

*In conjunction with the*



## Introduction to Philosophy - 1



Image courtesy of [Giamesh](#).

Professor Paul Weithman

### Course Description

This course is an introduction to philosophy for students seeking (or being forced) to fulfill a portion of their university philosophy requirements. The course is intended to introduce you to philosophical questions, to make you aware of how some of history's greatest philosophers have approached those questions and what they have had to say about them, to help you articulate philosophical concerns of your own and, most importantly, to learn how to address them. Among the areas of philosophy will explore are ethics, political philosophy, metaphysics and theory of knowledge.

# About the Professor



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## **Professor Paul Weithman, Ph.D.**

Philosophy Department  
University of Notre Dame

Areas of Interest: Contemporary Political Philosophy, Ethics, Medieval Political Philosophy

Paul Weithman is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Philosophy Department at the University of Notre Dame. His dissertation, "Justice, Charity, and Property: The Centrality of Sin to the Political Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas" was directed by John Rawls and Judith Shklar at Harvard University. Professor Weithman works primarily on issues in contemporary political philosophy and ethics, though, as his dissertation indicates, he takes an interest in medieval political philosophy as well. In his recent book, *Religion and the Obligations of Citizenship* (Cambridge, 2002), Professor Weithman defends an account of ethics citizenship in which citizens may appeal to religious reasons in voting and deliberation, provided that citizens believe the government would be justified in adopting the measures which these citizens prefer.

# Syllabus

## Textbooks

Plato, [\*The Republic\*](#)\*, translated by Robin Waterfield. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. ISBN: 0192829092

Aristotle, [\*Nicomachean Ethics\*](#)\*, Edited by J. L. Ackrill and J. O. Urmson. Translated by David Ross. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. ISBN: 0192815180

Thomas Aquinas, [\*Treatise on Happiness\*](#)\*, translated by John Oesterle. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983. ISBN: 0268018499

Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and [\*Meditations on First Philosophy\*](#)*\*, 4th Edition, translated by Donald Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999. ISBN: 0872204200

Thomas Hobbes, [\*Leviathan\*](#)\*: *With Selected Variants from the Latin Edition of 1668*, Edited by Edwin Curley. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999. ISBN: 0872201775

[Holy Bible](#), King James Version.

Fyodor Dostoyevski, [\*The Grand Inquisitor\*](#)\*. Frederick Ungar, 1981. ISBN: 0804461252

\*Links for these texts connect you to public domain versions of these texts, not to the ones listed here.

## Films

[Jesus of Montreal](#)

## Course Requirements

Exams: There will be a final exam.

# Calendar

Week	Topic	Readings
1	Introduction to Philosophy	<a href="#"><i>The Republic</i></a> , Books 1-2
	Introduction to Plato	
2	Plato	<a href="#"><i>The Republic</i></a> , Books 1-4
3	Plato	<a href="#"><i>The Republic</i></a> , Book 7
4	Aristotle	<a href="#"><i>The Nicomachean Ethics</i></a> , Books 1-3
5	Aristotle	<a href="#"><i>The Nicomachean Ethics</i></a> , Books 8-9
6	Aristotle	<a href="#"><i>The Nicomachean Ethics</i></a> , Books 8-9
	Thomas Aquinas	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> , I-II, q. <a href="#">2-3</a>
7	Thomas Aquinas	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> , I-II, q. <a href="#">2-3</a> , q. <a href="#">90-98</a>
8	Thomas Aquinas	<i>Summa Theologiae</i> , I-II, q. <a href="#">90-98</a>
9	Rene Descartes	<a href="#"><i>Meditations</i></a> , 1-3
10	Rene Descartes	<a href="#"><i>Meditations</i></a> , 4-6
11	Thomas Hobbes	<a href="#"><i>Leviathan</i></a> , Chs. 12-15
12	Thomas Hobbes	<a href="#"><i>Leviathan</i></a> , Chs. 16-18
13	Fyodor Dostoevsky	<a href="#"><i>The Grand Inquisitor</i></a>
14	Fyodor Dostoevsky	<a href="#"><i>The Grand Inquisitor</i></a>
15		Final Exam

