important, I venture to believe that it is the one that I have chosen.

It is, however, possible that I am wrong, and that I am mistaking bits of copper and glass for gold and diamonds. I know how likely we are to be wrong on our own account, and how suspect is the judgement of our friends when it is in our favour. Nonetheless, in this essay I shall gladly reveal the paths I have followed and paint my life as it were in a picture, so that everyone may come to a judgement about it; and from hearing the reactions of the public to this picture, I shall add a new way of acquiring knowledge to those which I habitually employ.

So my aim here is not to teach the method that everyone must follow for the right conduct of his reason, but only to show in what way I have tried to conduct mine. Those who take it upon themselves to give direction to others must believe themselves more capable than those to whom they give it, and bear the responsibility for the slightest error they might make. But as I am putting this essay forward only as a historical record, or if you prefer, a fable, in which among a number of examples worthy of imitation one may also find several which one would be right not to follow, I hope that it may prove useful to some people without being harmful to any, and that my candour will be appreciated by everyone.

[…]

PART TWO

At that time I was in Germany, where I had been called by the wars that have not yet come to an end there; as I was returning to the army from the coronation of the emperor, I was halted by the onset of winter in quarters where, having no diverting company and fortunately also no cares or emotional turmoil to trouble me, I spent the whole day shut up in a small room heated by a stove, in which I could converse with my own thoughts at leisure.

[…]

But like a man walking by himself in the dark, I took the decision to go so slowly and to exercise such caution in everything that even if I made very little progress, I would at least be sure not to fall. I did not even wish to begin by rejecting absolutely all the opinions that might have slipped into my mind without having been introduced there by reason, until I

had first spent enough time planning the work I was undertaking and searching for the true method of arriving at the knowledge of everything that my mind was capable of grasping.

In earlier years I had made some study of logic in the philosophy course, and of geometrical analysis and algebra in mathematics, three arts or branches of knowledge that seemed destined to contribute to my plan. But, on examining them, I noted, in the case of logic, that its syllogisms and most of its other techniques are employed more to explain things to other people that one knows already or even, as in the art of Lull, to speak injudiciously about those of which one is ignorant, than to learn anything new. And although logic really does contain many very true and excellent precepts, there are so many others mixed in with them that are either harmful or superfluous, that it is almost as difficult to separate the former from the latter as it is to extract a statue of Diana or Minerva from a rough block of marble. As for ancient geometrical analysis and modern algebra, even apart from the fact that they deal only in highly abstract matters that seem to have no practical application, the former is so closely tied to the consideration of figures that it is unable to exercise the intellect without greatly tiring the imagination, while in the latter case one is so much a slave to certain rules and symbols that it has been turned into a confused and obscure art that bewilders the mind instead of being a form of knowledge that cultivates it. This was why I thought that another method had to be found which retained the advantages of all three but was free from their defects. And just as a great number of laws is often a pretext for wrongdoing, with the result that a state is much better governed when, having only a few, they are strictly observed; so also I came to believe that in the place of the great number of precepts that go to make up logic, the following four would be sufficient for my purposes, provided that I took a firm and unshakeable decision never once to depart from them.

The first was never to accept anything as true that I did not *incontrovertibly* know to be so; that is to say, carefully to avoid both *prejudice* and premature conclusions; and to include nothing in my judgements other than that which presented itself to my mind so *clearly* and *distinctly*, that I would have no occasion to doubt it.

The second was to divide all the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as many as were required to solve them in the best way.

The third was to conduct my thoughts in a given order, beginning with the *simplest* and most easily understood objects, and gradually ascending, as it were step by step, to the knowledge of the most *complex*; and *positing* an order even on those which do not have a natural order of precedence.

The last was to undertake such complete enumerations and such general surveys that I would be sure to have left nothing out.

[…]

PART THREE

Finally, just as it is not enough, before beginning to rebuild the house in which one lives, to do no more than demolish it, make provision for materials and architects, or become oneself trained as an architect, or even to have carefully drawn up the plans, but one must also provide oneself with another house in which one may be comfortably lodged while work is in progress; so also, in order not to remain indecisive in my actions while my reason was forcing me to be so in my judgements, and to carry on living from then on as happily as I could, I formed a provisional moral code for myself consisting in only three or four maxims, which I should like to share with you.

The first was to obey the laws and customs of my country, and to adhere to the religion in which God by His grace had me instructed from my childhood, and to govern myself in everything else according to the most moderate and least extreme opinions, being those commonly received among the *wisest* of those with whom I should have to live. For, having begun already to discount my own opinions because I wished to subject them all to rigorous examination, I was certain that I could do no better than to follow those of the wisest. […]

My second maxim was to be as firm and resolute in my actions as I could, and to follow no less constantly the most doubtful opinions, once I had opted for them, than I would have if they had been the most certain ones. In this I imitated those travellers who, finding themselves lost in a forest, must not wander in circles first to one side then to the other, and still less stop in one place, but have to walk as straight as possible in one direction, and not alter course for weak reasons, even if it might only have been chance which had led them to settle on the direction they had chosen; for by this means, even if they do not end up precisely where they want to be, they will eventually reach somewhere where they will most likely be better off than the middle of a forest. […]

My third maxim was to endeavour always to master myself rather than fortune, to try to change my desires rather than to change the order of the world, and in general to settle for the belief that there is nothing entirely in our power except our thoughts, and after we have tried, in respect of things external to us, to do our best, everything in which we do not succeed is absolutely impossible as far as we are concerned. This alone seemed to me to be sufficient to prevent me from desiring anything in future which I could not obtain, and thereby to make me content. […]

Finally, as a conclusion to this moral code, I decided to review the various occupations that men have in this life, in order to try to select the best one. Without wishing to pass judgement on the occupations of others, I came to the view that I could do no better than to continue in the one in which I found myself, that is to say, to devote my life to the cultivation of my reason and make such progress as I could in the knowledge of the truth following the method I had prescribed for myself.

[…]

PART FOUR

I do not know whether I am bound to tell you about the first meditations that I engaged in there, for they are so metaphysical and recondite that they may not be to everyone's taste. And yet, to make it possible to judge whether the foundations I have laid are firm enough, I find myself in a way forced to speak about them. As has already been said, I had long since observed that, as far as morals are concerned, it is necessary sometimes to follow opinions which one knows to be very unsure as if they were indubitable; but because I wished at that time to concentrate on the pursuit of truth, I came to think that I should do the exact opposite and reject as completely false everything in which I could detect the least doubt, in order to see if anything thereafter remained in my belief that was completely indubitable. And so, because our senses sometimes deceive us, I decided to suppose that nothing was such as they lead us to imagine it to be. And because there are men who make mistakes in reasoning, even about the simplest elements of geometry, and commit logical fallacies, I judged that I was as prone to error as anyone else, and I rejected as false all the reasoning I had hitherto accepted as valid proof. Finally, considering that all the same thoughts which we have while awake can come to us while asleep without any one of them then being true, I resolved to pretend that everything that had ever entered my head was no more true than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately afterwards I

noted that, while I was trying to think of all things being false in this way, it was necessarily the case that I, who was thinking them, had to be something; and observing this truth: *I am thinking therefore I exist*, was so secure and certain that it could not be shaken by any of the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics, I judged that I could accept it without scruple, as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking.

Next, examining attentively what I was, I saw that I could pretend that I had no body and that there was no world or place for me to be in, but that I could not for all that pretend that I did not exist; on the contrary, from the very fact that I thought of doubting the truth of other things, it followed *incontrovertibly* and certainly that I myself existed, whereas, if I had merely ceased thinking, I would have no reason to believe that I existed, even if everything else I had ever imagined had been true. I thereby concluded that I was a *substance* whose whole *essence* or nature resides only in thinking, and which, in order to exist, has no need of place and is not dependent on any material thing. Accordingly this 'I', that is to say, the Soul* by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body and is even easier to know than the body; and would not stop being everything it is, even if the body were not to exist.

After this, I came to think in general about what is required for a proposition to be true and certain; for since I had just found one such proposition, I thought that I ought also to know in what this certainty consists. And having observed that there was nothing in this proposition, *I am thinking therefore I exist*, which makes me sure that I am telling the truth, except that I can see very clearly that, in order to think, one has to exist, I concluded that I could take it to be a general rule that things we conceive of very clearly and distinctly are all true, but that there is some difficulty in being able to identify those which we conceive of distinctly.

As a result of which, as I thought about the fact that I was doubting and that consequently my being was not altogether perfect (for I saw clearly that it was a greater perfection to know than to doubt), I decided to look for the source from which I had learned to think of something more perfect than I was myself, and I came to the *incontrovertible* realization that this must be from some nature that was in fact more perfect. As for the thoughts I had about many other things outside myself, such as the heavens, the earth, light, heat, and numerous others, I had no such difficulty in knowing where they

came from, because, seeing nothing in them which seemed to make them superior to myself, I could believe that if they were true, they depended on my nature in so far as it contained some perfection; and if they were not true, I held them from nothing, that is to say, that they were in me because I was lacking something. But this could not be true of the idea of a being more perfect than mine; for it was manifestly impossible that I should hold this from nothing; and because it is no less contradictory that the more perfect should proceed from and depend on the less perfect than it is that something should proceed from nothing, I could not hold it from myself either. So that there remained only the possibility that it had been put into me by a nature which was truly more perfect than mine, and one which even had in itself all the perfections of which I could have any idea, that is to say, in a word, which was God. To which thought I added that, because I knew some perfections that I did not myself have, I was not the only being who existed (I shall here freely employ, with your permission, some scholastic terminology), but that *of necessity* there must be some other, more perfect being upon whom I depended and from whom I had acquired all that I possessed. For if I had been the sole being and had been independent of every other being so as to *have, of myself*, that small degree of *participation* in the perfection which I shared with the perfect being, I could have been able to *have of myself*, by the same reason, all the remaining perfection that I knew myself to lack, and so be

myself infinite, eternal, unchanging, omniscient, in a word, to have all the perfections which I could observe in God. For, by following this line of reasoning, for me to know the nature of God in so far as my own nature permitted it, I only had to consider, in respect of each thing of which I found in myself some idea, whether it was a perfection to possess it; and I was certain that none of those things which manifested any imperfection was in Him, but that all the others were. In this way I could see that doubt, inconstancy, sadness, and such things could not be in Him, given that I would have been myself very glad to be free of them. Besides this, I had ideas of many corporeal things in the realm of the sensory; for even if I were to *suppose* that I was dreaming and that everything that I saw or imagined was false, I nevertheless could not deny that the ideas were really in my thought; but because I had already recognized in my own case that the nature of the intellect is distinct from the nature of the body, and considering that all composition is evidence of dependence, and that dependence is manifestly a defect, I concluded that it could not be one of God's perfections to be composed of these two natures, and that, as a consequence, He was not so composed; but that, if there were in the world any bodies or other intelligences or other natures which were not wholly perfect, their being must depend on His power, in such a way that they could not continue to subsist for a single moment without Him.

I decided after that to look for other truths; I called to mind the object of study of geometers, which I conceived of as a continuous body or a space indefinitely extended in length, breadth, and height or depth, divisible into different parts which could have various figures and sizes, and be moved or transposed in all sorts of ways, for geometers *posit* all that to be their object of study. I ran through some of their simpler proofs, and observed that the great certainty which everyone attributes to them is based only on the fact that they are conceived of as *incontrovertible*, following the rule that I have just given. I noted also that there was absolutely nothing in them which made me certain of the existence of their object. Thus, for example, I grasped clearly that, *supposing* a triangle to be given, it was necessary that its three angles were equal to two right angles; yet for all that, I saw nothing in this which made me certain that a single triangle existed in the world. Whereas, going back to the idea I had had of a perfect being, I found that existence was part of that idea, in the same way, or even more *incontrovertibly* so, that it is intrinsic to the idea of a triangle that its three angles equal two right angles, or to that of a sphere that all its parts are equidistant from its centre; and that, in consequence, it is at least as certain as any geometric proof that God, who is that perfect being, is or exists.

[…]

PART SIX

[…]

I have never laid great store by the products of my mind, and as long as I reaped no other benefits from the method that I use (apart from satisfying myself about some problems that belong to the speculative sciences, or trying to direct my life by the precepts that it inculcated in me), I have not felt obliged to write anything about it. For as far as mode of life is concerned, everyone is so sure that they know best that one could find as many reformers as there are people, if it were permitted to any other than those whom God has established as sovereigns over their peoples, or those to whom He has given sufficient grace and zeal to be prophets, to set about changing anything. And although I was very pleased with my speculations, I believed that others had their own which perhaps pleased them even more. But having no sooner acquired some general notions about physics, and begun to test them out on various particular problems, I noticed where they

may lead and how much they differ from the principles that have been employed up to now, and I believed that I could not keep them hidden without sinning greatly against the law that obliges us to procure, as far as it is in our power, the general good of all mankind. For these notions have made me see that it is possible to attain knowledge which is very useful in life, and that unlike the speculative philosophy that is taught in the schools, it can be turned into a practice by which, knowing the power and action of fire, water, air, stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies that are around us as distinctly as we know the different trades of our craftsmen, we could put them to all the uses for which they are suited and thus make ourselves as it were the masters and possessors of nature. This is not only desirable for the discovery of a host of inventions which will lead us effortlessly to enjoy the fruits of the earth and all the commodities that can be found in it, but principally also for the preservation of health, which is without doubt the highest good and the foundation of all the other goods of this life. For even the mind depends so much on the temperament and disposition of the organs of the body that, if it is possible to find some way of making men in most cases wiser and more skilful than they have been hitherto, I believe that it is in medicine that it must be sought. It is true that medicine as presently practised contains little of such notable benefit; but without wishing to disparage it, I am certain that there is no one, even among those whose profession it is, who will not admit that what is known about it is almost nothing compared to what remains to be known, and that it would be possible to be free of innumerable illnesses of both body and mind, and perhaps even the decline of old age, if we knew enough about their causes and the remedies with which nature has provided us. So, intending to devote my whole life to the pursuit of such an indispensable branch of knowledge, and having found a path which, I think, will inevitably lead me to it, unless prevented from doing so by the brevity of life or the lack of *empirical information*, I judged that there was no better remedy against these two obstacles than to communicate faithfully to the public what little I had discovered, and to urge good minds to try to go further by contributing, each according to his inclinations and power, to the observations and experiments that need to be undertaken, and by communicating in turn to the public everything that they learn. Thus, as the last would start from where their predecessors had left off, thereby combining the lives and labours of many, we might together make much greater progress than any one man could make on his own.

[…]

David Hume

David Hume (1711–1776 CE) was a historian, economist and philosopher from the Scottish Enlightenment. In the wake of a movement that encompassed all of Europe, his thought was characterized by the rejection of any authority that could not be justified by reason.

Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz: Rationalists had opened the path. Hume, however, would take a critical stance concerning their vision of what *reason* is, of what it is capable of concerning our understanding of reality. He opposed the view that the key to knowledge was to be found in reason alone; in particular, he opposed the view that ideas were innate. Instead, Hume thought that we acquire ideas through a long and complex process, which takes its roots in the experience of the senses (something Descartes, with his *cogito ergo sum*, couldn't agree with). Hence the fact that Hume was labelled an *Empiricist* by the following generations.

David Hume first published *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* in 1748. His main concern in it was to differentiate between types of judgements on reality. What he called *matters of fact* are judgements entirely dependent on experience (unobtainable through pure reason), while what he called *relations of ideas* are judgements which occur by combining ideas between them, without any necessary assistance from the senses. This theory of knowledge would prove very influential, and Kant would write for example that Hume was the one who awoke him from his "dogmatic slumber"… although he didn't share Hume's scepticism.

AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING (1748, 1777)

Section IV & V, extracts // Original text

SECTION IV

Sceptical Doubts concerning the Operations of the Understanding.

PART I

[E 4.1, SBN 25] ALL the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, *Relations of Ideas*, and *Matters of Fact*. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic; and in short, every affirmation, which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain. *That the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the square of the two sides*, is a proposition, which expresses a relation between these figures. *That three times five is equal to the half of thirty*, expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is any where existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths, demonstrated by Euclid, would for ever retain their certainty and evidence.

[E 4.2, SBN 25-6] Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality. *That the sun will not rise to-morrow* is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction, than the

affirmation, *that it will rise*. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.

[E 4.3, SBN 26] It may, therefore, be a subject worthy of curiosity, to enquire what is the nature of that evidence, which assures us of any real existence and matter of fact, beyond the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory. This part of philosophy, it is observable, has been little cultivated, either by the ancients or moderns; and therefore our doubts and errors, in the prosecution of so important an enquiry, may be the more excusable; while we march through such difficult paths, without any guide or direction. They may even prove useful, by exciting curiosity, and destroying that implicit faith and security, which is the bane of all reasoning and free enquiry. The discovery of defects in the common philosophy, if any such there be, will not, I presume, be a discouragement, but rather an incitement, as is usual, to attempt something more full and satisfactory, than has yet been proposed to the public.

[E 4.4, SBN 26-7] All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of *Cause and Effect*. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses. […]

SECTION V

Sceptical Solution of these Doubts.

PART I

[E 5.1, SBN 40-1] THE passion for philosophy, like that for religion, seems liable to this inconvenience, that, though it aims at the correction of our manners, and extirpation of our vices, it may only serve, by imprudent management, to foster a predominant inclination, and push the mind, with more determined resolution, towards that side, which already *draws* too much, by the bias and propensity of the natural temper. It is certain, that, while we aspire to the magnanimous firmness of the philosophic sage, and endeavour to confine our pleasures altogether within our own minds, we may, at last, render our philosophy like that of Epictetus, and other *Stoics*, only a more refined system of selfishness, and reason ourselves out of all virtue, as well as social enjoyment. While we study with attention the vanity of human life, and turn all our thoughts towards the empty and transitory nature of riches and honours, we are, perhaps, all the while, flattering our natural indolence, which, hating the bustle of the world, and drudgery of business, seeks a pretence of reason, to give itself a full and uncontrolled indulgence. There is, however, one species of philosophy, which seems little liable to this inconvenience, and that because it strikes in with no disorderly passion of the human mind, nor can mingle itself with any natural affection or propensity; and that is the Academic or Sceptical philosophy. The academics always talk of doubt and suspense of judgment, of danger in hasty determinations, of confining to very narrow bounds the enquiries of the understanding, and of renouncing all speculations which lie not within the limits of common life and practice. Nothing, therefore, can be more contrary than such a philosophy to the supine indolence of the mind, its rash arrogance, its lofty pretensions, and its superstitious credulity. Every passion is mortified by it, except the love of truth; and that passion never is, nor can be carried to too high a degree. It is surprising, therefore, that this philosophy, which, in almost every instance, must be harmless and innocent, should be the subject of so much groundless reproach and obloquy. But, perhaps, the very circumstance, which renders it so innocent, is what chiefly exposes it to the public hatred and resentment. By flattering no irregular passion, it gains few partizans: By opposing so many vices and follies,

it raises to itself abundance of enemies, who stigmatize it as libertine, profane, and irreligious.

[E 5.2, SBN 41-2] Nor need we fear, that this philosophy, while it endeavours to limit our enquiries to common life, should ever undermine the reasonings of common life, and carry its doubts so far as to destroy all action, as well as speculation. Nature will always maintain her rights, and prevail in the end over any abstract reasoning whatsoever. Though we should conclude, for instance, as in the foregoing section, that, in all reasonings from experience, there is a step taken by the mind, which is not supported by any argument or process of the understanding; there is no danger, that these reasonings, on which almost all knowledge depends, will ever be affected by such a discovery. If the mind be not engaged by argument to make this step, it must be induced by some other principle of equal weight and authority; and that principle will preserve its influence as long as human nature remains the same. What that principle is, may well be worth the pains of enquiry.

[E 5.3, SBN 42] Suppose a person, though endowed with the strongest faculties of reason and reflection, to be brought on a sudden into this world; he would, indeed, immediately observe a continual succession of objects, and one event following another; but he would not be able to discover any thing farther. He would not, at first, by any reasoning, be able to reach the idea of cause and effect; since the particular powers, by which all natural operations are performed, never appear to the senses; nor is it reasonable to conclude, merely because one event, in one instance, precedes another, that therefore the one is the cause, the other the effect. Their conjunction may be arbitrary and casual. There may be no reason to infer the existence of one from the appearance of the other. And in a word, such a person, without more experience, could never employ his conjecture or reasoning concerning any matter of fact, or be assured of any thing beyond what was immediately present to his memory and senses.

[E 5.4, SBN 42] Suppose again, that he has acquired more experience, and has lived so long in the world as to have observed similar objects or events to be constantly conjoined together; what is the consequence of this experience? He immediately infers the existence of one object from the appearance of the other. Yet he has not, by all his experience, acquired any idea or knowledge of the secret power, by which the one object produces the other; nor is it, by any process of reasoning, he is engaged to draw this inference. But still he finds himself determined to draw it: And though he should be convinced, that his understanding has no part in the operation, he would nevertheless continue in the same course of thinking. There is some other principle, which determines him to form such a conclusion.

[E 5.5, SBN 43] This principle is Custom or Habit. For wherever the repetition of any particular act or operation produces a propensity to renew the same act or operation, without being impelled by any reasoning or process of the understanding; we always say, that this propensity is the effect of *Custom*. By employing that word, we pretend not to have given the ultimate reason of such a propensity. We only point out a principle of human nature, which is universally acknowledged, and which is well known by its effects. Perhaps, we can push our enquiries no farther, or pretend to give the cause of this cause; but must rest contented with it as the ultimate principle, which we can assign, of all our conclusions from experience. It is sufficient satisfaction, that we can go so far; without repining at the narrowness of our faculties, because they will carry us no farther. And it is certain we here advance a very intelligible proposition at least, if not a true one, when we assert, that, after the constant conjunction of two objects, heat and flame, for instance, weight and solidity, we are determined by custom alone to expect the one from the appearance of the other.

This hypothesis seems even the only one, which explains the difficulty, why we draw, from a thousand instances, an inference, which we are not able to draw from one instance, that is, in no respect, different from them. Reason is incapable of any such variation. The conclusions, which it draws from considering one circle, are the same which it would form upon surveying all the circles in the universe. But no man, having seen only one body move after being impelled by another, could infer, that every other body will move after a like impulse. All inferences from experience, therefore, are effects of custom, not of reasoning.

[E 5.6, SBN 44-5] Custom, then, is the great guide of human life. It is that principle alone, which renders our experience useful to us, and makes us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past. Without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact, beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses. We should never know how to adjust means to ends, or to employ our natural powers in the production of any effect. There would be an end at once of all action, as well as of the chief part of speculation.