# Lectures

Session	Title	Files
1	Course Introduction; Introduction to <i>The Republic</i>	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
2	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> : Reading a Platonic Dialogue	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
3	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> : Thrasymachus Defeated! and Morality as a Craft	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
4	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> : Inner Politics, Inner Morality	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
5	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> : Inner and Outer Morality	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
6	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> : The Pieces Come Together	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
7	Plato, <i>The Republic</i> : Plato's Theory of Knowledge	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
8	Aristotle, Introduction	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
9	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Human Function and Moral Virtue	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
10	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> : Aristotle on Friendship	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
11	Aristotle Wrap Up and Introducing Thomas Aquinas	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
12	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> : Thomas on Happiness	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
13	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> : Thomas's Metaphysics of Happiness	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
14	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> : Refining Happiness and Introducing Law	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
15	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> : The Essence of Law	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
16	Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> : The Kinds of Law	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
17	Descartes, Introduction and Meditation 1	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
18	Descartes, Meditation 2	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
19	Descartes, Meditation 5	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
20	Descartes, Meditation 6 and Legacy	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
21	Thomas Hobbes, Introduction	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
22	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> : Humanity and the State	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
23	Dostoevski, <i>The Grand Inquisitor</i> : The Problem of Evil	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
24	Dostoevski, <i>The Grand Inquisitor</i> : How Would We Treat Jesus?	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>
25	Dostoevski, <i>The Grand Inquisitor</i> : Three Temptations	<a href="#">Lecture Notes</a>

## Lecture 01 Notes

Philosophy 101  
Introduction to Philosophy  
Professor Paul Weithman

I. Introduction to the Course

A. Aim and Structure of the Course:

This course is an introduction to philosophy for students seeking (or being forced) to fulfil the first of their university philosophy requirements. The course is intended to introduce you to philosophical questions, to make you aware of how some of history's greatest philosophers have approached those questions and what they have had to say about them, to help you articulate philosophical concerns of your own and, most importantly, to learn how to address them. Among the areas of philosophy will explore this semester are ethics, political philosophy, metaphysics and theory of knowledge.

## B. Required Texts for This Course:

*The Republic*, Plato  
*The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle  
*Meditations on First Philosophy*, Rene Descartes  
*The Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes  
*Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas  
*The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoyevski

## II. Introduction to Plato

### A. Facts of Life

- Plato lived from 427-347 BC in Greek city state of Athens. He was born into a prominent family and expected to enter Athenian politics.
- The city of Athens in Plato's time was small, probably not more than 100,000 residents, even fewer of whom were citizens with full rights to political participation.
- Politics in Athens and between Athens and other city states was tumultuous in his time.
- Athens was also home to Socrates (d. 399 BC), one of the greatest philosophical conversationalists the world has ever known.
- We need to keep Plato's context in mind as we read his work.

### B. Work

- Plato looks for answers to virtually all fundamental philosophical questions and so includes work in every area of philosophy: metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, political philosophy, and philosophy of language.
- Plato writes in DIALOGUE form:
  1. The main character is almost always Socrates.
  2. The interlocutors are historical figures whom Plato and his audience knew, at least by reputation.
  3. The dialogues are not transcripts of historical conversations, but artful constructions to be read as such.
  4. *The Republic* is Plato's greatest dialogue, written when he was at the height of his powers.

## III. Introduction to the Republic

### A. Question: HOW DO PEOPLE LEARN TO BEHAVE WELL?

- Answer: They learn to behave well in the context of their culture. For example, among the things that influence us are books, movies, poems, songs from popular culture, religion, tradition, and older people we admire as models.
- In other words, to the extent that a society is coherent, it possesses a body of moral resources that commands some degree of consensus.
- But **SOMETIMES** consensus breaks down, the resources don't work. During these times, it becomes salutary to call traditional sources into question.

#### B. Plato's Situation

- The culture had stock of cultural resources.
- But the traditional ways of behaving--myths, religion, veneration of the old, stock of sayings from Gk. poets--no longer seemed to work, or so Plato argued.
- Society is in moral disarray: the traditional sources of morality seem to be inadequate. Some reject morality altogether; the wise take advantage when they can.
- Plato turns to philosophy: systematic rational exploration in dialogue.

#### C. Morality is a Craft

- Being expert in that craft is good for an agent; it is preferable to immorality.
- A craft can only be learned in a just political society.

# Lecture 02 Notes

## Reading a Platonic Dialogue

### Lecture Plan

- I. Shakespeare as a Model
- II. Excerpt of the Republic
- III. Reading this Excerpt Philosophically

### I. Shakespeare as a Model

Consider the following excerpt from Shakespeare's [\*Julius Caesar, Act I, Scene II\*](#):

Caesar: Calpurnia!