[E 5.7, SBN 45-6] But here it may be proper to remark, that though our conclusions from experience carry us beyond our memory and senses, and assure us of matters of fact, which happened in the most distant places and most remote ages; yet some fact must always be present to the senses or memory, from which we may first proceed in drawing these conclusions. A man, who should find in a desert country the remains of pompous buildings, would conclude, that the country had, in ancient times, been cultivated by civilized inhabitants; but did nothing of this nature occur to him, he could never form such an inference. We learn the events of former ages from history; but then we must peruse the volumes, in which this instruction is contained, and thence carry up our inferences from one testimony to another, till we arrive at the eye-witnesses and spectators of these distant events. In a word, if we proceed not upon some fact, present to the memory or senses, our reasonings would be merely hypothetical; and however the particular links might be connected with each other, the whole chain of inferences would have nothing to support it, nor could we ever, by its means, arrive at the knowledge of any real existence. If I ask, why you believe any particular matter of fact, which you relate, you must tell me some reason; and this reason will be some other fact, connected with it. But as you cannot proceed after this manner, *in infinitum*, you must at last terminate in some fact, which is present to your memory or senses; or must allow that your belief is entirely without foundation.

[E 5.8, SBN 46-7] What then is the conclusion of the whole matter? A simple one; though, it must be confessed, pretty remote from the common theories of philosophy. All belief of matter of fact or real existence is derived merely from some object, present to the memory or senses, and a customary conjunction between that and some other object. Or in other words; having found, in many instances, that any two kinds of objects, flame and heat, snow and cold, have always been conjoined together; if flame or snow be presented anew to the senses, the mind is carried by custom to expect heat or cold, and to *believe*, that such a quality does exist, and will discover itself upon a nearer approach. This belief is the necessary result of placing the mind in such circumstances. It is an operation of the soul, when we are so situated, as unavoidable as to feel the passion of love, when we receive benefits; or hatred, when we meet with injuries. All these operations are a species of natural instincts, which no reasoning or process of the thought and understanding is able, either to produce, or to prevent.

[E 5.9, SBN 47] At this point, it would be very allowable for us to stop our philosophical researches. In most questions, we can never make a single step farther; and in all questions, we must terminate here at last, after our most restless and curious enquiries. But still our

curiosity will be pardonable, perhaps commendable, if it carry us on to still farther researches, and make us examine more accurately the nature of this *belief*, and of the *customary conjunction*, whence it is derived. By this means we may meet with some explications and analogies, that will give satisfaction; at least to such as love the abstract sciences, and can be entertained with speculations, which, however accurate, may still retain a degree of doubt and uncertainty. As to readers of a different taste; the remaining part of this section is not calculated for them, and the following enquiries may well be understood, though it be neglected.

[…]

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778 CE) was a writer, composer and philosopher, born in the Republic of Geneva, who had an important influence on the development of the Enlightenment, the French revolution and early Romanticism. Rousseau was a man of his century, who travelled and met with a number of intellectuals, including Hume and Voltaire, who would end up his enemies—if not of his ideas, then of his character.

In the 1750s, he published his first work, *Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, which met with important success; he contributed numerous articles to Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*; and wrote an opera which was performed for King Louis XV in 1752. In 1754, Rousseau returned to Geneva, converted to Calvinism and published his second major work, the *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. His attempt to investigate humans' original state of nature was at the basis of his idea that "l'homme est un être naturellement bon," and that society is the culprit for its perversion and decay.

His greatest successes were yet to come: in 1861, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, a sentimental novel; in 1862, *Du Contrat Social, Principes du droit politique*, in which he asserted that the only legitimate political power resides in the people; and also in 1862, *Émile, ou De l'éducation*, whose theories would serve during the French revolution as the basis for a new system of education. But in 1862, because Rousseau had written in this last book that no religion was in itself better than another, he had provoked the ire of all religious people. As a consequence, his works banned from France and Geneva, he had to flee to Bern, and later to Neuchâtel. He would subsequently travel to Paris, to London, to Grenoble and to Paris again, where he would conclude his final work, the *Confessions*, an autobiography.

DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGIN AND FOUNDATIONS OF INEQUALITY AMONG MEN (1754)

Extracts // Translated from French by Peter Constantine, 2013

PREFACE

The most useful of the natural sciences, yet the least advanced, strikes me as being the science of man, and I will venture to say that at the Temple of Delphi the only inscription contained a precept more important and difficult than all the copious volumes of the moralists. I also regard the subject of the following discourse as consisting of the most interesting questions that philosophy can propose and, unfortunately for us, one of the most contentious that the philosophers seek to resolve. For how can we understand the source of the inequality among men if we do not begin by understanding them? And how can man ultimately succeed in seeing himself as nature formed him through all the changes that the succession of time and circumstances must have produced in his original constitution, and disentangle what is innate in him from what circumstances and his progress have added or changed in his original state? Like the statue of Glaucus, which time, the sea, and storms had so disfigured that it resembled less a god than a wild beast, the human soul, altered in the bosom of society by a thousand perpetually recurring

causes, by the acquisition of a mass of knowledge and multitude of errors, by the changes befalling the constitution of the body and by the continual impact of the passions, has changed so as to be hardly recognizable. And one no longer finds beings that always act according to firm and invariable principles, beings with the celestial and majestic simplicity that their creator imprinted on them; instead one finds the misshapen contrast of a passion that believes it reasons and an understanding that is frenzied.

What is even more cruel is that all progress made by the human species ceaselessly moves it ever further from its original state: the more discoveries we make and the more new knowledge we accumulate, the more we deprive ourselves of the means of acquiring the most important knowledge of all, and it is in a sense, through studying man that we have made ourselves incapable of knowing him.

[…]

DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGIN AND FOUNDATIONS OF INEQUALITY AMONG MEN

It is of man that I have to speak, and the question I shall examine assures that I will be speaking openly, as one does not propose such questions to one's fellow men when one is afraid of honoring the truth. I will, therefore, defend the cause of humanity with confidence before the wise men who invite me to do so, and shall be pleased if I prove worthy of my subject and my judges.

In my view there are two sorts of inequality in the human species: one I call natural or physical, because it is established by nature and consists of differences in age, health, physical strength, and qualities of the mind or soul; the other, one might call moral or political inequality, because it depends on some sort of mutual agreement, and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of men. This inequality consists of the various privileges that some enjoy at the expense of others, such as being wealthier, more honored, and more powerful than they, or even making themselves obeyed.

One cannot ask what the source of natural inequality is, because the simple definition of the term would be provided as an answer. Even less can one inquire if there is not some essential connection between the two inequalities, for that would be to ask in different terms if those who command are necessarily better than those who obey, and if the power of the body or the mind, and wisdom or virtue, are always found in the same individuals in proportion to their power or wealth: this is a good question, perhaps, in a debate among slaves within earshot of their masters, but it is not fitting for free men of reason who are engaged in a quest for truth.

What, then, is this discourse about? Its aim is to mark within the progression of things the moment in which rights succeeded violence, and nature was subjected to law; to explain by what sequence of miracles the powerful might resolve to serve the weak and the people purchase an imaginary repose at the price of true happiness.

All the philosophers who have examined the foundations of society have felt compelled to go back to the state of nature, but not one has succeeded. Some have not hesitated to suppose that men living in a natural state had the notion of what was just and unjust, without troubling to show that they must already have had that notion, or even that it would have been useful to them to have it. Others have spoken of a natural right that each individual has to protect what belongs to him, yet without explaining what they understand by *belongs*. Others again, after first granting authority to the more powerful over the weaker, immediately created a government without giving thought to the time that had to

elapse before the words *authority* and *government* could attain meaning among men. Finally, all the philosophers, speaking constantly of need, greed, oppression, desires, and pride, imbued the state of nature with ideas they had found in society. They spoke of savage man but depicted civilized man. It did not even occur to most of our philosophers to doubt that the state of nature once existed, whereas it is evident from the Holy Scriptures that the first man, having instantly received intellect and precepts from God, was himself not in a state of nature at all; and if one gives the writings of Moses the credence that every Christian philosopher owes them, one must say that even before the Deluge men never existed in a pure state of nature, unless they lapsed into it by some extraordinary occurrence; a paradox that is most difficult to defend and altogether impossible to prove.

[…]

FIRST PART

[…]

It would at first seem that men in the state of nature, having no kind of moral relations among themselves or settled duties, were not capable of being good or bad, and had neither vices nor virtues, unless we take those terms in a physical sense and call vices the qualities that can impair the conservation of an individual, and virtues the qualities that can contribute to it; in which case one would have to call the man who least resists the simple impulses of nature the most virtuous. But without straying from the ordinary meaning of the words *vice* and *virtue*, it would behoove us to suspend any judgment we might pass on such a situation and to be wary of our prejudices, until it has been established, scales in hand, whether among civilized men there are more virtues than vices, or if their virtues are more advantageous than their vices are detrimental. One must ask if the progress of civilized men's knowledge is sufficient compensation for the harm they do one another in proportion as they learn of the good they *ought* to be doing to one another; or if they would not on the whole be in a happier state if they had neither evil to fear nor good to anticipate from anyone rather than subject themselves to a universal dependence, obliging themselves to receive everything from those who are not obliged to give them anything.

Above all, let us not conclude with Hobbes that man is naturally evil because he has no idea of goodness, that he is depraved because he does not know virtue, that he always refuses his fellow men services he does not believe he owes them, or that by the right he reasonably claims to things he needs, he foolishly imagines himself the sole proprietor of the universe. Hobbes saw very clearly the flaw of all modern definitions of natural right; but the conclusions he drew from his own definition demonstrate that his perception of natural right was no less false. By reasoning on principles he established, Hobbes should have said that the state of nature, being the state in which the care for our own preservation is least prejudicial to the preservation of others, was consequently the most suitable state for peace and the most appropriate for mankind. The reason that he says precisely the opposite is because he included in savage man's striving for his preservation the need to satisfy a multitude of passions that are the product of society and which have made laws necessary.

[…]

It is therefore certain that pity is a natural feeling that in every individual moderates the activity of love for himself, and consequently contributes to the preservation of the

entire species. It is pity that moves us to aid without reflection those we see suffering; it is pity that in the state of nature takes the place of laws, morals, and virtue, with the advantage that no one is tempted to disobey its gentle voice. It is pity that deters the strong savage from robbing helpless children, or depriving feeble old men of their hard-earned sustenance, if he has the prospect of finding sustenance elsewhere. It is pity and not the sublime maxim of reasoned justice—*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*—that inspires all men with the other maxim of natural goodness, which is less perfect, but perhaps more useful: *Do what is good for you with the least possible harm to others*. It is, in short, within this natural sentiment and not in subtle argument that one must seek the cause for the repugnance that every man would feel doing evil, even independently of the maxims of education. While Socrates and minds of his kind may be able to acquire virtue through reason, mankind would have long ceased to exist if its preservation had depended on men's reasoning.

[…]

Having proven that inequality and its influence are barely manifest in the state of nature, it remains for me to present the origin and progress of inequality within the sequential development of the human mind. Having demonstrated that the *faculty of self-improvement*, the social virtues, and the other faculties bestowed on original man could never have developed of themselves, that they needed the fortuitous convergence of various external causes that might never have come about, and without which man would forever have existed in his primitive condition, it now remains for me to consider and connect the different coincidences that might have improved human reason while impairing the species, rendering a being wicked while rendering him sociable, and ultimately in the distant future to lead man and the world to the point we have now reached.

SECOND PART

The first man who fenced in a plot of land and dared to say, "This is mine," and found people who were sufficiently simple to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how much misery and horror, could have been spared the human race if someone would have pulled out the stakes or filled in the ditch and called out to his fellow men: "Beware! Do not listen to this imposter! You will be lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all, and that the land belongs to no one." But it seems most likely that by this time things had already reached a point of not being able to continue as they were, for the idea of property, depending as it does on many prior ideas that could only have arisen successively, could not have suddenly taken shape in the minds of men. Much progress had to be made, much industry and intellect acquired and transmitted from one era to the next, before that final stage of the state of nature was reached. Let us thus look further back in time and try to gather under a single point of view the slow succession of events and knowledge in their most natural order.

The first feeling of man was that of his existence, his first concern his preservation. The fruits of the earth provided him with all the help he needed; instinct drove him to make use of them. Hunger, as well as other appetites, drove him to experience, one after the other, various ways of existence, one of which compelled him to perpetuate his species. And this blind impulse, devoid of all feeling, gave rise to a purely animal act. This need satisfied, the two sexes no longer recognized one another, and even the child meant nothing to the mother as soon as it could do without her.

Such was the condition of nascent man; such was the life of an animal limited at first to pure sensations and barely profiting from the fruits that nature offered him, let alone thinking of seizing these fruits. But soon difficulties arose, and man had to learn to overcome them. The height of the trees that prevented him from reaching their fruit, the competition from animals seeking to nourish themselves from them, and the ferocity of the animals that imperiled his life, all compelled him to exercise his body. He had to become agile, a fast runner, and vigorous in battle. Soon he had in hand natural weapons, such as branches and stones. He learned to surmount the obstacles of nature, to combat, if need be, other animals, and even to fight for his subsistence with other men, or recompense himself for what he had been forced to yield to those stronger than he.

The more the human species spread, the more the hardships multiplied along with the number of people. The differences of terrain, climate, and season will have forced men to differ in their ways. Barren years, long and harsh winters, scorching summers that consumed everything, demanded new enterprise. Along seacoasts and riverbanks, men invented fishing lines and hooks and became fishermen and fish eaters; in the forests, men made bows and arrows and became hunters and warriors. In cold countries they covered themselves with the skins of animals they had killed. Lightning, volcanoes, or some lucky chance introduced men to fire, a new resource against the rigors of winter. They learned to conserve this element, and then to reproduce it, and finally to cook with it the meats that in the past they had eaten raw.

Man's repeated contact with creatures that were different from him, as well as contact with other men, must have naturally prompted in his mind perceptions of certain relations. The relations we express with the words *large, small, strong, weak, fast, slow, timorous, bold*, and similar concepts, compared to one another when necessary, and almost offhand, ultimately produced in him some kind of reflection, or rather an instinctive prudence that suggested the precautions most necessary for his safety.

[…]

As soon as men began to value one another, and the concept of esteem had formed in their minds, everyone claimed a right to it, and it was no longer possible to deprive anyone of it with impunity. This gave rise, even among savages, to the first duties of civility, and with that every intentional wrong became an insult because the offended individual saw in the harm that resulted from the insult contempt for his person, a contempt that was often harder for him to bear than the harm itself. In this fashion, with each offended individual punishing the contempt shown him in a manner proportional to the regard in which he held himself, the acts of vengeance became terrible, and men bloodthirsty and cruel. This is the stage that most savage peoples we know of had reached. Many of our writers and thinkers, for lack of having sufficiently distinguished among different ideas, and not noting how far these people had already moved from the first stage of nature, have hastened to conclude that man is naturally cruel and needs regulation to make his temperament equable, although there is no temperament more equable than that of man in his primitive state, placed as he is by nature at an equal distance between the stupidity of brutes and the fatal knowledge of civilized man. Constrained by both instinct and reason to protect himself against the harm that threatens him, he is restrained by natural pity from doing harm to others unless he is compelled to do so, even if he has been harmed; for according to Locke's wise axiom, "Where there is no property there is no injury."[1]

[1] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), IV.iii.18. Locke's original reads: "Where there is no property there is no injustice." Rousseau has evidently substituted "injury" for "injustice" because he is imagining an era before legal systems were invented.

But it must be noted that once society had come into being and relations were established among men, these relations required them to have qualities different from those of their primitive constitution. Once morality began to enter human actions, and as before laws were established everyone had been the sole judge and avenger of offenses he had suffered, the quality of goodness that had been valid in the pure state of nature no longer suited nascent society. It must be furthermore noted that it was necessary for punishments to become more severe as the opportunities for transgression became more frequent, and in nascent society the dread of vengeance had to take the place of the restraint of the laws. Thus although men had become less hardy, and natural pity had already undergone change, this period in the development of human faculties, which maintained a golden mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the spirited activity of our *amour propre*, must have been the happiest and most lasting era of man. The more one reflects on it, the more one finds that this state was the least subject to revolution, the best state for man to be in, and that he can have left it only because of some dire turn of fate, which for the common good ought never to have occurred. The example of savage peoples, most of whom have been found at the nascent stage of development, seems to confirm that the human species was made to remain in that state, the true springtime of mankind. All subsequent progress has merely been a supposed progression toward the development of the individual, but in fact has been a progression toward the decline of the species.

As long as men were content with their rough and simple dwellings, limiting themselves to sewing their clothes out of animal skins with thorns or fish bones, and adorning themselves with feathers and shells, painting their bodies in different colors, improving or embellishing their bows and arrows, and using sharpened stones to make a few fishing canoes or some rudimentary musical instruments; in short, as long as men applied themselves only to the kind of labor that a single person could accomplish on his own, and to crafts that did not require the collaboration of several hands, they lived as free, healthy, good, and happy people to the extent their nature allowed, and continued to enjoy the gentleness of independent interaction among themselves. But from the moment one man needed the help of another, as soon as men realized that it was useful for an individual to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, work became necessary, and the vast forests turned into sunny fields that had to be watered with men's sweat, and in which one soon saw slavery and poverty sprouting and growing along with the harvest.

Metallurgy and agriculture were the two skills whose invention led to this great revolution. Poets say it was gold and silver that civilized man and ruined mankind, but philosophy will counter that it was iron and wheat. Both metallurgy and agriculture were unknown to the savages of the Americas, who for this reason have ever remained such. Other peoples seemed to have remained barbarian through practicing one of these skills without the other. The fact that Europe is the place most abundant in iron resources and the most fertile in wheat is one of the best reasons why it was, if not the earliest place to receive civil institutions, then at least the place where the institutions were more sound and constant than anywhere else in the world.

[…]

With the cultivation of the land came inevitably its division, and once property was recognized, the first rules of justice followed, for in order to render to each his own, every individual must be capable of having something. Furthermore, with men beginning to extend their views into the future and envisioning that they all had possessions they could lose, there was no one who did not need to fear reprisals for wrongs he might do to

another. This origin is all the more natural as it is impossible to conceive of nascent property originating from anything other than manual labor. What, besides his own labor, can man use in order to acquire things he has not created? Since it is his labor alone that gives the farmer the right to the product of the earth he has tilled, it also by extension gives him a right—at least until the harvest—to the plot of land, and this goes on from one year to the next. This makes it a continuous occupation of the land, which in this way is easily transformed into property. When the ancients, Grotius says, gave Ceres the title of *legislatrix* and the festival celebrated in her honor the name of Thesmophoria,[1] they indicated by this that the division of the land had produced a new kind of right, that is to say the right to property, which is different from the right that results from natural law.

In this state, equality could have prevailed if men's talents had been equal, and if, for example, the use of iron and the consumption of food had always been in precise balance. But this balance, not being supported by anything, was soon disrupted; the strongest did the greatest amount of work, those who were most skilled worked to best effect, and the most resourceful found ways of reducing their work. The plowman had more need of iron and the smith more need of wheat, though despite their both laboring equally, one earned much while the other could barely survive. That is how natural inequality spread imperceptibly with the inequality of function, and the differences among men resulting from the differences in circumstance became more marked, more permanent in their effects, and began to exercise a corresponding influence on the fate of individuals.

[...]

This is how the most powerful and the most wretched people claimed through their power or their need a kind of right over the property of others, equivalent, according to them, to the right of property. The end of equality was followed by terrible disorder. This is how the usurpations committed by the rich, the robbery committed by the poor, the unbridled passions of everyone that stifled natural pity, and the still weak voice of justice, rendered men greedy, ambitious, and wicked. Between the right of the strongest and the right of the first occupant of land arose a perpetual conflict that inevitably led to fights and murders. Nascent society made way for the most terrible state of war: the human species, debased and ravaged, no longer able to turn back or renounce its miserable acquisitions, and by abuse of the faculties that should do it honor working only toward its shame, brought itself to the brink of ruin.

Attonitus novitate mali divesque miserque effugere optat opes et, quae modo voverat, odit.[2]

It is not possible for men not to have reflected on such a wretched situation or on the calamities that were overwhelming them. The rich, above all, must have soon felt the disadvantage of a perpetual state of civil war for which they alone had to bear the cost, and in which all parties risked their lives, while they alone risked their property. Furthermore, however they might strive to embellish their usurpations, they knew that these were established only on a precarious and abusive right, and as the usurpations had been carried out by force, force could also deprive them of what they had usurped, without their having any recourse for complaint. Even those who had become wealthy through their own industriousness could hardly base their claim to their property on better titles. In vain would they say: "I am the one who built this wall—I have earned the right to this land through my labor." To this one might reply: "Who furnished you the boundaries for

[1] Ceres (from whose name the word "cereal" is derived) was the Roman goddess of agriculture. In Greece, where she was known as Demeter, the Thesmophoria was celebrated in her honor.

[2] "Dismayed by the novelty of the evil, he seeks, wretched in his wealth, to flee his riches, and hates what he had once prayed for" (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XI.127).

that land, and on what do you base your claim to be paid at our expense for labor we did not impose upon you? Do you not know that a countless number of your brethren are suffering or perishing from lack of what you have in excess, and that you would need the unanimous consent of the entire human species for you to be allowed to appropriate from the common property anything that extends beyond your own?" The wealthy man, lacking valid reasons to justify himself and sufficient power to defend himself, might easily crush an individual, but would himself be crushed by groups of bandits. Thus, alone against all and unable because of mutual jealousies to unite with his equals against enemies united by the common hope of plunder, the rich man finally by necessity concocted the most well-thought-out scheme that ever entered man's mind: he used the power of his attackers to his advantage by turning them into his defenders, goading them on with new maxims and institutions that were as favorable to him as natural right was contrary.

To this end, he portrayed to his fellow men the horrors of a situation that was pitching them all against one another, and making their possessions as burdensome to them as their privations, and in which no one found safety—not in poverty nor in wealth—and he easily invented fallacious reasons that enticed them into furthering his designs. "Let us unite," he told them, "so that we can protect the weak from oppression, keep the ambitious in check, and secure for each man the possessions that belong to him. Let us institute rules for justice to which all will be obliged to conform, rules that will not make exceptions for anyone and that will strive to make up for the caprices of fortune by subjecting the powerful and the weak equally to mutual duties. In short, instead of turning our power against one another, let us gather it into a supreme power, which will rule us according to wise laws that will protect and defend all the members of our association, repelling common enemies, and keeping us in eternal peace and harmony."