Casca: Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.

Caesar: Calpurnia!

Calpurnia: Here, my lord.

Caesar: Stand you directly in Antonius' way,  
When he doth run his course. Antonius!

Antony: Caesar, my lord?

Caesar: Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,  
To touch Calpurnia, for our elders say,  
The barren, touched in this holy chase,  
Shake off their sterile curse.

Antony: I shall remember.  
When Caesar says "do this", it is perform'd.

Caesar: Set on; and leave no ceremony out.

Soothsayer: Caesar!

Caesar: Who is it in this press that calls on me?  
I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,  
Cry "Caesar!" Speak; Caesar is turn'd to hear.

Soothsayer: Beware the Ides of March.

### **In order to understand this exchange, what should you look for?**

- Appreciate Language and Meter
- Understand Difficult Language
- Understand Allusions
- Appreciate Relationships Among Characters
- Appreciate Caesar's Power
- Foreshadowing
- Compare this Soothsayer with Others

## **II. An Excerpt from The Republic**

...we must first enquire whether what you are saying is the truth. Now we are both agreed that justice is interest of some sort, but you go on to say 'of the stronger'; about this addition I am not so sure, and must therefore consider further.

Proceed.

I will; and first tell me, Do you admit that it is just or subjects to obey their rulers?



I do.

But are the rulers of states absolutely infallible, or are they sometimes liable to err?

To be sure, he replied, they are liable to err.

Then in making their laws they may sometimes make them rightly, and sometimes not?

True.

When they make them rightly, they make them agreeably to their interest; when they are mistaken, contrary to their interest; you admit that?

Yes.

And the laws which they make must be obeyed by their subjects, --and that is what you call justice?

Doubtless.

Then justice, according to your argument, is not only obedience to the interest of the stronger but the reverse?

What is that you are saying? he asked.

I am only repeating what you are saying, I believe. But let us consider: Have we not admitted that the rulers may be mistaken about their own interest in what they command, and also that to obey them is justice? Has not that been admitted?

Yes.

Then you must also have acknowledged justice not to be for the interest of the stronger, when the rulers unintentionally command things to be done which are to their own injury. For if, as you say, justice is the obedience which the subject renders to their commands, in that case, O wisest of men, is there any escape from the conclusion that the weaker are commanded to do, not what is for the interest, but what is for the injury of the stronger?

Nothing can be clearer, Socrates, said Polemarchus.

Plato, *The Republic*, 339b-339e

### **A. In order to understand this exchange, what should you look for?**

- Keep track of who is speaking.
- Put the piece in argumentative context.
- Identify thesis the speaker is defending.
- Identify the thesis the interlocutor is defending.
- Identify the line of reasoning that is supposed to support each claim.
- Ask yourself what speakers mean by central terms in their argument.
- Identify and query presuppositions.

### **B. What shouldn't you do?**

- Don't read Plato's works like novels.
- Don't skim looking only for main or general ideas.
- Don't worry about the plot.

REMEMBER: You learn to read and write one way in English class, another in philosophy!

### III. Reading this Excerpt Philosophically

#### A. What to Look For

- Socrates and Thrasymachus, a sophist.
- Context: Socrates discussing various proposed definitions of moral goodness drawn from traditional sources. arguing that don't work. Thrasymachus impatiently bursts in to offer his own view.
- Socrates not yet defending a thesis of his own.
- Thrasymachus will defend a number of related claims: (i) morality is whatever is in interest of most powerful; (ii) rulers ought to exercise power for their own advantage; (iii) immorality makes people better off than morality.
- Presupposition to query: Socrates' claim that morality is a craft

#### B. A Closer Look

...we must first enquire whether what you are saying is the truth. Now we are both agreed that justice is interest of some sort, but you go on to say (1) [justice is in the interest] 'of the stronger'; about this addition I am not so sure, and must therefore consider further.

Proceed.

I will; and first tell me, Do you admit that (2) it is just or subjects to obey their rulers?

I do.

But are the rulers of states absolutely infallible, or are they sometimes liable to err?

To be sure, he replied, (3) they are liable to err.

Then in making their laws they may sometimes make them rightly, and sometimes not?

True.

(4) When they make them rightly, they make them agreeably to their interest; when they are mistaken, contrary to their interest; you admit that?

Yes.

And (5) the laws which they make must be obeyed by their subjects, --and that is what you call justice?

Doubtless.

Then (6) justice, according to your argument, is not only obedience to the interest of the stronger but the reverse?

What is that you are saying? he asked.

I am only repeating what you are saying, I believe. But let us consider: Have we not admitted that the rulers may be mistaken about their own interest in what they command, and also that to obey them is justice? Has not that been admitted?

Yes.

Then you must also have acknowledged justice not to be for the interest of the stronger, when the rulers unintentionally command things to be done which are to their own injury. For if, as you say, justice is the obedience which the subject renders to their commands, in that case, O wisest of men, is there any escape from the conclusion that the weaker are commanded to do, not what is for the interest, but what is for the injury of the stronger?

Nothing can be clearer, Socrates, said Polemarchus.

Plato, *The Republic*, 339b-339e

### **C. Socrates' Argument Against Thrasymachus**

Suppose, as Thrasymachus says, that

- (1) Justice is whatever is in the interest of the strongest party.

So it follows that:

- (2) Obedience to the government is always right.

Thrasymachus agrees that

- (3) Governments are capable of error when it comes to legislation,

and that

- (4) When they get it wrong, the laws will be to their disadvantage.

Thrasymachus also insists that

- (5) Subjects must obey any law that is passed.

But now Thrasymachus is in a dilemma, for:

(6) Suppose subjects don't follow a misconceived law.

Then it follows from (5) that

(7) They do something wrong.

So instead of (6)

(8) Suppose the subjects obey the misconceived law.

Since the law is misconceived, it enjoins subjects to do something that is NOT in the interest of those in power. So from (8) it follows that

(9) Citizens act against the interest of the strongest

So from Thrasymachus's definition of justice, it follows that

(10) Citizens do something wrong.

CONCLUSION: It is no more right to act to the advantage of the stronger party than to do the opposite. Thus, THRASYMACHUS LOSES! (The problem stems from his concession at (3).)

Thrasymachus replies by modifying his claim: Morality is whatever is in the interest of the ruling party, WHEN THEY MAKE NO MISTAKES ABOUT WHAT IS IN THEIR INTEREST.

### **Consider for next time:**

- How does Socrates respond to this modification?
- What role is played by his claim that morality is craft?

## **Lecture 03 Notes**

# Thrasymachus Defeated!

*and*

## Morality as a Craft

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. Morality as the Right of the Strongest
- II. Morality, Crafts, and Political Implications

## I. Morality as the Right of the Strongest

### A. Thrasymachus Tries Again

- To refute Thrasymachus's position, it is not enough to reply that it's repugnant or morally wrong. Socrates must show that the position is intellectually untenable. This is what Socrates tries to do by drawing out contradictions.
- Thrasymachus replies by modifying his claim...How?
- Thrasymachus agreed that exercising power is a skill, a craft. And then:
  1. To exercise power for one's own benefit = to exercise it effectively.
  2. To exercise power effectively = to exercise power skillfully.
  3. To exercise power skillfully = to exercise power well.
  4. To exercise power well = to exercise power morally, justly.
  5. Therefore: to exercise power for one's own benefit = to exercise it morally.
  6. Therefore: morality requires that the weak comply with orders of the strong, **when the strong exercise power well.**
    - The equations in the argument above are crucial--Socrates goes after the first of these:
      1. Ruling is a craft like horsemanship, shepherding, seamanship.
      2. The practitioner of any craft looks to good of her subjects.
      3. Those who rule well look to the good of their subjects. "there is no one in any rule who, in so far as he is a ruler, considers or enjoins what is for his own interest, but always what is for the interest of his subject or suitable to his art; to that he looks, and that alone he considers in everything which he says and does." (342e)
      4. To rule well cannot be to rule in one's own interest.
      5. Since ruling justly is the same as ruling well, it follows that ruling justly cannot be ruling in one's own interest.
    - **Thrasymachus Loses Again!**

## B. Why Was Thrasymachus's Position Appealing?

- Remember the context: Who is Thrasymachus teaching?
- Answer: bright young people who will be in positions of power in Athens. These young men will have opportunities to enrich themselves. Thrasymachus teaches them how to do so and that it is right to do so.
- In this way, Thrasymachus is similar to a good teacher at a professional school.