Much less than the equivalent of such an argument was needed to fire up rough and primitive men, who were easy to seduce and had too many disputes to settle among themselves to be able to prevail without arbiters, and too much greed and ambition to endure for long without masters. They all hastened toward their chains in the belief that they were securing their freedom, for although they had enough reason to sense the advantages of a political establishment, they did not have enough experience to predict its dangers. The individuals most capable of foreseeing the abuses were those who counted on profiting from them, and even the wise saw that they had to resolve to sacrifice one part of their freedom in order to preserve the other, much in the way an injured man will have his arm cut off in order to save the rest of his body.

Such was or must have been the origin of society and of laws, the weak gaining new fetters and the wealthy new power. Natural liberty was irreversibly destroyed, and the law of property and of inequality established forevermore. Cunning usurpation now became an irrevocable right; for the profit of a few ambitious men the entire human race was subjected to labor, slavery, and poverty. One can easily see how the establishment of a simple society rendered indispensable the establishment of all other societies, and how people, in order to prevail against a united force, had no other recourse except to unite. Societies multiplied and expanded rapidly, before long covering the whole surface of the earth; soon it was no longer possible to find a single corner of the world where one might free oneself of the yoke and withdraw one's head from beneath the sword, often waved precariously, that every man saw perpetually hanging over his head.

[…]

Such is, in fact, the true cause of all these differences: the savage lives within himself, whereas civilized man always lives outside himself and knows only how to live in the

opinion of others, deriving, so to speak, from their judgment alone a sense of his own existence. It is not my subject here to show how such a disposition brings about so much indifference to good and evil, with so much fine discourse on morality, nor how everything is reduced to appearances, turning into artifice and pretense honor, friendship, virtue, and often vice itself in which one ultimately learns the secret of glorifying oneself; how, in short, in that we always are asking others what we are, we never dare ask that question of ourselves. In the midst of so much philosophy, humanity, and politeness, so many sublime maxims, we are left only with a deceitful and frivolous façade, honor without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without happiness. I think it sufficient to have proven that this is not the original state of man, and that it is only society's growing sophistication and the inequality that society engenders that have changed and debased all our natural inclinations.

I have endeavored to lay out the origin and progress of inequality, the establishing and abuse of political societies, as far as such things can be deduced from the nature of man by intellect and reason, and independently of the sacred dogmas that give sovereign authority the sanction of divine right. It follows from my exposition that inequality is almost nonexistent in the state of nature, and that it derives its power and growth from the development of our faculties and the advance of the human mind, ultimately becoming permanent and legitimate through the establishment of property and laws. It also follows that moral inequality, authorized by positive law alone, is contrary to natural right whenever it is not in equal proportion with physical inequality. This distinction sufficiently determines what one should think of the kind of inequality prevailing among all civilized peoples, since it is manifestly against the law of nature, regardless of how one seeks to define it, that an infant should command an old man, an imbecile lead a sage, or a handful of men should exult in superfluities while the famished multitude lacks the bare necessities.

ON THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, OR, PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL RIGHT (1762)

Ch. VI & VII // Translated from French by Peter Constantine, 2013

CHAPTER VI: ON THE SOCIAL PACT

I propose that mankind reached a point at which the obstacles that hinder self-preservation in the state of nature became greater than the strength that each individual could employ to maintain himself in that state. At that point the primitive state could no longer prevail, and the human race would have perished had it not changed its way of life.

Yet as men cannot generate new strength but only unite and direct the strength they already have, their only means of preserving themselves is to form by aggregation a sum of forces that are enough to overcome the obstacles, and activate these forces by means of a single impetus, causing them to act in unison.

This sum of forces can arise only through a number of individuals coming together. But since strength and every man's liberty are the primary instruments of his self-preservation, how can he engage these without harming himself and neglecting the obligations he owes to himself? In relation to my subject, this difficulty can be summed up in the following terms: "How does one find a form of association that will defend and protect, through the entirety of its common force, the person and belongings of every associated member, while every individual, in uniting with everyone else, will still be answerable only to himself and remain as free as before?" Such is the fundamental problem to which the social contract provides the solution.

The clauses of this contract are so determined by the nature of the act that the slightest modification would render them futile and entirely ineffective; so that although these clauses have perhaps never been formally stated, they are everywhere the same, everywhere tacitly recognized and accepted, until, should the social pact be violated, everyone returns to his initial rights and resumes his natural liberty, losing the collective liberty for which he had relinquished it.

These clauses, if properly understood, can all be reduced to a single one: that each associate give himself absolutely, together with all his rights, to the entire community; for in the first place, when everyone gives himself entirely, the conditions are equal for all, and, the conditions being equal for all, it is in no one's interest to make them difficult for others.

Furthermore, each associate's giving himself being accomplished without reservation, the union is as perfect as it can be, and no associate has anything more to demand: for if individuals retain some rights, there being no common superior who can adjudicate between them and the public, everyone would be his own judge on a specific issue and would soon claim to be his own judge in all matters. The state of nature would continue, and the association would necessarily become either tyrannical or futile.

Finally, if each individual gives himself to all, he is giving himself to nobody; and as there is no associate over whom one does not acquire the same rights that one cedes to him, there is an equivalent gain for everything lost, and more power to preserve what one has.

Therefore, if one discards from the social pact everything that is not essential to it, one finds that it can be reduced to the following terms: "Each of us places his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and we receive into our association each member as an indivisible part of the whole."

This act of association immediately produces a moral and collective body that replaces the separate contracting individuals, a body composed of as many members as the assembly has votes, and which receives through this same act its unity, its common *self*, its life, and its will. This *public entity*, thus formed by the union of all the individual persons, formerly bore the name of *city* and has now assumed the name *republic* or *body politic*, which its members call *state* when it is passive, *sovereign* when it is active, and *power* when it is compared to others like itself. As for the associate members, they collectively assume the name *people* and call themselves individually *citizens*, as participants of the sovereign authority, and *subjects*, being subjected to the laws of the state. But these terms are often confused and mistaken for one another. It is enough to know how to distinguish them when they are used most precisely.

CHAPTER VII: ON THE SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY

It is clear from the formula I have proposed that the act of association encompasses a reciprocal engagement between the public and the individual, and that each individual, in making a contract with himself, so to speak, is engaged in a double relationship: as a member of the sovereign authority toward individuals, and as a member of the state toward the sovereign authority. But here we cannot apply the principle of civil right that no one is bound by obligations he enters with himself, since there is quite a difference between obliging oneself toward oneself and obliging oneself toward a whole of which one is a part.

It should also be noted that the public deliberation that can obligate all the subjects to the sovereign authority, owing to the two different kinds of relationship in which they are involved, cannot, for the opposite reason, obligate the sovereign authority toward itself, and that it is therefore against the nature of the body politic for the sovereign authority to impose on itself a law it cannot infringe. As the sovereign authority cannot regard itself as having the same relation with itself, it consequently finds itself in the same situation as an individual who enters a contract with himself; which demonstrates that there neither is nor can there be any kind of fundamental law that is obligatory for the body of the people, not even the social contract. This does not mean that the body politic cannot perfectly well enter into dealings with others in whatever does not infringe the contract; for with regard to outsiders, the body politic becomes a simple being, an individual.

But the body politic or the sovereign authority, drawing its existence exclusively from the sanctity of the contract, can never obligate itself, even to others, in any way that detracts from the original act, such as to transfer any part of itself or submit itself to another sovereign authority. Violation of the act by which it exists would be for it to annihilate itself; and that which is nothing produces nothing.

As soon as the multitude is thus united in one body, it is impossible to harm one of its members without attacking the body, and even less to harm the body without the members feeling the effect. Thus duty and interest both equally obligate the two contracting parties to offer each other mutual assistance, and the same individuals must seek to combine in this double relationship all the advantages that depend on it.

The sovereign authority, then, being formed entirely of the individuals who compose it, neither has nor can have any interest contrary to theirs. Consequently, the sovereign power need make no guarantee toward its subjects, because it is impossible for the body to want to harm all its members, and we will also see later that it cannot harm any one of

them in particular. The sovereign authority, by the mere fact that it exists, is always that which it ought to be.[1]

But this is not the case when it comes to the relation of the subjects to the sovereign authority, which, despite a common interest, has no guarantee that the subjects will fulfill their obligations to it if it does not find means to ensure their fidelity.

Indeed, each individual, as a man, can have an individual will that is contrary to or different from the general will he has as a citizen. His individual interest can strike him as quite different from the common interest: his existence, being absolute and naturally independent, can lead him to look upon what he owes to the common cause as an unnecessary contribution, the absence of which would be less harmful to others than the payment would be onerous to him; and as for the moral person[2] that the state constitutes as a reasoning being: because it is not a man, it would enjoy the rights of a citizen without being prepared to fulfill the duties of a subject, an injustice whose progress would lead to the ruin of the body politic.

So that this social pact will not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes this obligation, which alone can give power to the others, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing other than that he will be forced to be free.[3] For that is the condition which, by giving every citizen to his state, protects him from all personal dependency. This condition makes up the artifice and skill of the political machine, and alone renders legitimate the civil obligations that without it would be absurd, tyrannical, and subject to the greatest abuse.

[1] I.e., the "sovereign" is composed of all citizens, acting collectively; they may make mistakes, but they cannot cease to be the sovereign.

[2] I.e., the state is not an impersonal entity; as the embodiment of the common will, it acts as a collective person with moral responsibilities.

[3] This sentence became the most notorious one in the entire book. What Rousseau has in mind is not tyrannical coercion but rather an acknowledgment of the shared commitment that locates freedom in citizen participation rather than resistance. (He also believes that someone unable to conform to the will of the whole should be free to emigrate to someplace else.)

Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804 CE) was a German philosopher. As the founder of *critical philosophy*, his idea was that the task of philosophy was not to establish new theories about reality, but rather to evaluate the conditions of possibilities of any knowledge.

Positioning himself at the crossroads of Rationalism and Empiricism, he tried to synthetize those currents and move beyond the failures of both. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, published in 1781, he conceived of a system that articulated the opinions of his predecessors, while at the same time showing the limits of human reason. For Kant, we cannot know things as they really are, but only things as they present themselves to us (as *phenomena*).

The extract below is taken from his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, published in 1785. Morals were of great interest to Kant who tried to invent a system combining reason and social behaviour. The result was the notion of *categorical imperative*: if humans were to use their reason soundly, they would meet with the necessity to act according to it, and they would see in this necessity the only real freedom that humans can assert for themselves. Although this use of "reason", which harked back to the Enlightenment, would be short-lived, Kant's moral philosophy would prove very influential in the spheres of politics and the philosophy of law.

GROUNDING FOR THE METAPHYSICS OF MORALS (1785)

Good Will and the Categorical Imperative

Extracts // Translated from German by Mary Gregor, 1998

Section I

It is impossible to think of anything at all in the world, or indeed even beyond it, that could be considered good without limitation except a **good will.** Understanding, wit, judgment and the like, whatever such *talents* of mind may be called, or courage, resolution, and perseverance in one's plans, as qualities of *temperament,* are undoubtedly good and desirable for many purposes, but they can also be extremely evil and harmful if the will which is to make use of these gifts of nature, and whose distinctive constitution is therefore called *character,* is not good. It is the same with *gifts of fortune.* Power, riches, honor, even health and that complete wellbeing and satisfaction with one's condition called *happiness,* produce boldness and thereby often arrogance as well unless a good will is present which corrects the influence of these on the mind and, in so doing, also corrects the whole principle of action and brings it into conformity with universal ends - not to mention that an impartial rational spectator can take no delight in seeing the uninterrupted prosperity of a being graced with no feature of a pure and good will, so that a good will seems to constitute the indispensable condition even of worthiness to be happy. [...]

A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes, because of its fitness to attain some proposed end, but only because of its volition, that is, it is good in itself and, regarded for itself, is to be valued incomparably higher than all that could merely be brought about by it in favor of some inclination and indeed, if you will, of the sum of all inclinations. [...]

But what kind of law can that be, the representation of which must determine the will, even without regard for the effect expected from it, in order for the will to be called good absolutely and without limitation? Since I have deprived the will of every impulse that could arise for it from obeying some law, nothing is left but the conformity of actions as such with universal law, which alone is to serve the will as its principle, that is, *I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law.* Here mere conformity to law as such, without having as its basis some law determined for certain actions, is what serves the will as its principle, and must so serve it, if duty is not to be everywhere an empty delusion and a chimerical concept. Common human reason also agrees completely with this in its practical appraisals and always has this principle before its eyes. Let the question be, for example: may I, when hard pressed, make a promise with the intention not to keep it? Here I easily distinguish two significations the question can have: whether it is prudent or whether it is in conformity with duty to make a false promise. The first can undoubtedly often be the case. I see very well that it is not enough to get out of a present difficulty by means of this subterfuge but that I must reflect carefully whether this lie may later give rise to much greater inconvenience for me than that from which I now extricate myself; and since, with all my supposed *cunning,* the results cannot be so easily foreseen but that once confidence in me is lost this could be far more prejudicial to me than all the troubles" I now think to avoid, I must reflect whether the matter might be handled *more prudently* by proceeding on a general maxim and making 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 be based only on results feared. To be truthful from duty, however, is something entirely different from being truthful from anxiety about detrimental results, since in the first case the concept of the action in itself already contains a law for me while in the second I must first look about elsewhere to see what effects on me might be combined with it. For, if I deviate from the principle of duty this is quite certainly evil; but if I am unfaithful to my maxim of prudence this can sometimes be very advantageous to me, although it is certainly safer to abide by it. However, to inform myself in the shortest and yet infallible way about the answer to this problem, whether a lying promise is in conformity with duty, I ask myself: would I indeed be content that my maxim (to get myself out of difficulties by a false promise) should hold as a universal law (for myself as well as for others)? and could I indeed say to myself that every one may make a false promise when he finds himself in a difficulty he can get out of in no other way? Then I soon become aware that I could indeed will the lie, but by no means a universal law to lie; for in accordance with such a law there would properly be no promises at all, since it would be futile to avow my will with regard to my future actions to others who would not believe this avowal or, if they rashly did so, would pay me back in like coin; and thus my maxim, as soon as it were made a universal law, would have to destroy itself.

I do not, therefore, need any penetrating acuteness to see what I have to do in order that my volition be morally good. Inexperienced in the course of the world, incapable of being prepared for whatever might come to pass in it, I ask myself only: can you also will that your maxim become a universal law? If not, then it is to be repudiated, and that not because of a disadvantage to you or even to others forthcoming from it but because it cannot fit as a principle into a possible giving of universal law, for which lawgiving reason, however, forces from me immediate respect. Although I do not yet *see* what this respect is based upon (this the philosopher may investigate), I at least understand this much: that it is an estimation of a worth that far outweighs any worth of what is recommended by inclination, and that the necessity of my action from *pure* respect for the practical law is what constitutes duty, to which every other motive must give way because it is the condition of a will good *in itself,* the worth of which surpasses all else. […]

Section II

[…] Now, all imperatives command either *hypothetically* or *categorically.* The former represent the practical necessity of a possible action as a means to achieving something else that one wills (or that it is at least possible for one to will). The categorical imperative would be that which represented an action as objectively necessary of itself, without reference to another end.

Since every practical law represents a possible action as good and thus as necessary for a subject practically determinable by reason, all imperatives are formulae for the determination of action that is necessary in accordance with the principle of a will which is good in some way. Now, if the action would be good merely as a means *to something else* the imperative is *hypothetical;* if the action is represented as *in itself good,* hence as necessary in a will in itself conforming to reason, as its principle, *then it is categorical*.

[…] Now I say that the human being and in general every rational being *exists* as an end in itself, *not merely as a means* to be used by this or that will at its discretion; instead he must in all his actions, whether directed to himself or also to other rational beings, always be regarded *at the same time as an end.* All objects of the inclinations have only a conditional worth; for, if there were not inclinations and the needs based on them, their object would be without worth. But the inclinations themselves, as sources of needs, are so far from having an absolute worth, so as to make one wish to have them/ that it must instead be the universal wish of every rational being to be altogether free from them. Thus the worth of any object *to be acquired by* our action is always conditional. Beings the existence of which rests not on our will but on nature, if they are beings without reason, still have only a relative worth, as means, and are therefore called *things,* whereas rational beings are called *persons* because their nature already marks them out as an end in itself, that is, as something that may not be used merely as a means, and hence so far limits all choice (and is an object of respect). These, therefore, are not merely subjective ends, the existence of which as an effect of our action has a worth *for us,* but rather *objective ends,* that is, beings the existence of which is in itself an end, and indeed one such that no other end, to which they would serve *merely* as means, can be put in its place, since without it nothing of *absolute worth* would be found anywhere; but if all worth were conditional and therefore contingent, then no supreme practical principle for reason could be found anywhere.

If, then, there is to be a supreme practical principle and, with respect to the human will, a categorical imperative, it must be one such that, from the representation of what is necessarily an end for everyone because it is an *end in itself,* it constitutes an *objective* principle of the will and thus can serve as a universal practical law. The ground of this principle is: *rational nature exists as an end in itself*. The human being necessarily represents his own existence in this way; so far it is thus a *subjective* principle of human actions. But every other rational being also represents his existence in this way consequent on just the same rational ground that also holds for me; thus it is at the same time an *objective* principle from which, as a supreme practical ground, it must be possible to derive all laws of the will. The practical imperative will therefore be the following: *So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means.* We shall see whether this can be carried out. […]

This principle of humanity, and in general of every rational nature, *as an end in itself (which* is the supreme limiting condition of the freedom of action of every human being) is not borrowed from experience; first because of its universality, since it applies to all

rational beings as such and no experience is sufficient to determine anything about them; second because in it humanity is represented not as an end of human beings (subjectively), that is, not as an object that we of ourselves actually make our end, but as an objective end that, whatever ends we may have, ought as law to constitute the supreme limiting condition of all subjective ends, so that the principle must arise from pure reason. That is to say, the ground of all practical lawgiving lies (in accordance with the first principle) *objectively in the rule* and the form of universality which makes it fit to be a law (possibly a law of nature); *subjectively,* however, it lies in the *end;* but the subject of all ends is every rational being as an end in itself (in accordance with the second principle); from this there follows now the third practical principle of the will, as supreme condition of its harmony with universal practical reason, the idea *of the will of every rational being as a mill giving universal law.*

In accordance with this principle all maxims are repudiated that are inconsistent with the will's own giving of universal law. Hence the will is not merely subject to the law but subject to it in such a way that it must be viewed as also giving the law to itself and just because of this as first subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as the author).

Imperatives as they were represented above - namely in terms of the conformity of actions with universal law similar to a *natural order* or of the universal *supremacy as ends* of rational beings in themselves - did exclude from their commanding authority any admixture of interest as incentive, just by their having been represented as categorical; but they were only *assumed* to be categorical because we had to make such an assumption if we wanted to explain the concept of duty. But that there are practical propositions which command categorically could not itself be proved, any more than it could be proved either here or anywhere else in this section; one thing, however, could still have been done: namely, to indicate in the imperative itself the renunciation of all interest, in volition from duty, by means of some determination the imperative contains, as the specific mark distinguishing categorical from hypothetical imperatives; and this is done in the present third formula of the principle, namely the idea of the will of every rational being as a *will giving universal law.*

For when we think of a will of this kind, then although a will that *stands under law* may be bound to this law by means of some interest, a will that is itself the supreme lawgiver cannot possibly, as such, depend upon some interest; for, a will that is dependent in this way would itself need yet another law that would limit the interest of its self-love to the condition of a validity for universal law.

Thus the *principle* of every human will as *a will giving universal law through all its maxims* provided it is otherwise correct, would be very *well suited* to be the categorical imperative by this: that just because of the idea of giving universal law *it is based on no interest* and therefore, among all possible imperatives, can alone be *unconditional;* or still better, by converting the proposition, if there is a categorical imperative (i.e., a law for every will of a rational being) it can only command that everything be done from the maxim of one's will as a will that could at the same time have as its object itself as giving universal law; for only then is the practical principle, and the imperative that the will obeys, unconditional, since it can have no interest as its basis.

If we look back upon all previous efforts that have ever been made to discover the principle of morality, we need not wonder now why all of them had to fail. It was seen that the human being is bound to laws by his duty, but it never occurred to them that he is subject *only to laws given by himself but still universal* and that he is bound only to act in conformity with his own will, which, however, in accordance with nature's end is a will

giving universal law. For, if one thought of him only as subject to a law (whatever it may be), this law had to carry with it some interest by way of attraction or constraint, since it did not as a law arise from *his* will; in order to conform with the law, his will had instead to be constrained by *something else* to act in a certain way/ By this quite necessary consequence, however, all the labor to find a supreme ground of duty was irretrievably lost. For, one never arrived at duty but instead at the necessity of an action from a certain interest. This might be one's own or another's interest. But then the imperative had to turn out always conditional and could not be fit for a moral command. I will therefore call this basic principle the principle of the **autonomy** of the will in contrast with every other, which I accordingly count as **heteronomy.**

The concept of every rational being as one who must regard himself as giving universal law through all the maxims of his will, so as to appraise himself and his actions from this point of view, leads to a very fruitful concept dependent upon it, namely that *of a kingdom*[1] *of ends.*

By a *kingdom* I understand a systematic union of various rational beings through common laws. Now since laws determine ends in terms of their universal validity, if we abstract from the personal differences of rational beings as well as from all the content of their private ends we shall be able to think of a whole of all ends in systematic connection (a whole both of rational beings as ends in themselves and of the ends of his own that each may set himself), that is, a kingdom of ends, which is possible in accordance with the above principles.

For, all rational beings stand under the *law* that each of them is to treat himself and all others *never merely as means* but always *at the same time as ends in themselves.* But from this there arises a systematic union of rational beings through common objective laws, that is, a kingdom, which can be called a kingdom of ends (admittedly only an ideal) because what these laws have as their purpose is just the relation of these beings to one another as ends and means.

A rational being belongs as a *member* to the kingdom of ends when he gives universal laws in it but is also himself subject to these laws. He belongs to it *as sovereign11* when, as lawgiving, he is not subject to the will of any other.

[...]

[1] *Reich,* which could also be translated "commonwealth".

Arthur Schopenhauer

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860 CE) was a German philosopher, who developed an atheistic philosophy by merging Kant's influence with elements of Buddhism and Hinduism.

He took from them the notion that phenomena are but illusions, on the model of the *veil of māyā*, hiding the true nature of what exists. Schopenhauer then interpreted the phenomena as manifestations of a blind and insatiable fundamental *will*. It was a pessimistic stance, since in his view there was no way to escape this fundamental reality of the will, which pushes every individual being to always wish for more, causing pain and suffering.

In his major opus, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, first published in 1818 and expanded in 1844 and 1859, Schopenhauer gave a key to human freedom in this realm of illusion. From the cognition of the unity of everything, we can finally see through the veil and understand that when we hurt somebody, we actually hurt ourselves. While egoists are definitely trapped in the fabric of appearances, good people carrying out self-love and compassion are freed.

When it was first published, Schopenhauer's work was met with almost complete silence (with the notable exception of Goethe, who devoured the book). The reason for this was probably the success of another line of philosophers, that of Hegel, whom Schopenhauer deeply despised. It was only after 1848 and the violent repression of the German revolutions by the conservative aristocracy, that the *Zeitgeist* seemed ready for the pessimist's philosophy.

THE WORLD AS WILL AND REPRESENTATION (1818-1859)

Metaphysics of the Will

Extract from Vol. 1, Book 1 // Translated from German by Judith Norman et al., 2010

§18

What I am searching for, the meaning of the world that confronts me as a mere representation, and the transition from this world as mere representation of the cognizing subject to whatever it may be besides, could indeed never be discovered if the enquirer were himself nothing more than a pure subject of cognition (a winged cherub's head without a body). But he is rooted in this world and finds himself in it as an *individual*, i.e. his cognition, which upholds and conditions the entire world as representation, is nonetheless completely mediated through a body whose affections, as we have shown, are the starting point for the understanding as it intuits this world. To the pure subject of cognition as such, this body is a representation like any other, an object among objects: to this extent, the subject is familiar with its movements and its actions [*Aktionen*] in the same way he is familiar with the alterations that take place in other objects of intuition; and these movements would be just as foreign and incomprehensible as these other objects if their meaning were not unriddled in an entirely different way. Otherwise the pure subject of cognition would see his own actions [*Handeln*] as following from motives presented to him with the constancy of a natural law, just like the alterations that occur in other objects due to causes, stimuli and motives. But he would not understand the motives' influence any more intimately than he would understand the connection between any other effect and its cause. He would have no understanding of the inner essence of his body's actions

[*Handlungen*] and expressions; he would refer to this essence variously as a force, a quality, or a character, but he would have no more insight than this. But none of this is the case: rather the subject of cognition, appearing as an individual, is given the solution to the riddle: and this solution is *will*. This and this alone gives him the key to his own appearance, reveals to him the meaning and shows him the inner workings of his essence, his deeds, his movements. The body is given in two entirely different ways to the subject of cognition, who emerges as an individual only through his identity with it: in the first place it is given as a representation in intuition by the understanding, as an object among objects and liable to the same laws; but at the same time the body is also given in an entirely different way, namely as something immediately familiar to everyone, something designated by the word *will*. Every true act of his will [*Akt seines Willens*] is immediately and inevitably a movement of his body as well: he cannot truly will an act without simultaneously perceiving it as a motion of the body. An act of the will and an act of the body are not two different states cognized objectively, linked together in a causal chain, they do not stand in a relation of cause and effect; they are one and the same thing, only given in two entirely different ways: in one case immediately and in the other case to the understanding in intuition. An action of the body [*Aktion des Leibes*] is nothing but an objectified act of will, i.e. an act of will that has entered intuition. Furthermore, we will see that this is true of all bodily motion, not just motivated action, but even involuntary acts in response to simple stimuli; indeed, that the entire body is nothing but objectified will, i.e. will that has become representation; all of which will be clarified in the discussion to come. That is why I will now call the body the *objecthood of the will* [*Objektität des Willens*], although in the previous Book and in the essay *On the Principle of Sufficient Reason* I called it the *immediate object*, in keeping with the intentionally one-sided standpoint I adopted there (that of representation). And thus we can also say, in a sense: the will is *a priori* cognition of the body, and the body is *a posteriori* cognition of the will. – Resolutions of the will concerning events in the future are really just rational deliberations over things that will be willed later, they are not true acts of will: a decision is stamped only in the execution, and until that time it remains an unsettled design and exists only in reason, abstractly [*in abstracto*]. Willing and doing are different only for reflection: in actuality they are one. Every true, genuine and immediate act of will is instantly and immediately also the appearance of an act of the body: correspondingly, any effect on the body is instantly and immediately an effect on the will as well: it is called pain when it is contrary to the will; and it is called comfort or pleasure when it is in accordance with the will. The gradations of the two are very different. But it is quite wrong to call pain [*Schmerz*] and pleasure representations: they are nothing of the sort, but rather immediate affections of the will in its appearance, the body: a forced, momentary willing or not-willing of the impression the body is undergoing.

§65

[…] However densely the mind of someone evil is enveloped in the veil of *māyā*, i.e. however firmly he is caught in the *principium individuationis*, seeing his own person as utterly distinct and separated from everyone else by a wide gulf (cognition that he firmly embraces, because it is the only viewpoint that will serve and support his egoism, since this cognition is almost always corrupted by the will) – nevertheless, a secret presentiment arises in the innermost part of his consciousness, a presentiment that this order of things is merely appearance, and that, in itself, it is completely different. It makes him suspect that, to whatever extent time and space might present him as completely distinct from other individuals and divide him from these others and the countless miseries they suffer, indeed that he causes them to suffer, and present these as entirely foreign to him, nonetheless, in himself and apart from representation and the forms of representation, it is one will to life that appears in them all, and which here, failing to recognize itself, turns its weapons against itself; through the very act of trying to increase the well-being of one of its appearances, this will imposes the greatest sufferings on another. The evil person suspects that he is this very will in its entirety, and is thus not only the tormenter but the tormented as well, and that it is only a delusional dream, whose form is space and time, that separates him and keeps him free from the other's suffering; but the dream vanishes and in reality he must pay for pleasure with misery, and all the suffering that he considered only as a possibility, in fact concerns *him*, as the will to life, since possibility and actuality, proximity and distance in time and space differ from each other only from the perspective of the cognition of the individual, only by means of the *principium individuationis*, not in themselves. It is this truth that is expressed mythologically – i.e. in conformity with the principle of sufficient reason and translated into the form of appearance – as transmigration of the soul: but it has its purest and most unadulterated expression in precisely that obscurely felt but inconsolable misery that is called anguish of conscience [*Gewissenangst*]. – This, however, arises from a *second* immediate recognition as well, which is intimately connected to that first, namely recognition of the strength with which the will to life affirms itself in the evil individual, a strength that goes far beyond his individual appearance to the point of completely negating the same will as it appears in another individual. The inner horror that the evildoer experiences following his own deed, a horror that he tries to conceal even from himself, contains, along with that presentiment of the nothingness [*Nichtigkeit*] and merely illusory nature of the *principium individuationis* and the distinction it posits between himself and others, the recognition of the intensity of his own will, of the violence with which he has grasped life and attached himself to it, this very life whose terrible aspect he has seen before him, through the agony of those he has oppressed, and with which he is nonetheless so closely entwined that he has himself given rise to its greatest terrors as a means to the more complete affirmation of his own will. He recognizes himself to be the concentrated appearance of the will to life, feels the extent to which he has been cast into life and the countless sufferings that are essential to it, since life has infinite time and infinite space in which to annul the distinction between possibility and actuality and to transform all the miseries that he now merely *recognizes* into miseries that he can actually *feel*. The millions of years of constant rebirth exist only in theory, just as the whole past and future are only notional: only the present fills time and is the form of the appearance of the will, and time is always new for the individual: it always finds itself

newly created. This is because life is inseparable from the will to life, and its form is only the now. Death (you will excuse the repetition of the simile) is like the setting of the sun that only seems to be devoured by night, but in truth, as the source of all light, burns without pause, bringing new days to new worlds, forever rising and forever setting. Beginnings and endings concern only the individual, through the medium of time, the form of this appearance for representation. Only the will lies outside of time, Kant's thing in itself, and its adequate objecthood, Plato's Idea. This is why suicide is not a solution: what each person *wills* in his innermost being, that is what he must *be*: and what he *is*, that is what he *wills*. – But, besides the merely felt cognition of the illusoriness and the nothingness of the forms of representation that separate individuals, there is the self-cognition of one's own will itself and its degrees, and this gives pangs to conscience. The course of life elaborates the image of the empirical character whose original is the intelligible character, and the evil person is shocked by this image; it is all the same whether it is brought out in large features, so that the world shares his horror, or in small ones, that he alone can see, because he is the only one it directly concerns. The past, being mere appearance, would be indifferent and could not disturb anyone's conscience if the character did not feel itself to be free from all time and unchangeable by time, as long as it does not negate itself. That is why events from the distant past still weigh heavily on the conscience. The prayer: 'lead me not into temptation' means 'do not let me see who I am'. – In the violence with which the evil person affirms life, a violence that presents itself to him in the suffering he imposes on others, he estimates how far he is from abandoning and negating that very will, which is the only possible redemption from the world and its miseries. He sees the extent to which he belongs to the world, and how tightly he is bound up with it: his *recognition* of the sufferings of others was not able to move him: he is cast into life and the *feeling* of suffering. It is an open question whether this suffering will ever break and overcome the violence of his will.

This explanation of the meaning and inner essence of *evil*, which, as a mere feeling, i.e. *not* as clear and abstract cognition, forms the content of the *anguish of conscience*, will become clearer and more complete from an investigation of the *good*, provided that the investigation is carried out in precisely the same way, viewing it as a characteristic of the human will, and finally investigating the complete resignation and holiness that comes from goodness once it attains its highest degree. Opposites always shed light on each other and the day reveals both itself and the night, as Spinoza wisely remarked.

§66

A morality without grounding, which is to say mere moralizing, can never be effective, because it does not motivate. But a morality that *does* motivate can do so only by influencing self-love. And what results from this has no moral value. It follows from this that true virtue cannot arise from morality or abstract cognition in general, but must come from intuitive cognition that recognizes in another individual the same essence as in its own. Virtue does indeed come from cognition, but not from abstract cognition that can be communicated through words. If it did, then it could be taught, and the abstract explanation we are giving here of the essence of virtue and the cognition that grounds it would improve the ethics of anyone who understands us. But this is by no means the case. Ethical lectures and sermons are as little capable of producing a virtuous person as aesthetics, from Aristotle's onward, has ever made a poet. Concepts are barren when it comes to the true and inner nature of virtue, just as they are for art, and can only be used in an absolutely subordinate way, as tools for elaborating and safeguarding things that we

already know and have resolved upon. *Velle non discitur* [*willing cannot be taught*: Seneca, Epistles 81, 13]. […]

But of course dogmas can have a powerful influence on *action*, on external deeds, just as customs and examples can (the latter because the ordinary human being is aware of the weaknesses in his judgement and does not trust it, but instead only follows his own or other people's experience). But none of this alters anyone's disposition. Abstract cognition only ever gives motives and, as we showed above, motives can only alter the direction of the will, not the will itself. But any cognition that can be communicated can act on the will only as a motive: so however much the will is guided by dogmas, what the person really wills overall remains the same. The person has simply received different ideas concerning the means for achieving it, and imaginary motives direct him just like actual ones. Thus, for instance, with respect to his ethical worth, it is all the same whether he gives large presents to people in need, firmly convinced that he will be repaid tenfold in a future life, or if he uses the same sum to improve an estate that will carry interest – later, of course, but all the more securely and substantially. And someone who delivers a heretic to the flames for the sake of orthodoxy is just as much a murderer as a bandit who kills for a reward; and in fact, according to inner circumstances, he is just as much a murderer as someone who massacres Turks in the Promised Land, if he also really does it because he thinks it will earn him a place in heaven. These are people who only care about themselves, about their egoism, just like the bandit, and they differ from the bandit only in the absurdity of their methods. – As I have already said, only motives can affect the will from the outside, and these alter only the way it expresses itself, never the will itself. *Velle non discitur*.

When someone appeals to dogmas in doing good deeds, we must distinguish whether these dogmas are the true motives or whether, as I said above, they are nothing more than an ostensible account that the person uses to try to satisfy his own reason concerning a deed that emanates from a completely different source. He does the deed because he is *good*, but does not know how to explain it properly because he is no philosopher; still, he would like to have something to think. But the difference is very difficult to discover, because it lies at the depths of his soul. Thus we can almost never morally judge other people's deeds properly, and very seldom our own. […]

Thus, a truly good disposition, disinterested [*uneigennützige*] virtue, and nobility of mind do not begin with abstract cognition, but do nonetheless begin with cognition – namely, an immediate and intuitive cognition that cannot be reasoned for or reasoned away, a cognition that cannot be communicated precisely because it is not abstract. This cognition must come from each person, and thus is not truly and adequately expressed in words, but only in deeds, in actions, in the course of a person's life. We, who are looking to virtue for a theory and must express abstractly the essence of the cognition that grounds it, we, nonetheless, will not be able to provide the cognition itself in this expression, but rather only the concept of it. We always begin with action, which is the only way this cognition becomes visible, and we refer to action as its only adequate expression, which we now interpret and analyse, i.e. we describe in abstract terms what really takes place in it. […]

Such a person is as little capable of letting other people starve while he himself has enough to spare as anyone would be of going without food one day so that the next day they could have more than they could enjoy. The veil of *māyā* has become transparent for this person, who is practised in works of love, and the delusion of the *principium individuationis* has deserted him. He recognizes himself, his will, in every being, and so in suffering beings as well. He is free of the perversity with which the will to life, failing to recognize itself, enjoys deceptive and fleeting pleasures in the one individual here, by

suffering and starving in *another* one there, causing misery and enduring misery and not realizing that, like Thyestes, it is greedily consuming its own flesh. So it laments the undeserved suffering at one point and it commits outrages without fear of Nemesis at another, always and always only because it fails to recognize itself in the other appearance. Trapped in the *principium individuationis*, which is to say in the mode of cognition governed by the principle of sufficient reason, it does not perceive eternal justice. To be cured of this delusion and deception of *māyā* and to perform works of love are one and the same. But the latter is the inevitable symptom of that cognition.

Ludwig Feuerbach

Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872 CE) was a German anthropologist and philosopher, whose analysis of religion – and of Christianity in particular – proved very influential.

In *Das Wesen des Christentums*, first published in 1841, Feuerbach developed an understanding of God and religion based on human needs. Hegel had written that Creation was a continuous manifestation of God; Feuerbach would turn this statement upside down, saying that God is an outward *projection* of human nature. In his view, when humans define God as a supreme moral Being, they actually *create* such a Being, that functions as a pole of attraction for their own actions. Feuerbach would therefore argue that we should not remain alienated from such illusions, but be overtly atheistic, in order to compose with our own projections.

Such views were at the core of the *secularization*[1] of the Western world, a process that saw the weakening of Christian beliefs, and societies' move towards non-religious and "secular" values and institutions (based on scientific rationality). Sixty years later, Max Weber (1864–1920), a German sociologist and philosopher, would call this the "disenchantment of the world."

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY (1841)

The Essence of Religion Considered Generally

Introduction, §2 (extract) // Translated from German by Marian Evans, 1881

[...] In the perceptions of the senses consciousness of the object is distinguishable from consciousness of self; but in religion, consciousness of the object and self-consciousness coincide. The object of the senses is out of man, the religious object is within him, and therefore as little forsakes him as his self-consciousness or his conscience; it is the intimate, the closest object. "God," says Augustine, for example, "is nearer, more related to us, and therefore more easily known by us, than sensible, corporeal things."[2] The object of the senses is in itself indifferent — independent of the disposition or of the judgment; but the object of religion is a selected object; the most excellent, the first, the supreme being; it essentially presupposes a critical judgment, a discrimination between the divine and the non-divine, between that which is worthy of adoration and that which is not worthy. And here may be applied, without any limitation, the proposition: the object of any subject is nothing else than the subject's own nature taken objectively. Such as are a man's thoughts and dispositions, such is his God; so much worth as a man has, so much and no more has his God. Consciousness of God is self-consciousness, knowledge of God is self-knowledge. By his God thou knowest the man, and by the man his God; the two are identical. Whatever is God to a man, that is his heart and soul; and conversely, God is the manifested inward nature, the expressed self of a man, — religion the solemn unveiling of a man's hidden treasures, the revelation of his intimate thoughts, the open confession of his love-secrets.

[1] From the Latin *saeculum*, "age, span of time, lifetime, generation, breed". The word *secular* appeared around 1300 CE to designate people living in the world as opposed to people living in a convent or belonging to a religious order (such persons belonged to God, whose eternity transcends centuries).

[2] *De Genesi ad litteram*, 1. v. c. 16.

But when religion — consciousness of God — is designated as the self-consciousness of man, this is not to be under-stood as affirming that the religious man is directly aware of this identity; for, on the contrary, ignorance of it is fundamental to the peculiar nature of religion. To preclude this misconception, it is better to say, religion is man's earliest and also indirect form of self-knowledge. Hence, religion everywhere precedes philosophy, as in the history of the race, so also in that of the individual. Man first of all sees his nature as if out of himself, before he finds it in himself. His own nature is in the first instance contemplated by him as that of another being. Religion is the childlike condition of humanity; but the child sees his nature — man — out of himself; in childhood a man is an object to himself, under the form of another man. Hence the historical progress of religion consists in this: that what by an earlier religion was regarded as objective, is now recognised as subjective; that is, what was formerly contemplated and worshipped as God is now perceived to be something human. What was at first religion becomes at a later period idolatry; man is seen to have adored his own nature. Man has given objectivity to himself, but has not recognised the object as his own nature: a later religion takes this forward step; every advance in religion is therefore a deeper self-knowledge. But every particular religion, while it pronounces its predecessors idolatrous, excepts itself — and necessarily so, otherwise it would no longer be religion — from the fate, the common nature of all religions: it imputes only to other religions what is the fault, if fault it be, of religion in general. Because it has a different object, a different tenor, because it has transcended the ideas of preceding religions, it erroneously supposes itself exalted above the necessary eternal laws which constitute the essence of religion — it fancies its object, its ideas, to be superhuman. But the essence of religion, thus hidden from the religious, is evident to the thinker, by whom religion is viewed objectively, which it cannot be by its votaries. And it is our task to show that the antithesis of divine and human is altogether illusory, that it is nothing else than the antithesis between the human nature in general and the human individual ; that, consequently, the object and contents of the Christian religion are altogether human.

Religion, at least the Christian, is the relation of man to himself, or more correctly to his own nature (i.e., his subjective nature); but a relation to it, viewed as a nature apart from his own. The divine being is nothing else than the human being, or, rather, the human nature purified, freed from the limits of the individual man, made objective — i.e., contemplated and revered as another, a distinct being. All the attributes of the divine nature are, therefore, attributes of the human nature.

[…]

Karl Marx

Karl Marx (1818–1883 CE) was a German philosopher, economist and revolutionary. Born into a Jewish family in a Christian country under absolute monarchy, with a father who taught him the values of the Enlightenment, he stood on the brink of his era's shifting lines.

Together with Friedrich Engels (1820–1895 CE), he is remembered as the founder of communism[1], a movement that has fought since then for the common ownership of the means of production and the abolition of social classes. In the 1840s, while the industrial revolution was deeply transforming Western societies, political power was in the hands of monarchs and emperors, leaving no space for the people's demands. Marx, who studied law and philosophy in Berlin, began his career as a journalist, but was soon forced to move to France because of his political opinions. Expelled from France, and later from Belgium, he would spend most of his life in a poor neighbourhood in London, with his wife and daughters.

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, first published in 1848 in London, was commissioned by the Communist League that Marx and Engels had then recently joined. One of the most influential political texts ever written, the pamphlet exposed their theory of class struggle, arguing that *capitalism* was the domination of the bourgeois class (owners of the means of production) over the proletarian class (made to sell their labour force in exchange for a salary). The arguments presented in the Manifesto were the first seeds of Marx's political thought. He would spend the rest of his lifetime perfecting them, and in 1867 began publishing the three volumes of *Das Kapital, Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, a work that would prove immensely influential in the fields of economic, historical and sociological studies.

Marx's theory – like Feuerbach's in the field of religion – made use of Hegel's philosophy, which it turned upside down. While Hegel thought that human history was the materialisation of the progress of ideas, Marx thought that our ideas were the idealization of the material conditions in which humans live. With this view – called *historical materialism* – he re-interpreted the history of economic and political structures, with the aim of bringing forth a society based on the famous slogan: "From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs".

MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (1848)

Working Men of All Countries, Unite!

Section I, II, IV (extract) // Translated from German by Samuel Moore & Friedrich Engels, 1888

A SPECTRE is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as Communistic by its opponents in power? Where the Opposition that has not hurled back the branding

[1] From the French *communisme* (c. 1840), from the Old French *comun*, 'common, general, free, open, public.'

reproach of Communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries?

Two things result from this fact.

I. Communism is already acknowledged by all European Powers to be itself a Power.

II. It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself.

To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London, and sketched the following Manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

I. BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms: Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, under which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production.

The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world-market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the mediaeval commune, here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable “third estate” of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, corner-stone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world-market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors,” and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment.” It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which Reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant

revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and

agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economical and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piece-meal, are a commodity, like every other

article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overlooker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set

the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the ten-hours' bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times, with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself

adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The “dangerous class,” the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family-relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as

the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

II. PROLETARIANS AND COMMUNISTS

In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?

The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.

They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: (1) In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. (2) In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. The abolition of existing property relations is not at all a distinctive feature of Communism.

All property relations in the past have continually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical conditions.

The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favour of bourgeois property.

The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

We Communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man's own labour, which property is alleged to be the groundwork of all personal freedom, activity and independence.

Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of the petty artisan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily.

Or do you mean modern bourgeois private property?

But does wage-labour create any property for the labourer? Not a bit. It creates capital, i.e., that kind of property which exploits wage-labour, and which cannot increase except upon condition of begetting a new supply of wage-labour for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage-labour. Let us examine both sides of this antagonism.

To be a capitalist, is to have not only a purely personal, but a social status in production. Capital is a collective product, and only by the united action of many members, nay, in the last resort, only by the united action of all members of society, can it be set in motion.

Capital is, therefore, not a personal, it is a social power.

When, therefore, capital is converted into common property, into the property of all members of society, personal property is not thereby transformed into social property. It is only the social character of the property that is changed. It loses its class-character.

Let us now take wage-labour.

The average price of wage-labour is the minimum wage, i.e., that quantum of the means of subsistence, which is absolutely requisite to keep the labourer in bare existence as a labourer. What, therefore, the wage-labourer appropriates by means of his labour, merely suffices to prolong and reproduce a bare existence. We by no means intend to abolish this personal appropriation of the products of labour, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus wherewith to command the labour of others. All that we want to do away with, is the miserable character of this appropriation, under which the labourer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only in so far as the interest of the ruling class requires it.

In bourgeois society, living labour is but a means to increase accumulated labour. In Communist society, accumulated labour is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the labourer.