## C. Fundamental Problems With the View

Thrasymachus's view is riddled with problems. Let us focus on four:

1. No group that openly adopted T's view would be an authority but rather a self-professed gang of thugs.
2. Morality plays an important social role, which his view can't accommodate - social cohesion.
3. Morality plays important role in shaping character so that there is some coincidence between what one wants and what it's good for one to get.
4. In light of (1), (2) and (3), Thrasymachus overlooks an important distinction. It is the distinction between dispensing with morality altogether and revising it (i.e., by arguing that people are morally obligated to obey in ways that violate the accepted common view of morality). Thrasymachus wants to dispense with morality, not revise it.

# II. Morality, Crafts, and Political Implications

## A. Introduction

- The argument against Thrasymachus depends on challenging the first equation. It is crucial to Socrates's view that moral behavior is performing a craft/job well.
- We want to figure out just what Socrates's view is. More specifically we want to know:
  1. Why does Socrates think of morality as he does?
  2. How does his view that moral behavior is performing a job well fit with the discussion of politics that comes later in the Republic?

## B. The Main Features of Excellence as a Craft

- Socrates prefers to make his case by talking of crafts like carpentry, horsemanship and medicine. For our purposes, it is more illuminating to discuss sports.
- Note that excellence in sports:
  1. Presupposes organized forms of activity in which there are recognized standards of good performance.
  2. Is perfected with practice.
  3. Can master only if sports itself (the institution) is in good shape.
  4. Involves learning to see and feel things that new initiates cannot.
  5. Involves learning under the tutelage of an expert.
  6. Is such that the rationale for training is only partially communicable.

7. If all players are experts, then sport itself (the institution) is in good shape.
  - Morality as Socrates conceives it presupposes:
    1. That our society includes organized forms of exercising authority, eating and drinking, sexual practices and family life, property ownership, and shared standards of doing well.
    2. The possibility of regular performance of good acts (achieved through practice).
    3. Some level of agreement about who moral experts are.
    4. A distinctive “feel” or perception to morality.
    5. The availability of experts to communicate their wisdom.
    6. That the rationale for moral education is partially communicable.
    7. That good people make a good community.
  - Morality requires a high degree of social organization. In order to see more specifically what that requires, we must look at a good society. This explains Socrates's concern with the formation of the state.

### C. The Main Features of Sports and Their Political Analogues

Sports	Politics
It presupposes ordered forms of activity; it is perfected only with practice.	There are different kinds of jobs that people try to master.
One can attain expertise in sports only if the sport itself is in good shape.	People become good people only in good society.
Competence involves learning to see what initiates cannot; initiates learn under tutelage of experts; the rationale for the training program is only partially communicable.	There are classes of experts with special training, who train others by ruling them, whose reasons for ruling are not communicated to citizens.
If players are good, the team is in good shape.	If citizens are moral, then society as a whole is good.

# Lecture 04 Notes

## Inner Politics, Inner Morality

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. The Fundamentals of Inner Politics
- II. Inner and Outer Morality

## I. The Fundamentals of Inner Politics

### A. A Closer Look at the Political Analogues

Political Analogue: There are different kinds of jobs that people try to master

- "there are diversities of natures among us which are suited to different occupations." (370b)
- "...and will you have work better done when the workman has many occupations or when he has only one? When he has only one." (370b)
- Classes of occupation are:
  1. Commercial (farmers, merchants, cobblers, business people)
  2. Military
  3. Rulers

Political Analogue: there is a class of experts who train the people by ruling them, and whose reasons for ruling are not disclosed to citizens.

- We will see this in more detail when we discuss the governing class.
- Notice Socrates's remarks about special training required to be a soldier: "And the higher the duties of the guardian, I said, the more time, and skill, and art, and application will be needed by him." (374e)
- Notice also the comparison of soldiers to animals, 375a-376c.
- "The city will be courageous in virtue of **a portion of herself which preserves under all circumstances that opinion about the nature of things to be feared** and not to be feared in which our legislator educated them." (429c, **emphasis added**)

### B. Taking Stock

- We now know a lot about morality. It has, for example, the following features:
  1. It is social in a way that Thrasymachus can't account for.
  2. It is excellence in a craft and entails a complex social context.
  3. This social context includes a self-sufficient society with a high degree of differentiation and people suited by nature for various occupations.
- We don't yet know what morality is; which is to say that we don't yet know what thing has these features.