In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present; in Communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality.

And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois, abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.

By freedom is meant, under the present bourgeois conditions of production, free trade, free selling and buying.

But if selling and buying disappears, free selling and buying disappears also. This talk about free selling and buying, and all the other "brave words" of our bourgeoisie about freedom in general, have a meaning, if any, only in contrast with restricted selling and buying, with the fettered traders of the Middle Ages, but have no meaning when opposed to the Communistic abolition of buying and selling, of the bourgeois conditions of production, and of the bourgeoisie itself.

You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society.

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend.

From the moment when labour can no longer be converted into capital, money, or rent, into a social power capable of being monopolised, i.e., from the moment when individual property can no longer be transformed into bourgeois property, into capital, from that moment, you say, individuality vanishes.

You must, therefore, confess that by "individual" you mean no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle-class owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way, and made impossible.

Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labour of others by means of such appropriation.

It has been objected that upon the abolition of private property all work will cease, and universal laziness will overtake us.

According to this, bourgeois society ought long ago to have gone to the dogs through sheer idleness; for those of its members who work, acquire nothing, and those who acquire anything, do not work. The whole of this objection is but another expression of the tautology: that there can no longer be any wage-labour when there is no longer any capital.

All objections urged against the Communistic mode of producing and appropriating material products, have, in the same way, been urged against the Communistic modes of producing and appropriating intellectual products. Just as, to the bourgeois, the

disappearance of class property is the disappearance of production itself, so the disappearance of class culture is to him identical with the disappearance of all culture.

That culture, the loss of which he laments, is, for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine.

But don't wrangle with us so long as you apply, to our intended abolition of bourgeois property, the standard of your bourgeois notions of freedom, culture, law, &c. Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class.

The selfish misconception that induces you to transform into eternal laws of nature and of reason, the social forms springing from your present mode of production and form of property—historical relations that rise and disappear in the progress of production—this misconception you share with every ruling class that has preceded you. What you see clearly in the case of ancient property, what you admit in the case of feudal property, you are of course forbidden to admit in the case of your own bourgeois form of property.

Abolition of the family! Even the most radical flare up at this infamous proposal of the Communists.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletarians, and in public prostitution.

The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.

Do you charge us with wanting to stop the exploitation of children by their parents? To this crime we plead guilty.

But, you will say, we destroy the most hallowed of relations, when we replace home education by social.

And your education! Is not that also social, and determined by the social conditions under which you educate, by the intervention, direct or indirect, of society, by means of schools, &c.? The Communists have not invented the intervention of society in education; they do but seek to alter the character of that intervention, and to rescue education from the influence of the ruling class.

The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of Modern Industry, all family ties among the proletarians are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.

But you Communists would introduce community of women, screams the whole bourgeoisie in chorus.

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the Communists. The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.

Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives.

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution both public and private.

The Communists are further reproached with desiring to abolish countries and nationality.

The working men have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got. Since the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word.

National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world-market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto.

The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. United action, of the leading civilised countries at least, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end.

The charges against Communism made from a religious, a philosophical, and, generally, from an ideological standpoint, are not deserving of serious examination.

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.

When people speak of ideas that revolutionise society, they do but express the fact, that within the old society, the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence.

When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient religions were overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie. The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience merely gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge.

"Undoubtedly," it will be said, "religious, moral, philosophical and juridical ideas have been modified in the course of historical development. But religion, morality, philosophy, political science, and law, constantly survived this change.

"There are, besides, eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience."

What does this accusation reduce itself to? The history of all past society has consisted in the development of class antagonisms, antagonisms that assumed different forms at different epochs.

But whatever form they may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, viz., the exploitation of one part of society by the other. No wonder, then, that the social consciousness of past ages, despite all the multiplicity and variety it displays, moves within certain common forms, or general ideas, which cannot completely vanish except with the total disappearance of class antagonisms.

The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.

But let us have done with the bourgeois objections to Communism.

We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which appear economically insufficient and untenable, but which, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production.

These measures will of course be different in different countries.

Nevertheless in the most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable.

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.

5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.

6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.

7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.

8. Equal liability of all to labour. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equable distribution of the population over the country.

10. Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labour in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, &c., &c.

When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

[...]

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES,

UNITE!

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY (1859)

Preface

Translated from German by S.W. Ryazanskaya, 1997

I examine the system of bourgeois economy in the following order: *capital*, *landed property*, *wage-labour*; *the State*, *foreign trade*, *world market*. The economic conditions of existence of the three great classes into which modern bourgeois society is divided are analysed under the first three headings; the interconnection of the other three headings is self-evident. The first part of the first book, dealing with Capital, comprises the following chapters: 1. The commodity, 2. Money or simple circulation; 3. Capital in general. The present part consists of the first two chapters. The entire material lies before me in the

form of monographs, which were written not for publication but for self-clarification at widely separated periods; their remoulding into an integrated whole according to the plan I have indicated will depend upon circumstances.

A general introduction, which I had drafted, is omitted, since on further consideration it seems to me confusing to anticipate results which still have to be substantiated, and the reader who really wishes to follow me will have to decide to advance from the particular to the general. A few brief remarks regarding the course of my study of political appropriate here.

Although I studied jurisprudence, I pursued it as a subject subordinated to philosophy and history. In the year 1842-43, as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, I first found myself in the embarrassing position of having to discuss what is known as material interests. The deliberations of the Rhenish Landtag on forest thefts and the division of landed property; the officials polemic started by Herr von Schaper, then Oberprasident of the Rhine Province, against the *Rheinische Zeitung* about the condition of the Moselle peasantry, and finally the debates on free trade and protective tariffs caused me in the first instance to turn my attention to economic questions. On the other hand, at that time when good intentions "to push forward" often took the place of factual knowledge, an echo of French socialism and communism, slightly tinged by philosophy, was noticeable in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. I objected to this dilettantism, but at the same time frankly admitted in a controversy with the *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung* that my previous studies did not allow me to express any opinion on the content of the French theories. When the publishers of the *Rheinische Zeitung* conceived the illusion that by a more compliant policy on the part of the paper it might be possible to secure the abrogation of the death sentence passed upon it, I eagerly grasped the opportunity to withdraw from the public stage to my study.

The first work which I undertook to dispel the doubts assailing me was a critical re-examination of the Hegelian philosophy of law; the introduction to this work being published in the *Deutsch-Franzosische Jahrbucher* issued in Paris in 1844. My inquiry led me to the conclusion that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel, following the example of English and French thinkers of the eighteenth century, embraces within the term "civil society"; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy. The study of this, which I began in Paris, I continued in Brussels, where I moved owing to an expulsion order issued by M. Guizot. The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, became the guiding principle of my studies can be summarised as follows. In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or — this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms — with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to

the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic — in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society. The bourgeois mode of production is the last antagonistic form of the social process of production — antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence — but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation.

Frederick Engels, with whom I maintained a constant exchange of ideas by correspondence since the publication of his brilliant essay on the critique of economic categories (printed in the *Deutsch-Franzosische Jahrbucher*), arrived by another road (compare his *Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*) at the same result as I, and when in the spring of 1845 he too came to live in Brussels, we decided to set forth together our conception as opposed to the ideological one of German philosophy, in fact to settle accounts with our former philosophical conscience. The intention was carried out in the form of a critique of post-Hegelian philosophy. The manuscript [*The German Ideology*], two large octavo volumes, had long ago reached the publishers in Westphalia when we were informed that owing to changed circumstances it could not be printed. We abandoned the manuscript to the gnawing criticism of the mice all the more willingly since we had achieved our main purpose — self-clarification. Of the scattered works in which at that time we presented one or another aspect of our views to the public, I shall mention only the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, jointly written by Engels and myself, and a *Discours sur le libre échange*, which I myself published. The salient points of our conception were first outlined in an academic, although polemical, form in my *Misère de la philosophie* ..., this book which was aimed at Proudhon appeared in 1847. The publication of an essay on Wage-Labour [*Wage-Labor and Capital*] written in German in which I combined the lectures I had held on this subject at the German Workers' Association in Brussels, was interrupted by the February Revolution and my forcible removal from Belgium in consequence.

The publication of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1848 and 1849 and subsequent events cut short my economic studies, which I could only resume in London in 1850. The enormous amount of material relating to the history of political economy assembled in the British Museum, the fact that London is a convenient vantage point for the observation of bourgeois society, and finally the new stage of development which this society seemed to have entered with the discovery of gold in California and Australia, induced me to start

again from the very beginning and to work carefully through the new material. These studies led partly of their own accord to apparently quite remote subjects on which I had to spend a certain amount of time. But it was in particular the imperative necessity of earning my living which reduced the time at my disposal. My collaboration, continued now for eight years, with the *New York Tribune*, the leading Anglo-American newspaper, necessitated an excessive fragmentation of my studies, for I wrote only exceptionally newspaper correspondence in the strict sense. Since a considerable part of my contributions consisted of articles dealing with important economic events in Britain and on the continent, I was compelled to become conversant with practical detail which, strictly speaking, lie outside the sphere of political economy.

This sketch of the course of my studies in the domain of political economy is intended merely to show that my views — no matter how they may be judged and how little they conform to the interested prejudices of the ruling classes — are the outcome of conscientious research carried on over many years. At the entrance to science, as at the entrance to hell, the demand must be made:

Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto
Ogni vilta convien che qui sia morta.

[From Dante, *Divina Commedia*:
Here must all distrust be left;
All cowardice must here be dead.]

Karl Marx

London, January 1859

Friedrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900 CE) was a German philosopher, psychologist, philologist and poet. In the line of Heraclitus, Nietzsche envisioned a philosophy of the *becoming*, and as such was the hardest critique of all systematic thinking in philosophy.

An aficionado in his youth of the philosophy of Schopenhauer and friend to Richard Wagner, he would develop his views in a completely different direction. Where Schopenhauer posited a *will* that is one and insatiable, Nietzsche came up with a will that is overabundant and multiple. And where Wagner ended up a German nationalist, Nietzsche rejected his German nationality. In Nietzsche's own words, this was the recipe for becoming an "untimely man"… perhaps confirmed by the fact that his books had little success during his lifetime. But while they would prove deeply influential worldwide over the course of the 20th century, his ideas were often distorted and even falsified[1]. His philosophy suffered from its fame.

It is useful then to remember how Nietzsche began by studying Ancient Greek philosophy and culture. In his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, published in 1872, he differentiated between two settings of the Greeks' attitude towards life: one was inspired by the God Apollo and focused on organised knowledge, self-control and order; while the other was a measure of chaos, of the disinhibiting tendency found in the arts or in the consumption of wine, inspired by the God Dionysus. Nietzsche asked what the psychological motives of this cultural construct were, questioning philosophy, its quest for the truth and for morals based on the idea of truth. Is knowledge merely a human attempt to create order in an otherwise chaotic existence? Nietzsche posited that such attempts were neither good nor bad, because they all came down to the psychic life of our instincts—the great inventors of all "good" and "bad".

His understanding of the *will to truth* as *will to power* remains one of the most important moments in the history of philosophy, a return to its origins and a leap into the future.

ON TRUTH AND LIE IN A NONMORAL SENSE (1873)

Extract // Translated from German by Taylor Carman, 2010

> In some remote corner of the sprawling universe, twinkling among the countless solar systems, there was once a star on which some clever animals invented knowledge. It was the most arrogant, most mendacious minute in "world history," but it was only a minute. After nature caught its breath a little, the star froze, and the clever animals had to die.—One could invent a fable like this and still not have illustrated sufficiently how miserable, how shadowy and fleeting, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect appears in nature. There were eternities in which it did not exist, and when it has vanished once again, it will have left nothing in its wake. For the human intellect has no further task beyond human life. Instead, it is merely human, and only its owner and producer regards it so pathetically as to suppose that it contains in itself the hinge on which the world turns. If we could communicate with a mosquito, we would learn that it, too, flies through the air with

[1] Nietzsche's own sister, Elizabeth, who was married to an anti-Semite German officer, intentionally transformed some of his writings to make them fit her proto-Nazi agenda.

this same pathos, feeling itself to be the moving center of the entire world. There is nothing in nature so abject and lowly that it would not instantly swell up like a balloon at the faintest breath of that cognitive faculty. And just as every baggage carrier wants admirers, so, too, the proudest man of all, the philosopher, thinks he sees the eyes of the universe trained from all sides telescopically on his thoughts and his deeds.

It is remarkable that the intellect manages this, considering it is simply an expedient supplied to the unluckiest, the most delicate, the most transitory creatures in order to detain them for a minute in existence; from which, without that added extra, they would have every reason to flee as swiftly as Lessing's son.[1] The arrogance involved in cognition and sensation, spreading a blinding fog over men's eyes and senses, deceives them about the value of existence by implying the most flattering evaluation of cognition. Its most general effect is deception—but even its most particular effects have something of the same quality.

The intellect, as a means of preserving the individual, develops its principal strengths in dissimulation, for this is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves, it being denied to them to wage the battle of existence with the horns or sharp fangs of a beast of prey. This art of dissimulation reaches its peak in man: here deception, flattery, lying and cheating, talking behind the backs of others, keeping up appearances, living in borrowed splendor, donning masks, the shroud of convention, playacting before others and before oneself—in short, the continual fluttering around the flame of vanity is so much the rule and the law that virtually nothing is as incomprehensible as how an honest and pure drive to truth could have arisen among men. They are deeply immersed in illusions and dream images; their eyes glide only over the surface of things and see "forms"; their sensations nowhere lead to truth but content themselves with registering stimuli and playing a touching-feeling game, as it were, on the back of things. What is more, man lets his dreams lie to him at night, his whole life long, his moral sense never trying to prevent it; whereas they say there are people who have managed to quit snoring by sheer willpower. What does man actually know of himself? Could he ever be capable, even just once, of perceiving himself entire, laid out as if in a glass case? Does nature not conceal virtually everything from him, even his body, banishing and locking him up in a proud, spurious consciousness, far removed from the convolutions of the bowels, the rapid flow of the bloodstream, the intricate vibrations of nerve fibers? Nature has thrown away the key; and woe unto that fateful curiosity that might once manage to peer out through a crack in the chamber of consciousness and gain an intimation that man rests in the indifference of his ignorance on the merciless, the greedy, the insatiable, the murderous, suspended in dreams on the back of a tiger. Where in the world, given this setting, can the drive to truth ever have come from?

In the natural state of things, the individual, inasmuch as he wants to protect himself against other individuals, uses his intellect mostly for dissimulation. But because, out of both necessity and boredom, he wants to exist socially and in herds, man needs a peace treaty and strives at the least to rid his world of the crudest forms of *bellum omnium contra omnes*.[2]

This peace treaty, however, brings with it something like the first step in the attainment of that enigmatic drive to truth. Namely, what is henceforth to count as "truth" is now fixed, that is, a uniformly valid and binding designation of things is invented, and the

[1] In a famous letter to Johann Joachim Eschenburg (December 31, 1778), Lessing relates the death of his infant son, who "understood the world so well that he left it at the first opportunity."
[2] "War of all against all": Thomas Hobbes's description of the state of nature.

legislation of language likewise yields the first laws of truth. For here a distinction is drawn for the first time between truth and lie: the liar uses valid designations—words—to make the unreal appear real; he says, for instance, "I am rich," precisely when the proper designation for his condition would be "poor." He misuses fixed conventions by various substitutions or even inversions of names. If he does this in self-serving or otherwise injurious ways, society will no longer trust him and will therefore exclude him from its ranks. So it is that men flee not so much from being cheated as from being harmed by cheating. Even on this level, it is at bottom not deception they hate but the dire, inimical consequences of certain kinds of deception. So, too, only to a limited extent does man want truth. He desires the pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth; to pure knowledge without consequences he is indifferent, to potentially harmful and destructive truths he is even hostile. And besides, what is the status of those linguistic conventions? Are they perhaps products of knowledge, of our sense for truth? Do the designations and the things coincide? Is language the full and adequate expression of all realities?

Only through forgetfulness can man ever come to imagine that he possesses truth to that degree. If he does not wish to rest content with truth in the form of a tautology, that is, with empty husks, he will forever be passing illusions off as truths. What is a word? The copy of a nerve stimulus in sounds. To go on to infer from the nerve stimulus to a cause outside us, however, is already the result of a false and unjustified application of the principle of sufficient reason. If truth alone had been decisive in the genesis of language, and the standpoint of certainty in the genesis of the designations of things, how would we be entitled to say, "The stone is hard," as if "hard" were something otherwise known to us and not a wholly subjective impression? We divide things according to genders: we call the tree [der Baum] masculine, the plant [die Pflanze] feminine—what arbitrary transferences! How far-flung beyond the canon of certainty! We speak of a snake: the designation pertains only to its slithering movement and so could as easily apply to a worm. What arbitrary demarcations, what one-sided preferences for now this, now that property of a thing! All the different languages, set alongside one another, show that when it comes to words, truth—full and adequate expression—is never what matters; otherwise there wouldn't be so many languages. The "thing in itself" (which would be, precisely, pure truth without consequences) is utterly unintelligible, even for the creator of a language, and certainly nothing to strive for, for he designates only the relations of things to human beings and helps himself to the boldest metaphors. First, to transfer a nerve stimulus into an image—first metaphor! The image again copied in a sound—second metaphor! And each time a complete leap out of one sphere into an entirely new and different one. One can imagine someone profoundly deaf who has never had any sensation of tone or of music: just as he will gaze in amazement at Chladnian sound figures in sand,[1] will find their causes in the vibration of the strings, and will swear that he now surely knows what people call a tone—so it is for all of us when it comes to language. We think we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers, yet we possess only metaphors of the things, which in no way correspond to the original essences. Just as the tone appears as a shape in the sand, so, too, the enigmatic X of the thing in itself appears first as nerve stimulus, then as image, finally as sound. In any case, the emergence of language did not come about logically, and the very material in which and with which the man of truth—the scientist, the philosopher—later works and builds derives, if not from Cloud Cuckoo Land, then at least not from the essence of things either.

[1] The German physicist and musician Ernst Chladni (1756–1827) invented a technique showing patterns of vibration in sand on glass plates.

Let us contemplate in particular the formation of concepts: every word becomes a concept, not just when it is meant to serve as a kind of reminder of the single, absolutely individualized original experience to which it owes its emergence, but when it has to fit countless more or less similar—that is, strictly speaking, never equal, hence blatantly unequal—cases. Every concept arises by means of the equating of the unequal. Just as certain as it is that no one leaf is exactly the same as any other, so, too, it is certain that the concept leaf is formed by arbitrarily ignoring these individual differences, by forgetting what distinguishes one from the other, thus giving rise to the notion that there is in nature something other than leaves, something like "The Leaf," a kind of prototype according to which all leaves were woven, drawn, delineated, colored, crimped, painted, but by unskilled hands, so that no specimen turned out correctly or reliably as a true copy of the prototype. We call a man honest. We ask, "Why did he act so honestly today?" Our answer is, usually, "Because of his honesty." Honesty! Which is again like saying, "Leaf is the cause of leaves." We really have no knowledge at all of an essential quality called Honesty, but we do know countless individualized, hence unequal, actions, which we equate by leaving aside the unequal and henceforth designate as honest actions; finally, from them we formulate a *qualitas occulta* [hidden quality] with the name Honesty.

Overlooking the individual and the actual yields concepts, just as it yields forms, whereas nature knows neither forms nor concepts, hence no species, but only what remains for us an inaccessible and indefinable X. For even the distinction we draw between the individual and the species is anthropomorphic and does not stem from the essence of things, though neither can we say that it does not correspond to the essence of things, for that would be a dogmatic assertion and as such just as indemonstrable as its counterpart.

What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms—in short, a sum of human relations that have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, translated, and embellished, and that after long use strike a people as fixed, canonical, and binding: truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions, metaphors that have become worn-out and deprived of their sensuous force, coins that have lost their imprint and are now no longer seen as coins but as metal. We still don't know where the drive to truth comes from, for we have hitherto heard only of the obligation to be truthful, which society imposes in order to exist—that is, the obligation to use the customary metaphors, hence, morally expressed, the obligation to lie in accordance with a fixed convention, to lie in droves in a style binding for all. Man forgets, of course, that this is how things are; he therefore lies in this way unconsciously and according to centuries-old habits—and precisely by means of this unconsciousness, precisely by means of this forgetting, he arrives at the feeling of truth. A moral impulse pertaining to truth is awoken out of this feeling of being obligated to designate one thing red, another cold, a third mute: in contrast to the liar, whom no one trusts, whom everyone shuns, man proves to himself how venerable, trustworthy, and useful truth is. As a rational being he now submits his actions to the rule of abstractions: no longer does he let himself be swept away by sudden impressions, by intuitions, he first generalizes all these impressions into paler, cooler concepts in order to hitch the wagon of his life and his action to them. Everything that distinguishes man from beast hinges on this capacity to dispel intuitive metaphors in a schema, hence to dissolve an image into a concept. For in the realm of those schemata something becomes possible that could never be achieved by intuitive first impressions, namely, the construction of a pyramidal order of castes and degrees, creating a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, and boundary demarcations, which now stands over against the other intuitive world of first impressions as the more fixed, more universal, more familiar, more human, hence something regulatory and imperative. Whereas every metaphor of intuition is individual and without

equal and so always knows how to escape all classification, the great edifice of concepts exhibits the rigid regularity of a Roman *columbarium*[1] and in logic exhales the severity and coolness proper to mathematics. Whoever has felt that breath will scarcely believe that concepts, too, as bony and eight-cornered as dice, and just as moveable, are but the lingering residues of metaphors, and that the illusion of the artistic rendering of a nerve stimulus into images is, if not the mother, then at least the grandmother of every concept. In this dice game of concepts, however, "truth" means using every die as it is marked, counting its dots precisely, establishing correct classifications, and never violating the order of castes and rankings of class. Just as the Romans and Etruscans carved up the sky with rigid mathematical lines, installing a god in each circumscribed space as in a *templum*, so, too, every people has above it just such a mathematically divided heaven of concepts and understands the demand of truth to mean that each concept god is to be found only in its own sphere. In this, one may well admire man as a great architectural genius who manages to erect an infinitely complicated cathedral of concepts on shifting foundations and flowing water. Of course, in order to rest on such foundations, it must be a structure made as if of spiderwebs, delicate enough to be carried away by the waves, firm enough not to be blown apart by the wind. Measured thus, man as architectural genius far surpasses the bee: the latter builds with wax, which it gathers from nature; man builds with the much more delicate material of concepts, which he must first fabricate from out of himself. In this, he is to be admired—but not on account of his drive to truth, to the pure cognition of things. If someone hides a thing behind a bush, then looks for it and finds it again in the same place, the seeking and finding are not much to brag about; yet this is how matters stand with the seeking and finding of "truth" in the realm of reason. If I give a definition of "mammal" and then, after inspecting a camel, declare, "Behold, a mammal," a truth has indeed been brought to light, but one of limited value, by which I mean it is thoroughly anthropomorphic and contains not a single point that would be "true in itself," real and universally valid, apart from man. The seeker of such truths seeks at bottom only the metamorphosis of the world into man; he strives for an understanding of the world as a human thing and gains, in the best case, the feeling of an assimilation. Like the astrologer who views the stars as in the service of human beings and as tied to their fortune and suffering, so, too, such a seeker views the entire world as bound to man, as the infinitely splintered echo of a primal sound, that of man, or as the reduplicated copy of a primal image, that of man. His procedure is to hold man up as the measure of all things, but in so doing he sets out from the error of believing that he has these things directly before him as pure objects. And so he forgets that the original metaphors of intuition were metaphors and takes them as the things themselves. […]

THE GAY SCIENCE (1882)

Extracts // Translated from German by Josefine Nauckhoff, 2001

276

For the new year. – I'm still alive; I still think: I must still be alive because I still have to think. *Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum*. Today everyone allows himself to express his dearest wish and thoughts: so I, too, want to say what I wish from myself today and what thought first crossed my heart – what thought shall be the reason, warrant, and sweetness

[1] A catacomb with separate niches housing urns that contained the ashes of the dead.

of the rest of my life! I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them – thus I will be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love from now on! I do not want to wage war against ugliness. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse the accusers. Let *looking away* be my only negation! And, all in all and on the whole: some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer!