- Morality is the state of a sound soul, as health is the state of a sound body. To be a good person is to be free of psychic conflicts, free of sicknesses of the soul. It is to have a soul that is well-functioning.
- Is this plausible?
- The Upshot:

"Now as you have admitted that justice is one of that highest class of goods which are desired indeed for their results, but in a far greater degree for their own sakes--**like sight or hearing or knowledge or health, or any other real and natural and not merely conventional good**--I would ask you in your praise of justice to regard one point only: I mean the essential good and evil which justice and injustice work in the possessors of them. Let others praise justice and censure injustice, magnifying the rewards and honours of the one and abusing the other; that is a manner of arguing which, coming from them, I am ready to tolerate, but from you who have spent your whole life in the consideration of this question, unless I hear the contrary from your own lips, I expect something better. And therefore, I say, not only prove to us that justice is better than injustice, but show what they either of them do to the possessor of them, which makes the one to be a good and the other an evil, whether seen or unseen by gods and men." (367d, emphasis added)

- Two important cautionary notes:
  1. We have a range of Christian conceptions that Plato does not.
    2.
      - Morality for us is importantly connected to an all-good, all-loving, all-powerful God who regularly intervenes in human history, especially, but not only, in the Incarnation.
      - We think of the soul as a substance that can exist without the body and which is calledo eternal life with God provided we satisfy certain conditions. Plato may think that the soul is immortal, but perhaps not in the same way. For Plato, the soul is the locus of thought and personality, the seat of intellect and emotion. It is a part of a person just as an eye, liver, or arm is part of a person (even if the soul is the most important part). Like these other parts, the soul can function well or badly.
  3. We have a range of democratic notions that Plato does not. One thing that is very important to us--but not to Plato--is individual freedom. We give it paramount value.

## II. Inner Morality

If Plato wants to maintain the view that the person is composed of parts (and the soul is one of them), he must then identify those parts of the soul that are well-disposed by morality, as one would have to identify parts of knee that make its functioning possible.

### **A. Plato Identifies Three Parts of the Soul.**

1. The Appetitive Part: The locus of desire for comfort, food, drink, and sex.
2. The Spirited Part: The locus of aggressive emotions.
3. The Intellect: The locus of intelligence, wisdom, and insight.

### **B. Each Person Has All Three Parts to Some Degree.**

- The predominant part in each individual dictates the type of character possessed by the person as well as that person's citizenship class.

### **C. An Excellently Functioning Part Has a Corresponding Virtue**

1. When the appetites are well regulated, a person is said to have self-discipline.
2. When the spirited part is well regulated, a person is said to have courage.
3. When the intellect is well regulated, a person is said to have wisdom.
4. When all three parts function well together without conflict, a person is good.

# **Lecture 05 Notes**

## **Inner and Outer Morality**

### **Plan of the Lecture**

- I. Inner Morality
- II. Outer Morality

### **I. Inner Morality--A Note about the Argument**

- The argument for the existence of parts of the soul focuses on psychic conflict. That is to say, we can distinguish the different parts of the soul when we see them conflict. This phenomenon of psychic conflict is something Plato takes to be a common one, and a problem central to ethics. People act badly when riven by conflicts, pulled in different directions.
- To become good, inner conflict must be overcome by development of virtues:
  1. Self-discipline
  2. Courage
  3. Wisdom to the degree possible
  4. Morality properly so called

## **II. Outer Morality**

### **A. Two Presuppositions of Outer Morality**

- We are looking at a good society to learn what morality is.
- Recall also good society has three classes of occupations: commercial, military and ruling class.

### **B. Aspects of Social Goodness Located in Each Class of Citizen:**

1. Wisdom lies in the governing class (the guardians); it consists in ruling well.
2. Courage lies in the military class (the auxiliaries); it consists in fearing right things.
3. Self-discipline, or temperance, lies in the masses of society who are governed by pleasure and pain.
  - Question: What is the self-discipline the masses are supposed to cultivate?
  - Answer: The masses learn to obey the rulers, those they recognize to be their natural superiors.
  - It's worth asking: how does this come about? Is it desirable?

### **C. Morality is found in the State as a Whole, Not in Any One Class of Citizen**

- A state exhibits morality in virtue of a relation between classes. What is it?

"Seeing then, I said, that there are three distinct classes, any meddling of one with another, or the change of one into another, is the greatest harm to the State, and may be most justly termed evil-doing? And the greatest degree of evil-doing to one's own city would be termed by you injustice? This then is injustice...and on the other hand when the trader, the auxiliary, and the guardian each do their own business, that is justice, and will make the city just." (434c)
- Morality in a State is found when everyone is doing the job for which nature best suits him or her.

### **D. The Perfectly Moral (or Just) Society**

- This is a society which fosters in its citizens just the sort of psychic integrity that Plato identified as good:
  1. Ordinary people, in whom the appetites dominate, are not driven by lust, ambition or greed.
  2. Those in whom spirit predominates are tempered by courage.
  3. Those in whom wisdom predominates cultivate wisdom and use it for benefit of all.

- THEREFORE good citizens of the ideal state have just the qualities Plato argued good people should have. This supports his account of morality.

### **E. Consider: Why Would Plato Think a Good State is One of This Sort?**

- Notice that in this state, there is no social mobility, no ambition, little scope for individual initiative, and tight control.
- Think of evils that beset his own society...

**NEXT TIME:** Clearly the job of making the state good rests most heavily on rulers. How do they learn to do their job? How do they become good?

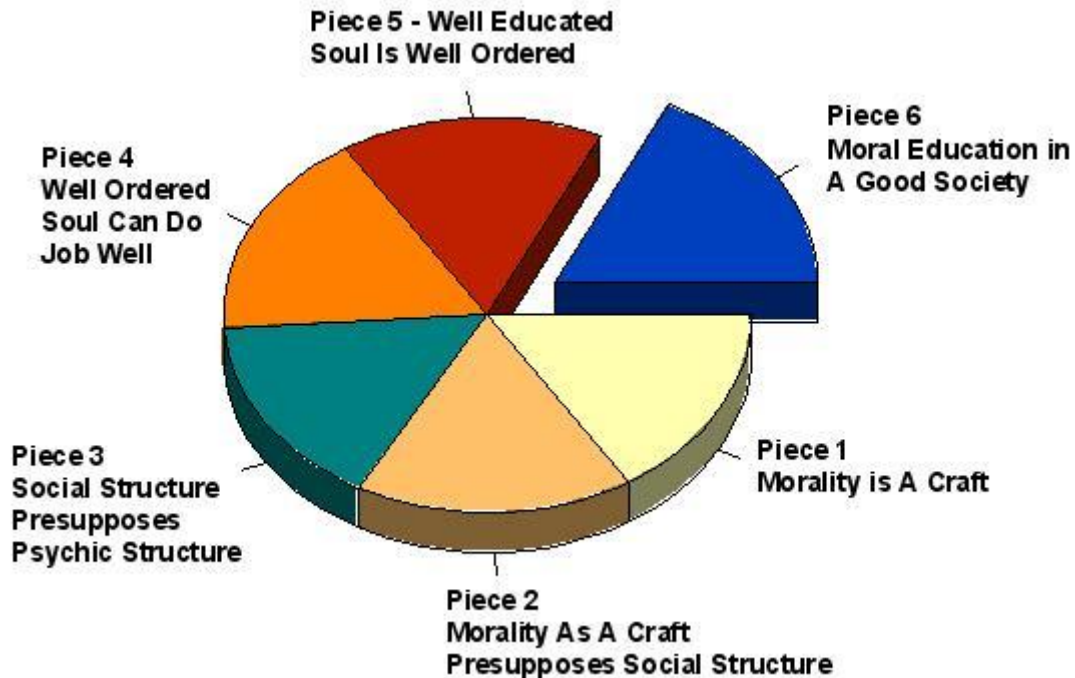
# **Lecture 06 Notes**

## **The Pieces Come Together**

### **Plan of the Lecture**

- I. An Illustrated Overview of the Structure of Plato's Society
- II. The Education of Rulers and the Supremacy of Good

### **I. An Illustrated Overview of the Structure of Plato's Society**



## II. The Education of the Rulers and the Supremacy of the Good

### A. Maintaining the Good Society

- The burden of maintaining a good society falls most heavily on rulers. What qualities should they have? What subjects should they study? Should they possess commercial skill like Donald Trump? Should they possess military skills like Colin Powell?
- Plato argues that rulers should be those in whom the intellect predominates. It is they who:
  1. Legislate to control the appetites of the rabble, those who are interested in commerce.
  2. Structure the education of the military so that they know what to fear.
- In other words, their job is to make people like Donald Trump and Colin Powell good.