341

The heaviest weight. – What if some day or night a demon were to steal into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: 'This life as you now live it and have lived it you will have to live once again and innumerable times again; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small or great in your life must return to you, all in the same succession and sequence – even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned over again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!' Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: 'You are a god, and never have I heard anything more divine.' If this thought gained power over you, as you are it would transform and possibly crush you; the question in each and every thing, 'Do you want this again and innumerable times again?' would lie on your actions as the heaviest weight! Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to long for nothing more fervently* than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?

357

[…] One can see *what* it was that actually triumphed over the Christian god: Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness that was taken ever more rigorously; the father confessor's refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into a scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price. Looking at nature as if it were proof of the goodness and care of a god; interpreting history in honour of some divine reason, as a continual testimony of a moral world order and ultimate moral purposes; interpreting one's own experiences as pious people have long interpreted theirs, as if everything were providential, a hint, designed and ordained for the sake of salvation of the soul – that is *over* now; that has conscience *against* it; every refined conscience considers it to be indecent, dishonest, a form of mendacity, effeminacy, weakness, cowardice. With this severity, if with anything, we are simply *good* Europeans and heirs of Europe's longest and most courageous self-overcoming. As we thus reject Christian interpretation and condemn its 'meaning' as counterfeit, *Schopenhauer*'s question immediately comes at us in a terrifying way: *Does existence have any meaning at all?* A few centuries will be needed before this question can ever be heard completely and in its full depth. […]

THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA (1883-1885)
A Book for All and None
An extract from the Prologue // Translated from German by Adrian Del Caro, 2006

1

When Zarathustra was thirty years old he left his home and the lake of his home and went into the mountains. Here he enjoyed his spirit and his solitude and for ten years he did not tire of it. But at last his heart transformed, – one morning he arose with the dawn, stepped before the sun and spoke thus to it:

"You great star! What would your happiness be if you had not those for whom you shine?

For ten years you have come up here to my cave: you would have tired of your light and of this route without me, my eagle and my snake.

But we awaited you every morning, took your overflow from you and blessed you for it.

Behold! I am weary of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey. I need hands that reach out.

I want to bestow and distribute until the wise among human beings have once again enjoyed their folly, and the poor once again their wealth.

For this I must descend into the depths, as you do evenings when you go behind the sea and bring light even to the underworld, you super-rich star!

Like you, I must go down as the human beings say, to whom I want to descend.

So bless me now, you quiet eye that can look upon even an all too great happiness without envy!

Bless the cup that wants to flow over, such that water flows golden from it and everywhere carries the reflection of your bliss!

Behold! This cup wants to become empty again, and Zarathustra wants to become human again."

– Thus began Zarathustra's going under.

2

Zarathustra climbed down alone from the mountains and encountered no one. But when he came to the woods suddenly an old man stood before him, who had left his saintly hut in search of roots in the woods. And thus spoke the old man to Zarathustra:

"This wanderer is no stranger to me: many years ago he passed by here. Zarathustra he was called; but he is transformed.

Back then you carried your ashes to the mountain: would you now carry your fire into the valley? Do you not fear the arsonist's punishment?

Yes, I recognize Zarathustra. His eyes are pure, and no disgust is visible around his mouth. Does he not stride like a dancer?

Zarathustra is transformed, Zarathustra has become a child, an awakened one is Zarathustra. What do you want now among the sleepers?

You lived in your solitude as if in the sea, and the sea carried you. Alas, you want to climb ashore? Alas, you want to drag your own body again?"

Zarathustra answered: "I love mankind."

"Why," asked the saint, "did I go into the woods and the wilderness in the first place? Was it not because I loved mankind all too much?

Now I love God: human beings I do not love. Human beings are too imperfect a thing for me. Love for human beings would kill me."

Zarathustra replied. "Why did I speak of love? I bring mankind a gift."

"Give them nothing," said the saint. "Rather take something off them and help them to carry it – that will do them the most good, if only it does you good!

And if you want to give to them, then give nothing more than alms, and make them beg for that too!"

"No," answered Zarathustra. "I do not give alms. For that I am not poor enough."

The saint laughed at Zarathustra and spoke thus: "Then see to it that they accept your treasures! They are mistrustful of hermits and do not believe that we come to give gifts.

To them our footsteps sound too lonely in the lanes. And if at night lying in their beds they hear a man walking outside, long before the sun rises, they probably ask themselves: where is the thief going?

Do not go to mankind and stay in the woods! Go even to the animals instead! Why do you not want to be like me – a bear among bears, a bird among birds?"

"And what does the saint do in the woods?" asked Zarathustra.

The saint answered: "I make songs and sing them, and when I make songs I laugh, weep and growl: thus I praise God.

With singing, weeping, laughing and growling I praise the god who is my god. But tell me, what do you bring us as a gift?"

When Zarathustra had heard these words he took his leave of the saint and spoke: "What would I have to give you! But let me leave quickly before I take something from you!" – And so they parted, the oldster and the man, laughing like two boys laugh.

But when Zarathustra was alone he spoke thus to his heart: "Could it be possible! This old saint in his woods has not yet heard the news that *God is dead*!" –

3

When Zarathustra came into the nearest town lying on the edge of the forest, he found many people gathered in the market place, for it had been promised that a tightrope walker would perform. And Zarathustra spoke thus to the people:

"*I teach you the overman*. Human being is something that must be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?

All creatures so far created something beyond themselves; and you want to be the ebb of this great flood and would even rather go back to animals than overcome humans?

What is the ape to a human? A laughing stock or a painful embarrassment. And that is precisely what the human shall be to the overman: a laughing stock or a painful embarrassment.

You have made your way from worm to human, and much in you is still worm. Once you were apes, and even now a human is still more ape than any ape.

But whoever is wisest among you is also just a conflict and a cross between plant and ghost. But do I implore you to become ghosts or plants?

Behold, I teach you the overman!

The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman *shall be* the meaning of the earth!

I beseech you, my brothers, *remain faithful to the earth* and do not believe those who speak to you of extraterrestrial hopes! They are mixers of poisons whether they know it or not.

They are despisers of life, dying off and self-poisoned, of whom the earth is weary: so let them fade away!

[…]

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL (1886)

Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future

Extracts // Translated from German by Marion Faber, 2006

211

I must insist that we finally stop mistaking philosophical workers or learned people in general for philosophers—in this regard especially, we should give strictly 'to each his own', and not too much to the former or much too little to the latter. The education of the true philosopher may require that he himself once pass through all the stages at which his servants, the learned workers of philosophy, remain—*must* remain. Perhaps he even needs to have been a critic and a sceptic and a dogmatist and an historian, and in addition a poet and collector and traveller and puzzle-solver and moralist and seer and 'free spirit' and nearly all things, so that he can traverse the range of human values and value-feelings and *be able* to look with many kinds of eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths into every height, from the corners into every wide expanse. But all these are only the preconditions for his task: the task itself calls for something else—it calls for him to *create values*. It is the task of those philosophical workers in the noble mould of Kant and Hegel to establish and press into formulae some large body of value judgements (that is, previous value-*assumptions*, value-creations that have become dominant and are for a time called 'truths'), whether in the realm of *logic* or of *politics* (morals) or of *aesthetics*. It is incumbent upon these researchers to describe clearly, conceivably, intelligibly, manageably everything that has already taken place and been assessed, to abbreviate everything that is lengthy, even 'time' itself, and to *subdue* the entire past: a tremendous and wondrous task, the execution of which can surely satisfy any refined pride or tenacious will. *But true philosophers are commanders and lawgivers*. They say, 'This is the way it *should* be!' Only they decide about mankind's Where to? and What for? and to do so they employ the preparatory work of all philosophical workers, all subduers of the past. With creative hands they reach towards the future, and everything

that is or has existed becomes their means, their tool, their hammer. Their 'knowing' is *creating*, their creating is law-giving, their will to truth is—*will to power*.

Do philosophers like these exist today? Have philosophers like these ever existed? Don't philosophers like these *have to* exist? …

TWILIGHT OF THE IDOLS (1888)

Or How to Philosophize with a Hammer

Extracts // Translated from German and annotated by Duncan Large, 1998

THE PROBLEM OF SOCRATES

1

Throughout the ages the wisest of men have passed the same judgement on life: *it is no good*... Always and everywhere their mouths have been heard to produce the same sound—a sound full of doubt, full of melancholy, full of weariness of life, full of resistance to life. Even Socrates said as he was dying: 'Life is one long illness: I owe the saviour Asclepius a cock.' Even Socrates had had enough of it.—What does this *prove*? What does this *point to*?—In former times people would have said (—oh they did say it, and loudly enough, with our pessimists[1] in the vanguard!): 'There must be at least something true here! The *consensus sapientium*[2] proves the truth.'—Shall we still speak in such terms today? *can* we do so? 'There must be at least something *sick* here' is the answer *we* give: these wisest of every age,[3] we should look at them from close to! Were they all perhaps no longer steady on their feet? belated? doddery? *decadents*?[4] Would wisdom perhaps appear on earth as a raven excited by a faint whiff of carrion?...

2

I myself was first struck by this impertinent thought, that the great wise men are *declining types*, in the very case where it meets with its strongest opposition from scholarly and unscholarly prejudice: I recognized Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay, as tools of the Greek dissolution, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek (*Birth of Tragedy*, 1872). That *consensus sapientium*—I have realized it more and more—proves least of all that they were right in what they agreed on: it proves rather that they themselves, these

[1] Nietzsche's usual shorthand for Schopenhauerians.

[2] 'Consensus of the wise'.

[3] The first of numerous quotations from and allusions to the works of Nietzsche's enduring hero, the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). The source here is Goethe's 'Kophtisches Lied' (Cophtic Song), 1.3: 'All the wisest of every age.'

[4] Nietzsche's critique of contemporary European 'decadence' is an important feature of his later works, especially in his attacks on Wagner, who serves as his model of the 'decadent' artist (cf. WC, NcW). 'Nothing has preoccupied me more profoundly than the problem of décadence', he writes in the Preface to The Wagner Case: since he adopted the term from Bourget he almost invariably uses the French word, although he also uses many similar terms such as 'Entartung' (degeneration), the Gallicism 'Degenerescenz' (de-generescence), 'Verfall' (falling-off), and 'Niedergang' (decline), all of which reinforce his general topology of 'ascending' versus 'descending' cultures.

wisest of men, were somehow in *physiological* agreement in order to have—to *have* to have—the same negative attitude towards life. Judgements, value judgements on life, whether for or against, can ultimately never be true: they have value only as symptoms, they can be considered only as symptoms—in themselves such judgements are foolish. We must really stretch out our fingers and make the effort to grasp this astonishing *finesse, that the value of life cannot be assessed*. Not by a living person because he is an interested party, indeed even the object of dispute, and not the judge; nor by a dead person, for a different reason. For a philosopher to see a problem in the *value* of life is thus even an objection against him, a question mark against his wisdom, a piece of unwisdom.—What? so all these great wise men were not only *decadents*, they were not even wise?—But I return to the problem of Socrates.

10

If it is necessary to make a tyrant out *of reason*, as Socrates did, then there must be no little danger that something else might play the tyrant. At that time people sensed in rationality a *deliverance*; neither Socrates nor his 'invalids' were free to be rational—it was *de rigueur*, it was their *last* available means. The fanaticism with which the whole of Greek thought throws itself on rationality betrays a crisis: they were in danger, they had just *one* choice: either perish or—be *absurdly rational*... The moralism of Greek philosophers from Plato onwards is pathologically conditioned: likewise their appreciation of dialectics. Reason = virtue = happiness means simply: we must imitate Socrates and establish permanent *daylight* to combat the dark desires—the daylight of reason. We must be clever, clear, bright at all costs: any yielding to the instincts, to the unconscious,[1] leads *downwards* . . .

11

I have indicated how Socrates fascinated people: he appeared to be a physician, a saviour. Is it still necessary to demonstrate the error which lay in his belief in 'rationality at all costs'? It is a self-deception on the part of philosophers and moralists to believe that in waging war on *décadence* they are already emerging from it. It is beyond their power to emerge from it: whatever they choose as their means, their deliverance, is itself just another expression of *décadence*—they *alter* its expression, but they do not get rid of it. Socrates was a misunderstanding; *the entire morality of improvement, Christianity's included, was a misunderstanding*... The harshest daylight, rationality at all costs, life bright, cold, cautious, conscious, instinct-free, instinct resistant: this itself was just an illness, a different illness—and definitely not a way back to 'virtue', 'health', happiness... To *have to* fight against the instincts—this is the formula for *décadence*: so long as life is *ascendant*, happiness equals instinct.—

RECONNAISSANCE RAIDS OF AN UNTIMELY MAN

19

[1] Although in our post-Freudian age the term is commonplace, it was a relatively new coinage (as a noun) in Nietzsche's time, popularized by the German philosopher Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906: cf. note to p. 51) and his book *Die Philosophie des Unbewussten* (The Philosophy of the Unconscious, 1869).

Beautiful and Ugly.—Nothing is more qualified, let us say *more limited*, than our feeling for the beautiful. If you tried to think of it in isolation from the pleasure humanity takes in itself, you would immediately lose the ground beneath your feet. The 'beautiful in itself' is merely a word, not even a concept. In beautiful things, man posits himself as the measure of perfection; in exceptional cases he worships himself in them. A species cannot *help* saying yes to itself alone in this way. Its most *deep-seated* instinct, for self-preservation and self-expansion, radiates out even from such sublimities. Man thinks the world itself is overwhelmed with beauty—he *forgets* he is its cause. He alone has bestowed beauty on it—oh! but a very human, all-too-human beauty... Basically man mirrors himself in things, he thinks anything that reflects his image back to him is beautiful: the judgement 'beautiful' is *the vanity of his species*... Now the sceptic might find a slight suspicion whispering in his ear the question: is the world really beautified just because man takes it to be beautiful? He has *anthropomorphized* it: that is all. But we have no guarantee, none at all, that it is man who should be singled out to provide the model of the beautiful. Who knows how he might look in the eyes of a higher arbiter of taste? Perhaps audacious? perhaps amused at himself? perhaps a little arbitrary?... 'Oh Dionysus, you divinity, why are you tugging at my ears?' Ariadne once asked her philosophical paramour during one of those famous dialogues on Naxos. 'I find your ears rather humorous, Ariadne: why aren't they even longer?'

20

Nothing is beautiful, only man is beautiful: all aesthetics rests on this naivety; it is its *first* truth. Let us immediately add its second: nothing is ugly except *degenerating* man—thus the realm of aesthetic judgement is delimited.—In physiological terms everything ugly weakens and saddens man. It reminds him of decay, danger, powerlessness; it actually makes him lose strength. You can measure the effect of ugly things with a dynamometer. Whenever man gets depressed, he senses something 'ugly' is nearby. His feeling of power, his will to power, his courage, his pride—all are diminished by ugliness and increased by beauty... In both cases *we reach a conclusion*, the premisses for which accumulate in immense abundance in our instinct. Ugly things are understood as signs and symptoms of degenerescence: anything which serves as the slightest reminder of degenerescence produces in us the judgement 'ugly'. Any sign of exhaustion, of heaviness, of age, of tiredness; any kind of constraint, a cramp, a paralysis; above all the whiff, the colour, the form of dissolution, of decomposition, even in the ultimate rarefaction into a symbol—all produce the same reaction, the value judgement 'ugly'. A *hatred* springs up here: who is man hating here? But there is no doubt: the *decline of his type*. His hatred here stems from the most deep-seated instinct of the species; in this hatred there is shuddering horror, caution, profundity, far-sightedness—it is the most profound hatred there is. That is why art is *profound*...

33

Natural Value of Egoism.—Selfishness is worth as much as the physiological value of whoever is exhibiting it: it can be worth a great deal; it can be worthless and contemptible. Every single person can be considered from the point of view of whether he represents the ascendant or descendent line of life. A decision on this point gives you a criterion for the value of his selfishness. If he represents the line ascendant then his value is indeed extraordinary—and for the sake of the totality of life, which takes a step *further* with him, extreme care may even be taken in maintaining and creating the optimum conditions for him. For the single person—the 'individual', as the people and the philosophers have

understood him thus far—is an error: he is nothing by himself, no atom, no 'ring in the chain', nothing which has simply been inherited from the past—he is the whole single line of humanity up to and including himself... If he represents a development downwards, a falling-off, a chronic degeneration, or illness (—illnesses are by and large already the consequences of a falling-off, *not* the causes of it), then he is worth little, and in all fairness he should *detract* as little as possible from those who turned out well. He is merely a parasite on them...

38

My Idea of Freedom.—The value of a thing sometimes depends not on what we manage to do with it, but on what we pay for it—what it *costs* us. Let me give an example. Liberal institutions stop being liberal as soon as they have been set up: afterwards there is no one more inveterate or thorough in damaging freedom than liberal institutions. Now we know *what* they achieve: they undermine the will to power, they are the levelling of mountain and valley elevated to the status of morality, they make things petty, cowardly, and hedonistic—with them the herd animal*triumphs every time. Liberalism: in plain words *herd-animalization*... While these same institutions are still being fought for, they produce quite different effects: then they are actually powerful promoters of freedom. On closer inspection, it is war that produces these effects, war waged *for* liberal institutions, which as war allows the *illiberal* instincts to persist. And war is an education in freedom. For what is freedom! Having the will to be responsible to oneself. Maintaining the distance which divides us off from each other. Becoming more indifferent towards hardship, harshness, privation, even life itself. Being prepared to sacrifice people to one's cause—oneself included. Freedom means that the manly instincts which delight in war and victory rule over other instincts, for example the instincts for 'happiness'. The *liberated* man—and the liberated *spirit* even more so—tramples over the contemptible kind of well-being that shopkeepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen, and other democrats dream about. The free man is a *warrior*.—How is freedom measured, in individuals as well as nations? By the resistance which must be overcome, the effort it costs to stay *on top*. The highest type of free men would need to be sought in the place where the greatest resistance is constantly being overcome: a short step away from tyranny, right on the threshold of the danger of servitude. This is psychologically true, if one understands here by 'tyrants' pitiless and terrible instincts which require the maximum of authority and discipline to deal with them—finest type Julius Caesar—and it is also politically true, if one simply takes a walk through history. The nations which were worth something, *became* worth something, never did so under liberal institutions: it was *great danger* that turned them into something worthy of respect, the kind of danger without which we would not know our instruments, our virtues, our defences and weapons, our *spirit*—which *forces* us to be strong... *First* principle: you must need to be strong, or else you will never become it.—Those great hothouses for strong, for the strongest kind of people there has yet been—the aristocratic communities such as Rome and Venice—understood freedom in exactly the same sense as I understand the word freedom: as something which one can have and *not* have, which one can *want*, which one can *conquer*...

49

Goethe—not a German event but a European one: a magnificent attempt to overcome the eighteenth century by a return to nature, by a coming-*up* to the naturalness of the Renaissance, a kind of self-overcoming on the part of that century.—He bore its strongest instincts in himself: sentimentality, nature-idolatry, the antihistorical, the idealistic, the

unreal and revolutionary (—the last being merely a form of the unreal). He made use of history, natural science, antiquity, as well as Spinoza, and of practical activity above all; he surrounded himself with nothing but closed horizons; he did not divorce himself from life but immersed himself in it; he never lost heart, and took as much as possible upon himself, above himself, into himself. What he wanted was *totality*; he fought against the disjunction of reason, sensuality, feeling, will (—preached in the most repulsively scholastic way by *Kant*, Goethe's antipode), he disciplined himself into a whole, he *created* himself... In the midst of an age disposed to unreality, Goethe was a convinced realist: he said yes to all that was related to him in this respect—he had no greater experience than that *ens realissimum* called Napoleon. Goethe conceived of a strong, highly educated man, adept in all things bodily, with a tight rein on himself and a reverence for himself, who can dare to grant himself the whole range and richness of naturalness, who is strong enough for this freedom; the man of tolerance, not out of weakness, but out of strength, because he knows how to turn to his advantage what would destroy the average type; the man to whom there is no longer anything forbidden except *weakness*, whether it be called vice or virtue... Such a *liberated* spirit stands in the midst of the universe with a joyful and trusting fatalism, with *faith* in the fact that only what is individual is reprehensible, that everything is redeemed and affirmed in the whole—*he no longer denies*... But such a faith is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of Dionysus.

Simone de Beauvoir

Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir (1908–1986 CE) was a French writer and philosopher, activist and pioneer of the feminist movement.

Raised strictly Catholic in a bourgeois family, she declared herself an atheist at the age of 14 and decided to make her own experience of life. In 1929, she graduated from the Sorbonne University in Paris with a thesis on Leibniz. Soon after, she met Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980 CE) with whom, although they never married and never lived under the same roof, she would have a lifelong relationship. Both existentialist philosophers, they worked together, de Beauvoir describing herself as the midwife of Sartre's thinking.

She worked for a couple of years as a philosophy and literature teacher, but at the beginning of the Second World War her position was revoked by the Vichy government. During the following period, she wrote more and more, working on novels (*L'Invitée* in 1943, *Le Sang des autres* in 1945) and philosophical essays (*Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté* in 1947) which were based on her own experience of being a woman. In the 1940s, de Beauvoir and Sartre began to edit a newspaper, *Les Temps Modernes*, which they envisioned as a vehicle for their ideas. The first issue was published in 1945, signalling the beginning of a new era. The year after, de Beauvoir began writing *Le Deuxième Sexe*, which would be published in 1949.

In the words of scholar Debra Bergoffen, "*The Second Sex* speaks of the specific ways that the natural and social sciences and the European literary, social, political and religious traditions have created a world where impossible and conflicting ideals of femininity produce an ideology of women's "natural" inferiority to justify patriarchal domination."[1]

When it was first published, the Catholic Church banned the book. It was a success nonetheless. But it would take 50 years for de Beauvoir's writings to be fully acknowledged in the pantheon of (mostly male) political philosophers… an effect of the reality she described.

THE SECOND SEX (1949)

She is the Other at the heart of a whole

Introduction // Translated from French by Constance Borde & Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, 2009

> I hesitated a long time before writing a book on woman. The subject is irritating, especially for women; and it is not new. Enough ink has flowed over the quarrel about feminism; it is now almost over: let's not talk about it anymore. Yet it is still being talked about. And the volumes of idiocies churned out over this past century do not seem to have clarified the problem. Besides, is there a problem? And what is it? Are there even women? True, the theory of the eternal feminine still has its followers; they whisper, "Even in Russia, women are still very much women"; but other well-informed people—and also at times those same ones—lament, "Woman is losing herself, woman is lost." It is hard to know any longer if women still exist, if they will always exist, if there should be women at all, what

[1] Debra Bergoffen, "Simone de Beauvoir", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2004/2018. URL: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/beauvoir/

place they hold in this world, what place they should hold. “Where are the women?” asked a short-lived magazine recently. But first, what is a woman? “*Tota mulier in utero*: she is a womb,” some say. Yet speaking of certain women, the experts proclaim, “They are not women,” even though they have a uterus like the others. Everyone agrees there are females in the human species; today, as in the past, they make up about half of humanity; and yet we are told that “femininity is in jeopardy”; we are urged, “Be women, stay women, become women.” So not every female human being is necessarily a woman; she must take part in this mysterious and endangered reality known as femininity. Is femininity secreted by the ovaries? Is it enshrined in a Platonic heaven? Is a frilly petticoat enough to bring it down to earth? Although some women zealously strive to embody it, the model has never been patented. It is typically described in vague and shimmering terms borrowed from a clairvoyant’s vocabulary. In Saint Thomas’s time it was an essence defined with as much certainty as the sedative quality of a poppy. But conceptualism has lost ground: biological and social sciences no longer believe there are immutably determined entities that define given characteristics like those of the woman, the Jew, or the black; science considers characteristics as secondary reactions to a *situation*. If there is no such thing today as femininity, it is because there never was. Does the word “woman,” then, have no content? It is what advocates of Enlightenment philosophy, rationalism, or nominalism vigorously assert: women are, among human beings, merely those who are arbitrarily designated by the word “woman”; American women in particular are inclined to think that woman as such no longer exists. If some backward individual still takes herself for a woman, her friends advise her to undergo psychoanalysis to get rid of this obsession. Referring to a book—a very irritating one at that—*Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, Dorothy Parker wrote: “I cannot be fair about books that treat women as women. My idea is that all of us, men as well as women, whoever we are, should be considered as human beings.” But nominalism is a doctrine that falls a bit short; and it is easy for antifeminists to show that women are not men. Certainly woman like man is a human being; but such an assertion is abstract; the fact is that every concrete human being is always uniquely situated. To reject the notions of the eternal feminine, the black soul, or the Jewish character is not to deny that there are today Jews, blacks, or women: this denial is not a liberation for those concerned but an inauthentic flight. Clearly, no woman can claim without bad faith to be situated beyond her sex. A few years ago, a well-known woman writer refused to have her portrait appear in a series of photographs devoted specifically to women writers. She wanted to be included in the men’s category; but to get this privilege, she used her husband’s influence. Women who assert they are men still claim masculine consideration and respect. I also remember a young Trotskyite standing on a platform during a stormy meeting, about to come to blows in spite of her obvious fragility. She was denying her feminine frailty; but it was for the love of a militant man she wanted to be equal to. The defiant position that American women occupy proves they are haunted by the feeling of their own femininity. And the truth is that anyone can clearly see that humanity is split into two categories of individuals with manifestly different clothes, faces, bodies, smiles, movements, interests, and occupations; these differences are perhaps superficial; perhaps they are destined to disappear. What is certain is that for the moment they exist in a strikingly obvious way.

If the female function is not enough to define woman, and if we also reject the explanation of the “eternal feminine,” but if we accept, even temporarily, that there are women on the earth, we then have to ask: What is a woman?

Merely stating the problem suggests an immediate answer to me. It is significant that I pose it. It would never occur to a man to write a book on the singular situation of males in humanity. If I want to define myself, I first have to say, “I am a woman”; all other assertions will arise from this basic truth. A man never begins by positing himself as an individual of a

certain sex: that he is a man is obvious. The categories masculine and feminine appear as symmetrical in a formal way on town hall records or identification papers. The relation of the two sexes is not that of two electrical poles: the man represents both the positive and the neuter to such an extent that in French *hommes* designates human beings, the particular meaning of the word *vir* being assimilated into the general meaning of the word "homo." Woman is the negative, to such a point that any determination is imputed to her as a limitation, without reciprocity. I used to get annoyed in abstract discussions to hear men tell me: "You think such and such a thing because you're a woman." But I know my only defense is to answer, "I think it because it is true," thereby eliminating my subjectivity; it was out of the question to answer, "And you think the contrary because you are a man," because it is understood that being a man is not a particularity; a man is in his right by virtue of being man; it is the woman who is in the wrong. In fact, just as for the ancients there was an absolute vertical that defined the oblique, there is an absolute human type that is masculine. Woman has ovaries and a uterus; such are the particular conditions that lock her in her subjectivity; some even say she thinks with her hormones. Man vainly forgets that his anatomy also includes hormones and testicles. He grasps his body as a direct and normal link with the world that he believes he apprehends in all objectivity, whereas he considers woman's body an obstacle, a prison, burdened by everything that particularizes it. "The female is female by virtue of a certain *lack* of qualities," Aristotle said. "We should regard women's nature as suffering from natural defectiveness." And Saint Thomas in his turn decreed that woman was an "incomplete man," an "incidental" being. This is what the Genesis story symbolizes, where Eve appears as if drawn from Adam's "supernumerary" bone, in Bossuet's words. Humanity is male, and man defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself; she is not considered an autonomous being. "Woman, the relative being," writes Michelet. Thus Monsieur Benda declares in *Le rapport d'Uriel* (Uriel's Report): "A man's body has meaning by itself, disregarding the body of the woman, whereas the woman's body seems devoid of meaning without reference to the male. Man thinks himself without woman. Woman does not think herself without man." And she is nothing other than what man decides; she is thus called "the sex," meaning that the male sees her essentially as a sexed being; for him she is sex, so she is it in the absolute. She is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other.

The category of *Other* is as original as consciousness itself. The duality between Self and Other can be found in the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies; this division did not always fall into the category of the division of the sexes, it was not based on any empirical given: this comes out in works like Granet's on Chinese thought, and Dumézil's on India and Rome. In couples such as Varuna—Mitra, Uranus—Zeus, Sun—Moon, Day—Night, no feminine element is involved at the outset; neither in Good—Evil, auspicious and inauspicious, left and right, God and Lucifer; alterity is the fundamental category of human thought. No group ever defines itself as One without immediately setting up the Other opposite itself. It only takes three travelers brought together by chance in the same train compartment for the rest of the travelers to become vaguely hostile "others." Village people view anyone not belonging to the village as suspicious "others." For the native of a country inhabitants of other countries are viewed as "foreigners"; Jews are the "others" for anti-Semites, blacks for racist Americans, indigenous people for colonists, proletarians for the propertied classes. After studying the diverse forms of primitive society in depth, Lévi-Strauss could conclude: "The passage from the state of Nature to the state of Culture is defined by man's ability to think biological relations as systems of oppositions; duality, alternation, opposition, and symmetry,

whether occurring in defined or less clear form, are not so much phenomena to explain as fundamental and immediate givens of social reality." These phenomena could not be understood if human reality were solely a *Mitsein*[1] based on solidarity and friendship. On the contrary, they become clear if, following Hegel, a fundamental hostility to any other consciousness is found in consciousness itself; the subject posits itself only in opposition; it asserts itself as the essential and sets up the other as inessential, as the object.

But the other consciousness has an opposing reciprocal claim: traveling, a local is shocked to realize that in neighboring countries locals view him as a foreigner; between villages, clans, nations, and classes there are wars, potlatches, agreements, treaties, and struggles that remove the absolute meaning from the idea of the Other and bring out its relativity; whether one likes it or not, individuals and groups have no choice but to recognize the reciprocity of their relation. How is it, then, that between the sexes this reciprocity has not been put forward, that one of the terms has been asserted as the only essential one, denying any relativity in regard to its correlative, defining the latter as pure alterity? Why do women not contest male sovereignty? No subject posits itself spontaneously and at once as the inessential from the outset; it is not the Other who, defining itself as Other, defines the One; the Other is posited as Other by the One positing itself as One. But in order for the Other not to turn into the One, the Other has to submit to this foreign point of view. Where does this submission in woman come from?

There are other cases where, for a shorter or longer time, one category has managed to dominate another absolutely. It is often numerical inequality that confers this privilege: the majority imposes its law on or persecutes the minority. But women are not a minority like American blacks, or like Jews: there are as many women as men on the earth. Often, the two opposing groups concerned were once independent of each other; either they were not aware of each other in the past, or they accepted each other's autonomy; and some historical event subordinated the weaker to the stronger: the Jewish Diaspora, slavery in America, and the colonial conquests are facts with dates. In these cases, for the oppressed there was a *before*: they share a past, a tradition, sometimes a religion, or a culture. In this sense, the parallel Bebel draws between women and the proletariat would be the best founded: proletarians are not a numerical minority either, and yet they have never formed a separate group. However, not *one* event but a whole historical development explains their existence as a class and accounts for the distribution of these individuals in this class. There have not always been proletarians: there have always been women; they are women by their physiological structure; as far back as history can be traced, they have always been subordinate to men; their dependence is not the consequence of an event or a becoming, it did not *happen*. Alterity here appears to be an absolute, partly because it falls outside the accidental nature of historical fact. A situation created over time can come undone at another time—blacks in Haiti for one are a good example; on the contrary, a natural condition seems to defy change. In truth, nature is no more an immutable given than is historical reality. If woman discovers herself as the inessential and never turns into the essential, it is because she does not bring about this transformation herself. Proletarians say "we." So do blacks. Positing themselves as subjects, they thus transform the bourgeois or whites into "others." Women—except in certain abstract gatherings such as conferences—do not use "we"; men say "women," and women adopt this word to refer to themselves; but they do not posit themselves authentically as Subjects. The proletarians made the revolution in Russia, the blacks in Haiti, the Indo-Chinese are fighting in Indochina. Women's actions have never been more

[1] *Mitsein* can be translated as "being with." The French term *réalité humaine* (human reality) has been problematically used to translate Heidegger's Dasein.—TRANS.

than symbolic agitation; they have won only what men have been willing to concede to them; they have taken nothing; they have received. It is that they lack the concrete means to organize themselves into a unit that could posit itself in opposition. They have no past, no history, no religion of their own; and unlike the proletariat, they have no solidarity of labor or interests; they even lack their own space that makes communities of American blacks, the Jews in ghettos, or the workers in Saint-Denis or Renault factories. They live dispersed among men, tied by homes, work, economic interests, and social conditions to certain men—fathers or husbands—more closely than to other women. As bourgeois women, they are in solidarity with bourgeois men and not with women proletarians; as white women, they are in solidarity with white men and not with black women. The proletariat could plan to massacre the whole ruling class; a fanatic Jew or black could dream of seizing the secret of the atomic bomb and turning all of humanity entirely Jewish or entirely black: but a woman could not even dream of exterminating males. The tie that binds her to her oppressors is unlike any other. The division of the sexes is a biological given, not a moment in human history. Their opposition took shape within an original *Mitsein*, and she has not broken it. The couple is a fundamental unit with the two halves riveted to each other: cleavage of society by sex is not possible. This is the fundamental characteristic of woman: she is the Other at the heart of a whole whose two components are necessary to each other.

[…]

Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt (1906–1975 CE), a philosopher and political theorist, was born in Hanover into a Jewish family. She faced the increasing anti-Semitism in 1930s Nazi Germany.

Arendt studied philosophy first with Martin Heidegger[1], then with Karl Jaspers, two prominent figures of phenomenology and existentialism in Germany. But the political transformations would soon give her life another direction. In 1933, she was denounced and imprisoned for 8 days by the Gestapo. Upon her release, she fled to Paris with her mother, and in 1941 to the United States, where she eventually settled in New York City. It was there that she published her first major work in 1951, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, an analysis of the historical circumstances which resulted in the Nazi totalitarian State and the Holocaust.

In 1963, Arendt went to Jerusalem to report on the trial of Adolf Eichmann, one of the major organizers of the Holocaust, who had just been captured. Her series of articles – entitled *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* – which were published in The New Yorker, met a considerable readership and created controversy: many misunderstood her title and thought that she meant that evil was unexceptional. What Arendt meant, however, was precisely that the most dreadful thing about Eichmann was this: he was not the "monster" or sociopath one would expect, but only a 'normal' bureaucrat, motivated by professional promotion rather than by ideology. For Arendt, Eichmann was the type of an average person who could, in a situation where evil was the norm, carry out the most evil actions without seeing the evil in them.

THE ORIGINS OF TOTALITARIANISM (1951)

The Masses

Extracts, pp. 311-317 // Original text, 1951

> Totalitarian movements are possible wherever there are masses who for one reason or another have acquired the appetite for political organization. Masses are not held together by a consciousness of common interest and they lack that specific class articulateness which is expressed in determined, limited, and obtainable goals. The term masses applies only where we deal with people who either because of sheer numbers, or indifference, or a combination of both, cannot be integrated into any organization based on common interest, into political parties or municipal governments or professional organizations or trade unions. Potentially, they exist in every country and form the majority of those large numbers of neutral, politically indifferent people who never join a party and hardly ever go to the polls.

[1] One of the major philosophers of the 20th century, Heidegger's position in the history of philosophy must also be referred to the fact that he signed in 1933 the *Loyalty Oath of German Professors to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist State*, joined the Nazi Party and became the rector of the University of Freiburg, which he was to align on the new party-state positions. Though none of his published books were openly anti-Semitic, scholars have shown how Heidegger's thought shared affinities with his milieu. Hannah Arendt, who had an affair with him when she was his student, would remain his friend until his death. For an introduction on these questions, cf. Adam Kirsch, *Beware of Pity, Hannah Arendt and the power of the impersonal*, The New Yorker, January 12, 2009 issue (online).

It was characteristic of the rise of the Nazi movement in Germany and of the Communist movements in Europe after 1930 that they recruited their members from this mass of apparently indifferent people whom all other parties had given up as too apathetic or too stupid for their attention. The result was that the majority of their membership consisted of people who never before had appeared on the political scene. This permitted the introduction of entirely new methods into political propaganda, and indifference to the arguments of political opponents; these movements not only placed themselves outside and against the party system as a whole, they found a membership that had never been reached, never been "spoiled" by the party system. Therefore they did not need to refute opposing arguments and consistently preferred methods which ended in death rather than persuasion, which spelled terror rather than conviction. They presented disagreements as invariably originating in deep natural, social, or psychological sources beyond the control of the individual and therefore beyond the power of reason. This would have been a shortcoming only if they had sincerely entered into competition with ether parties; it was not if they were sure of dealing with people who had reason to be equally hostile to all parties.

The success of totalitarian movements among the masses meant the end of two illusions of democratically ruled countries in general and of European nation-states and their party system in particular. The first was that the people in its majority had taken an active part in government and that each individual was in sympathy with one's own or somebody else's party. On the contrary, the movements showed that the politically neutral and indifferent masses could easily be the majority in a democratically ruled country, that therefore a democracy could function according to rules which are actively recognized by only a minority. The second democratic illusion exploded by the totalitarian movements was that these politically indifferent masses did not matter, that they were truly neutral and constituted no more than the inarticulate backward setting for the political life of the nation. Now they made apparent what no other organ of public opinion had ever been able to show, namely, that democratic government had rested as much on the silent approbation and tolerance of the indifferent and inarticulate sections of the people as on the articulate and visible institutions and organizations of the country. Thus when the totalitarian movements invaded Parliament with their contempt for parliamentary government, they merely appeared inconsistent: actually, they succeeded in convincing the people at large that parliamentary majorities were spurious and did not necessarily correspond to the realities of the country, thereby undermining the self-respect and the confidence of governments which also believed in majority rule rather than in their constitutions.

It has frequently been pointed out that totalitarian movements use and abuse democratic freedoms in order to abolish them. This is not just devilish cleverness on the part of the leaders or childish stupidity on the part of the masses. Democratic freedoms may be based on the equality of all citizens before the law; yet they acquire their meaning and function organically only where the citizens belong to and are represented by groups or form a social and political hierarchy. The breakdown of the class system, the only social and political stratification of the European nation-states, certainly was "one of the most dramatic events in recent German history" and as favorable to the rise of Nazism as the absence of social stratification in Russia's immense rural population (this "great flaccid body destitute of political education, almost inaccessible to ideas capable of ennobling action") was to the Bolshevik overthrow of the democratic Kerensky government. Conditions in pre-Hitler Germany are indicative of the dangers implicit in the development of the Western part of the world since, with the end of the second World War, the same dramatic event of a breakdown of the class system repeated itself in almost all European

countries, while events in Russia clearly indicate the direction which the inevitable revolutionary changes in Asia may take. Practically speaking, it will make little difference whether totalitarian movements adopt the pattern of Nazism or Bolshevism, organize the masses in the name of race or class, pretend to follow the laws of life and nature or of dialectics and economics.

Indifference to public affairs, neutrality on political issues, are in themselves no sufficient cause for the rise of totalitarian movements. The competitive and acquisitive society of the bourgeoisie had produced apathy and even hostility toward public life not only, and not even primarily, in the social strata which were exploited and excluded from active participation in the rule of the country, but first of all in its own class. The long period of false modesty, when the bourgeoisie was content with being the dominating class in society without aspiring to political rule, which it gladly left to the aristocracy, was followed by the imperialist era, during which the bourgeoisie grew increasingly hostile to existing national institutions and began to claim and to organize itself for the exercise of political power. Both the early apathy and the later demand for monopolistic dictatorial direction of the nation's foreign affairs had their roots in a way and philosophy of life so insistently and exclusively centered on the individual's success or failure in ruthless competition that a citizen's duties and responsibilities could only be felt to be a needless drain on his limited time and energy. These bourgeois attitudes are very useful for those forms of dictatorship in which a “strong man” takes upon himself the troublesome responsibility for the conduct of public affairs; they are a positive hindrance to totalitarian movements which can tolerate bourgeois individualism no more than any other kind of individualism. The apathetic sections of a bourgeois-dominated society, no matter how unwilling they may be to assume the responsibilities of citizens, keep their personalities intact if only because without them they could hardly expect to survive the competitive struggle for life.

[…]

In this atmosphere of the breakdown of class society the psychology of the European mass man developed. The fact that with monotonous but abstract uniformity the same fate had befallen a mass of individuals did not prevent their judging themselves in terms of individual failure or the world in· terms of specific injustice. This self-centered bitterness, however, although repeated again and again in individual isolation, was not a common bond despite its tendency to extinguish individual differences, because it was based on no common interest, economic or social or political. Self-centeredness, therefore, went hand in hand with a decisive weakening of the instinct for self-preservation. Selflessness in the sense that oneself does not matter, the feeling of being expendable, was no longer the expression of individual idealism but a mass phenomenon. The old adage that the poor and oppressed have nothing to lose but their chains no longer applied to the mass men, for they lost much more than the chains of misery when they lost interest in their own well-being: the source of all the worries and cares which make human life troublesome and anguished was gone. Compared with their nonmaterialism, a Christian monk looks like a man absorbed in worldly affairs. Himmler, who knew so well the mentality of those whom he organized, described not only his SS-men, but the large strata from which he recruited them, when he said they were not interested in “everyday problems” but only “in ideological questions of importance for decades and centuries, so that the man . . . knows he is working for a great task which occurs but once in 2,000 years.” The gigantic massing of individuals produced a mentality which, like Cecil Rhodes some forty years before, thought in continents and felt in centuries.

Eminent European scholars and statesmen had predicted, from the early nineteenth century onward, the rise of the mass man and the coming of a mass age. A whole literature

on mass behavior and mass psychology had demonstrated and popularized the wisdom, so familiar to the ancients, of the affinity between democracy and dictatorship, between mob rule and tyranny. They had prepared certain politically conscious and overconscious sections of the Western educated world for the emergence of demagogues, for gullibility, superstition, and brutality. Yet, while all these predictions in a sense came true, they lost much of their significance in view of such unexpected and unpredicted phenomena as the radical loss of self-interest, the cynical or bored indifference in the face of death or other personal catastrophes, the passionate inclination toward the most abstract notions as guides for life, and the general contempt for even the most obvious rules of common sense.

The masses, contrary to prediction, did not result from growing equality of condition, from the spread of general education and its inevitable lowering of standards and popularization of content. (America, the classical land of equality of condition and of general education with all its shortcomings, knows less of the modern psychology of masses than perhaps any other country in the world.) It soon became apparent that highly cultured people were particularly attracted to mass movements and that, generally, highly differentiated individualism and sophistication did not prevent, indeed sometimes encouraged, the self-abandonment into the mass for which mass movements provided. Since the obvious fact that individualization and cultivation do not prevent the formation of mass attitudes was so unexpected, it has frequently been blamed upon the morbidity or nihilism of the modern intelligentsia, upon a supposedly typical intellectual sell-hatred, upon the spirit's “hostility to life” and antagonism to vitality. Yet, the much-slandered intellectuals were only the most illustrative example and the most articulate spokesmen for a much more general phenomenon. Social atomization and extreme individualization preceded the mass movements which, much more easily and earlier than they did the sociable, nonindividualistic members of the traditional parties, attracted the completely unorganized, the typical “nonjoiners” who for individualistic reasons always had refused to recognize social links or obligations.

The truth is that the masses grew out of the fragments of a highly atomized society whose competitive structure and concomitant loneliness of the individual had been held in check only through membership in a class. The chief characteristic of the mass man is not brutality and backwardness, but his isolation and lack of normal social relationships. Coming from the class-ridden society of the nation-state, whose cracks had been cemented with nationalistic sentiment, it is only natural that these masses, in the first helplessness of their new experience, have tended toward an especially violent nationalism, to which mass leaders have yielded against their own instincts and purposes for purely demagogic reasons.

[…]

Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault (1926–1984 CE) was a French philosopher, historian of ideas and social theorist, known for his critique of social institutions (the prison, the asylum, the school, etc.) and for his works on the relationship between *knowledge* and *power*.

Foucault, born into an upper-middle class family in Poitier, first studied in a religious school. Against the wish of his father who wanted him to study medicine, he moved to Paris and graduated in literature and philosophy, before entering the École Normale Supérieure, a training institution for teachers and researchers. From then on, Foucault would teach philosophy in many places, including the ENS, the University of Vincennes and later the Collège de France, one of France's most respected academic centres, founded in 1530. Foucault would remain there for 14 years, naming his chair *Histoire des systèmes de pensée*.

From his *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (1961) to *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (1975), Foucault combined the work of a historian of science and institutions, with in-depth sociological and philosophical analyses. Between 1976 and 1984, he would then publish the three first volumes of his *Histoire de la sexualité*, a project whose aim was to evaluate the relationship of European societies to the (re)productive forces of the human body. While sexuality had been largely repressed since the rise of the bourgeois capitalist society in the 17th century, sexual behaviours had been mostly controlled through a growing apparatus of sciences, speeches and institutions. These "politics of the body" would be synthetized in yet another concept, that of *biopower*, defined as an "explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations".

THE WILL TO KNOWLEDGE (1976)

THE HISTORY OF SEXUALITY 1

Right of Death and Power over Life

Extract from Part 5 // Translated from French by Robert Hurley, 1978

For a long time, one of the characteristic privileges of sovereign power was the right to decide life and death. In a formal sense, it derived no doubt from the ancient *patria potestas* that granted the father of the Roman family the right to "dispose" of the life of his children and his slaves; just as he had given them life, so he could take it away. By the time the right of life and death was framed by the classical theoreticians, it was in a considerably diminished form. It was no longer considered that this power of the sovereign over his subjects could be exercised in an absolute and unconditional way, but only in cases where the sovereign's very existence was in jeopardy: a sort of right of rejoinder. If he were threatened by external enemies who sought to overthrow him or contest his rights, he could then legitimately wage war, and require his subjects to take part in the defense of the state; without "directly proposing their death," he was empowered to "expose their life": in this sense, he wielded an "indirect" power over them of life and death. But if someone dared to rise up against him and transgress his laws, then he could exercise a direct power over the offender's life: as punishment, the latter would be put to death. Viewed in this way, the power of life and death was not an absolute privilege: it was

conditioned by the defense of the sovereign, and his own survival. Must we follow Hobbes in seeing it as the transfer to the prince of the natural right possessed by every individual to defend his life even if this meant the death of others? Or should it be regarded as a specific right that was manifested with the formation of that new juridical being, the sovereign? In any case, in its modern form—relative and limited—as in its ancient and absolute form, the right of life and death is a dissymmetrical one. The sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring. The right which was formulated as the "power of life and death" was in reality the right to *take* life or *let* live. Its symbol, after all, was the sword. Perhaps this juridical form must be referred to a historical type of society in which power was exercised mainly as a means of deduction [*prélèvement*], a subtraction mechanism, a right to appropriate a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labor and blood, levied on the subjects. Power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it.

Since the classical age the West has undergone a very profound transformation of these mechanisms of power. "Deduction" has tended to be no longer the major form of power but merely one element among others, working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them. There has been a parallel shift in the right of death, or at least a tendency to align itself with the exigencies of a life-administering power and to define itself accordingly. This death that was based on the right of the sovereign is now manifested as simply the reverse of the right of the social body to ensure, maintain, or develop its life. Yet wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century, and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations. But this formidable power of death—and this is perhaps what accounts for part of its force and the cynicism with which it has so greatly expanded its limits—now presents itself as the counterpart of a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations. Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed. And through a turn that closes the circle, as the technology of wars has caused them to tend increasingly toward all-out destruction, the decision that initiates them and the one that terminates them are in fact increasingly informed by the naked question of survival. The atomic situation is now at the end point of this process: the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual's continued existence. The principle underlying the tactics of battle—that one has to be capable of killing in order to go on living—has become the principle that defines the strategy of states. But the existence in question is no longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population. If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill; it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population.

On another level, I might have taken up the example of the death penalty. Together with war, it was for a long time the other form of the right of the sword; it constituted the reply of the sovereign to those who attacked his will, his law, or his person. Those who died

on the scaffold became fewer and fewer, in contrast to those who died in wars. But it was for the same reasons that the latter became more numerous and the former more and more rare. As soon as power gave itself the function of administering life, its reason for being and the logic of its exercise—and not the awakening of humanitarian feelings—made it more and more difficult to apply the death penalty. How could power exercise its highest prerogatives by putting people to death, when its main role was to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, to put this life in order? For such a power, execution was at the same time a limit, a scandal, and a contradiction. Hence capital punishment could not be maintained except by invoking less the enormity of the crime itself than the monstrosity of the criminal, his incorrigibility, and the safeguard of society. One had the right to kill those who represented a kind of biological danger to others.

One might say that the ancient right to *take* life or *let* live was replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death. This is perhaps what explains that disqualification of death which marks the recent wane of the rituals that accompanied it. That death is so carefully evaded is linked less to a new anxiety which makes death unbearable for our societies than to the fact that the procedures of power have not ceased to turn away from death. In the passage from this world to the other, death was the manner in which a terrestrial sovereignty was relieved by another, singularly more powerful sovereignty; the pageantry that surrounded it was in the category of political ceremony. Now it is over life, throughout its unfolding, that power establishes its dominion; death is power's limit, the moment that escapes it; death becomes the most secret aspect of existence, the most "private." It is not surprising that suicide—once a crime, since it was a way to usurp the power of death which the sovereign alone, whether the one here below or the Lord above, had the right to exercise—became, in the course of the nineteenth century, one of the first conducts to enter into the sphere of sociological analysis; it testified to the individual and private right to die, at the borders and in the interstices of power that was exercised over life. This determination to die, strange and yet so persistent and constant in its manifestations, and consequently so difficult to explain as being due to particular circumstances or individual accidents, was one of the first astonishments of a society in which political power had assigned itself the task of administering life.

In concrete terms, starting in the seventeenth century, this power over life evolved in two basic forms; these forms were not antithetical, however; they constituted rather two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of these poles—the first to be formed, it seems—centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the *disciplines*: an *anatomo-politics of the human body*. The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a bio-politics of the population*. The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed. The setting up, in the course of the classical age, of this great bipolar technology—anatomic and biological, individualizing and specifying, directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life—characterized a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through.

The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life. During the classical period, there was a rapid development of various disciplines—universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops; there was also the emergence, in the field of political practices and economic observation, of the problems of birthrate, longevity, public health, housing, and migration. Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of "bio-power." The two directions taken by its development still appeared to be clearly separate in the eighteenth century. With regard to discipline, this development was embodied in institutions such as the army and the schools, and in reflections on tactics, apprenticeship, education, and the nature of societies, ranging from the strictly military analyses of Marshal de Saxe to the political reveries of Guibert or Servan. As for population controls, one notes the emergence of demography, the evaluation of the relationship between resources and inhabitants, the constructing of tables analyzing wealth and its circulation: the work of Quesnay, Moheau, and Süssmilch. The philosophy of the "Ideologists," as a theory of ideas, signs, and the individual genesis of sensations, but also a theory of the social composition of interests—Ideology being a doctrine of apprenticeship, but also a doctrine of contracts and the regulated formation of the social body—no doubt constituted the abstract discourse in which one sought to coordinate these two techniques of power in order to construct a general theory of it. In point of fact, however, they were not to be joined at the level of a speculative discourse, but in the form of concrete arrangements [*agencements concrets*] that would go to make up the great technology of power in the nineteenth century: the deployment of sexuality would be one of them, and one of the most important.

This bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes. But this was not all it required; it also needed the growth of both these factors, their reinforcement as well as their availability and docility; it had to have methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern. If the development of the great instruments of the state, as *institutions* of power, ensured the maintenance of production relations, the rudiments of anatomo- and bio-politics, created in the eighteenth century as *techniques* of power present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective bodies), operated in the sphere of economic processes, their development, and the forces working to sustain them. They also acted as factors of segregation and social hierarchization, exerting their influence on the respective forces of both these movements, guaranteeing relations of domination and effects of hegemony. The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of bio-power in its many forms and modes of application. The investment of the body, its valorization, and the distributive management of its forces were at the time indispensable. […]

Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari

Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995 CE), a French philosopher, and Félix Guattari (1930–1992 CE), a French schizoanalyst, ecosopher and semiologist, are best known for their collaborative work on the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

The first one was published in 1972, a couple of years after the protests of May 68 in France, under the title *L'Anti-Œdipe*. The book begins with a critique of Freud's psychoanalytic model, which they describe as part of the ideological framework of the dominant capitalist class, the bourgeoisie. Making an extensive use of the history of ideas (philosophers like Marx, Nietzsche, Kant and Spinoza, but also writers like Bataille, Artaud, Proust or Beckett), Deleuze & Guattari sketched the outlines of a *materialist psychiatry*, which would attempt to understand how human *desire* composes with the cultural and economic structures of society. One of their aims, in the wake of the fascist era, was to question how desire can end up desiring its own repression. They asserted that desire is never only a personal matter, but also a social one.

While the first volume was an attack on the normative features of the liberal bourgeois way of thinking, the second volume, *Mille Plateaux*, published in 1980, was described by translator Brian Massumi as a positive exercise in *nomadology*, i.e. the tendency inherent to any living being to look for a way out, a way of re-inventing itself, of becoming other.

Deleuze & Guattari examined this process and its outcomes in a variety of fields, from cybernetics to political rule, and from ecology to economics. Their concept of *rhizome*, which opens the book, offers a good introduction to *constructivism* in philosophy.

A THOUSAND PLATEAUS (1980)

CAPITALISM AND SCHIZOPHRENIA II

Rhizome

Extracts pp. 3-8 // Translated from French by Brian Massumi, 1987

The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd. Here we have made use of everything that came within range, what was closest as well as farthest away. We have assigned clever pseudonyms to prevent recognition. Why have we kept our own names? Out of habit, purely out of habit. To make ourselves unrecognizable in turn. To render imperceptible, not ourselves, but what makes us act, feel, and think. Also because it's nice to talk like everybody else, to say the sun rises, when everybody knows it's only a manner of speaking. To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves. Each will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied.

A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. It is to fabricate a beneficent God to explain geological movements. In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of

deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an *assemblage*. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity—but we don't know yet what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed, that is, after it has been elevated to the status of a substantive. […]

A first type of book is the root-book. The tree is already the image of the world, or the root the image of the world-tree. This is the classical book, as noble, signifying, and subjective organic interiority (the strata of the book). The book imitates the world, as art imitates nature: by procedures specific to it that accomplish what nature cannot or can no longer do. The law of the book is the law of reflection, the One that becomes two. How could the law of the book reside in nature, when it is what presides over the very division between world and book, nature and art? One becomes two: whenever we encounter this formula, even stated strategically by Mao or understood in the most "dialectical" way possible, what we have before us is the most classical and well reflected, oldest, and weariest kind of thought. Nature doesn't work that way: in nature, roots are taproots with a more multiple, lateral, and circular system of ramification, rather than a dichotomous one. Thought lags behind nature. Even the book as a natural reality is a taproot, with its pivotal spine and surrounding leaves. But the book as a spiritual reality, the Tree or Root as an image, endlessly develops the law of the One that becomes two, then of the two that become four. . . Binary logic is the spiritual reality of the root-tree. Even a discipline as "advanced" as linguistics retains the root-tree as its fundamental image, and thus remains wedded to classical reflection (for example, Chomsky and his grammatical trees, which begin at a point S and proceed by dichotomy). This is as much as to say that this system of thought has never reached an understanding of multiplicity: in order to arrive at two following a spiritual method it must assume a strong principal unity. On the side of the object, it is no doubt possible, following the natural method, to go directly from One to three, four, or five, but only if there is a strong principal unity available, that of the pivotal taproot supporting the secondary roots. That doesn't get us very far. The binary logic of dichotomy has simply been replaced by biunivocal relationships between successive circles. The pivotal taproot provides no better understanding of multiplicity than the dichotomous root. One operates in the object, the other in the subject. Binary logic and biunivocal relationships still dominate psychoanalysis (the tree of delusion in the Freudian interpretation of Schreber's case), linguistics, structuralism, and even information science.

The radicle-system, or fascicular root, is the second figure of the book, to which our modernity pays willing allegiance. This time, the principal root has aborted, or its tip has been destroyed; an immediate, indefinite multiplicity of secondary roots grafts onto it and undergoes a flourishing development. This time, natural reality is what aborts the principal root, but the root's unity subsists, as past or yet to come, as possible. We must ask if reflexive, spiritual reality does not compensate for this state of things by demanding an even more comprehensive secret unity, or a more extensive totality. Take William Burroughs's cut-up method: the folding of one text onto another, which constitutes multiple and even adventitious roots (like a cutting), implies a supplementary dimension to that of the texts under consideration. In this supplementary dimension of folding, unity continues its spiritual labor. That is why the most resolutely fragmented work can also be presented as the Total Work or Magnum Opus. Most modern methods for making series proliferate or a multiplicity grow are perfectly valid in one direction, for example, a linear direction, whereas a unity of totalization asserts itself even more firmly in another, circular or cyclic, dimension. Whenever a multiplicity is taken up in a structure, its growth is offset by a reduction in its laws of combination. The abortionists of unity are indeed angel makers,

doctores angelici, because they affirm a properly angelic and superior unity. Joyce's words, accurately described as having "multiple roots," shatter the linear unity of the word, even of language, only to posit a cyclic unity of the sentence, text, or knowledge. Nietzsche's aphorisms shatter the linear unity of knowledge, only to invoke the cyclic unity of the eternal return, present as the nonknown in thought. This is as much as to say that the fascicular system does not really break with dualism, with the complementarity between a subject and an object, a natural reality and a spiritual reality: unity is consistently thwarted and obstructed in the object, while a new type of unity triumphs in the subject. The world has lost its pivot; the subject can no longer even dichotomize, but accedes to a higher unity, of ambivalence or overdetermination, in an always supplementary dimension to that of its object. The world has become chaos, but the book remains the image of the world: radicle-chaosmos rather than root-cosmos. A strange mystification: a book all the more total for being fragmented. At any rate, what a vapid idea, the book as the image of the world. In truth, it is not enough to say, "Long live the multiple," difficult as it is to raise that cry. No typographical, lexical, or even syntactical cleverness is enough to make it heard. The multiple must be made, not by always adding a higher dimension, but rather in the simplest of ways, by dint of sobriety, with the number of dimensions one already has available—always *n* -1 (the only way the one belongs to the multiple: always subtracted). Subtract the unique from the multiplicity to be constituted; write at *n* -1 dimensions. A system of this kind could be called a rhizome. A rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. Bulbs and tubers are rhizomes. Plants with roots or radicles may be rhizomorphic in other respects altogether: the question is whether plant life in its specificity is not entirely rhizomatic. Even some animals are, in their pack form. Rats are rhizomes. Burrows are too, in all of their functions of shelter, supply, movement, evasion, and breakout. The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. When rats swarm over each other. The rhizome includes the best and the worst: potato and couchgrass, or the weed. Animal and plant, couchgrass is crabgrass. We get the distinct feeling that we will convince no one unless we enumerate certain approximate characteristics of the rhizome.

1 and 2. Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order. The linguistic tree on the Chomsky model still begins at a point S and proceeds by dichotomy. On the contrary, not every trait in a rhizome is necessarily linked to a linguistic feature: semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status. *Collective assemblages of enunciation* function directly within *machinic assemblages*; it is not impossible to make a radical break between regimes of signs and their objects. Even when linguistics claims to confine itself to what is explicit and to make no presuppositions about language, it is still in the sphere of a discourse implying particular modes of assemblage and types of social power. Chomsky's grammaticality, the categorical S symbol that dominates every sentence, is more fundamentally a marker of power than a syntactic marker: you will construct grammatically correct sentences, you will divide each statement into a noun phrase and a verb phrase (first dichotomy. . .). Our criticism of these linguistic models is not that they are too abstract but, on the contrary, that they are not abstract enough, that they do not reach the *abstract machine* that connects a language to the semantic and pragmatic contents of statements, to collective assemblages of enunciation, to a whole micropolitics of the social field. A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse

acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community. Language is, in Weinreich's words, "an essentially heterogeneous reality." There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity. Language stabilizes around a parish, a bishopric, a capital. It forms a bulb. It evolves by subterranean stems and flows, along river valleys or train tracks; it spreads like a patch of oil. It is always possible to break a language down into internal structural elements, an undertaking not fundamentally different from a search for roots. There is always something genealogical about a tree. It is not a method for the people. A method of the rhizome type, on the contrary, can analyze language only by decentering it onto other dimensions and other registers. A language is never closed upon itself, except as a function of impotence.

[…]

Bibliography

John Burnet (ed. & tr.), *Early Greek Philosophy*, A. and C. Black, London, 1892.

Héraclite, *Fragments*, tr. Marcel Conche, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1986.

Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, tr. R. Hicks, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1925.

Robin Waterfield (ed. & tr.), *The First Philosophers*, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford, 2000.

Hippocrates, *Ancient Medicine. Airs, Waters, Places. Epidemics 1 and 3. The Oath. Precepts. Nutriment*, tr. W.H.S. Jones, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1923.

Plato, *The Republic*, tr. Allan Bloom, HarperCollins, New York, 1991.

Plato, *Phaedrus*, tr. Robin Waterfield, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002.

Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. Roger Crisp, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004.

Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, tr. M.F. Smith (1969), Hackett Publishing, Cambridge, 2001.

Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, tr. P.E. Matheson, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1916.

Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. H. Chadwick, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1992.

Philip Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 5., Christian Literature, 1887.

Augustine, *On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings*, tr. P. King, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, tr. W. V. Cooper, J. M. Dent & Co., London, 1902.

Avicenna, *Treatise on Logic*, tr. Farhang Zabeeh, ed. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1971.

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Christian Classics, 1981.

M.O'C. Walshe (ed. & tr.), *The complete mystical works of Meister Eckhart*, Crossroad, New York, 2009.

Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, tr. R. Brown-Grant, Penguin, London, 1999.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, tr. Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1942.

Nicolas Machiavelli, *The Prince*, tr. Peter Bondanella, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

Martin Luther, *Treatise on Good Works*, tr. Johann Michael Reu (c. 1930), [online], Project Gutenberg, url: https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/418 (retrieved 19.02.2019).
Maurice A. Finocchiaro (ed. & tr.), *The Essential Galileo*, Hackett, Indianapolis, 2008.

René Descartes, *A Discourse on the Method of Correctly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*, tr. Ian Maclean, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006.

Peter Constantine (ed. & tr.), *The essential writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Random House, New York, 2013.

David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.

Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.

Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, tr. Marian Evans, Trübner & co., London, 1881.

Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, tr. Judith Norman et al., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, tr. Samuel Moore & Friedrich Engels (1888), Random House, New York, 2004.

Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, tr. S.W. Ryazanskaya, ed. Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1971.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense*, tr. Taylor Carman, HarperCollins, New York, 2010.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, tr. Josefine Nauckhoff, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra. A Book for All and None*, tr. Adrian Del Caro, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, tr. Marion Faber, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006.

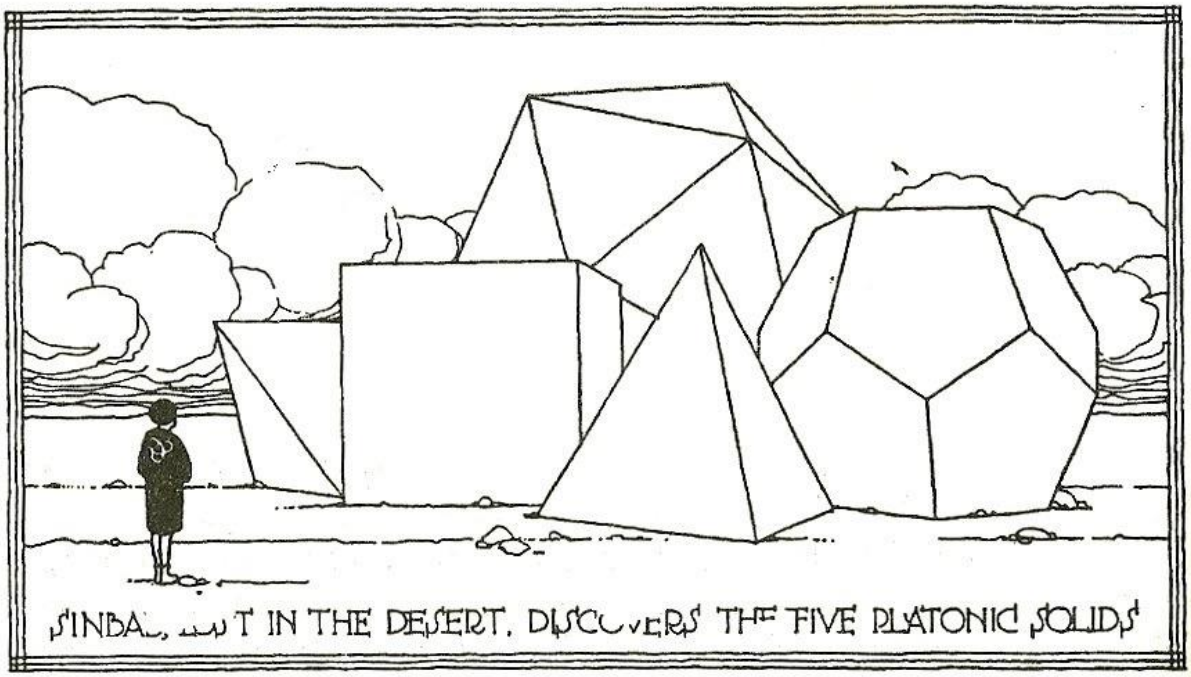
Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harvest Books, New York, 1973.

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, tr. Constance Borde & Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Random House, New York, 2009.

Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, tr. Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1987.

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, tr. Robert Hurley, Random House, New York, 1978.

*



SINBAD, LOST IN THE DESERT, DISCOVERS THE FIVE PLATONIC SOLIDS