**Question:** What must they learn in order to do this properly?

**Plato's Answer:** They must understand human beings and their good.

### B. The Object of Knowledge or Who Learns What

- Note first an important distinction between the work of rulers and the work of military and commercial classes:
  1. Those in the military and commercial classes learn how to perform their craft or skill.
  2. Those in the ruling class learn how to teach them to perform; how to make laws that teach others to do these things well.
- **Therefore**, there will be an important difference between the education of rulers and the education of the members of other two classes.
- What is this difference? The difference, say Plato and Socrates, is that the objects of knowledge differ. The ruler's knowledge has different objects than the others in society.
- When we begin to think about Plato's view of knowledge, we begin to encounter his **Theory of Forms**, perhaps the theory for which he is best known.
- Example: Throwing a Football: What is it to know about throwing a football? There are two features:
  1. Knowing how to throw a beautiful pass.
  2. Knowing what makes the pass a beautiful one.
- On the one hand, to know (1), one must know how to spin the ball off of one's fingers, the precise point at which to release, how to judge the distance to the receiver, as well as the receiver's speed. In other words, not much abstract thought is required: all that one needs to know is that one should throw the ball to the receiver at a particular time.
- On the other hand, to know (2), one must know what makes an ideal pass a beautiful one and how an ideally thrown ball behaves. This requires knowing sophisticated math. Moreover, one must be able to judge how this particular pass compares to an ideally thrown one. In other words, one needs to have sophisticated aesthetic appreciation and be able to apply abstract concepts to concrete situations.
- Clearly the distinction between knowing (1) and (2) can be applied to other areas of knowledge, including: art, music, and sculpture. Plato and Socrates apply it to all crafts and jobs in a good society, including soldiering, carpentry, seamanship, and medicine. All can be done beautifully, such that beautiful products are made.
- We are therefore drawing an important distinction between:
  1. Knowing how to perform these crafts well: having certain skills, applying them to particular circumstances. This does not entail much abstract thought.
  2. Knowing what makes a given performance good, beautiful, knowing the ideals which particular performances instantiate. This entails reasoning about abstract concepts.
- **Therefore**, for all jobs in good society, there are two kinds of knowledge. What distinguishes these two kinds of knowledge is that they are of different objects. Knowledge of type (1) is of particulars while knowledge of type (2) is of ideals.
- Plato ascribes to these ideals, which he calls **the forms** a number of properties:

- 
- ETERNAL
- UNCHANGEABLE
- INDEPENDENTLY EXISTING
- OBJECTS OF KNOWLEDGE
- RESEMBLED BY PARTICULAR OBJECTS
- RESEMBLANCE CAUSES THINGS TO BE WHAT THEY ARE

# Lecture 07 Notes

## Plato's Theory of Knowledge

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. Knowledge in Citizens
- II. The Simile of the Divided Line
- III. The Simile of the Cave
- IV. Brief Summary

### I. Knowledge in Citizens

**\*\*This discussion picks up at the very end of the previous lecture\*\***

Consider, for a moment, the classes in a good society and the occupations associated with each.

#### A. The Commercial Class

- The commercial class includes carpenters, merchants, sea captains, and so on. Notice the following contrasts:
  1. Knowing how to build vs. principles of carpentry
  2. Knowing how to sell vs. principles of finance
  3. Knowing how to sail vs. principles of navigation
- **Questions:** (i) What do carpenters, merchants sailors need to know? (ii) What do those who teach them need to know?

#### B. Military Class

- The military class (the auxiliaries) include the soldiers. Notice the following contrasts:
  1. Knowing how to fight vs. principles of strategy
  2. Knowing what to fear vs. principles of psychology





- Segments A+B represent the **visible** realm, accessible to the faculty of **sense**, of which we have **opinion**.
- Segments C+D represent the **intelligible** realm, accessible to the faculty of **reason**, of which we have **knowledge**.
- Plato thinks that those who teach must know objects in segments C and D.

### **C. Areas C and D Represent the Realm of the Forms, or Ideas.**

- Plato therefore ascribes to these ideas a number of properties.
- They are eternal, unchangeable, independently existing, objects of knowledge (rather than opinion), and resembled by particular objects.

## **III. The Simile of the Cave**

**Recall:** Plato thinks those who teach must know the Forms

**Question:** How do they come to know them? What sort of education do they get?

### **A. Progress of Education is:**

- ...from what is most familiar and vivid, e.g., footballs
- ...to what is less vivid and more abstract: the Forms
- When learn to think abstractly, we think about the Forms. This will sound foolish and confused to everyone else, just as a football commentator who talked about math will sound foolish and confused.

### **B. Those Who Teach Must Know the Forms**

- Given (A), we can see why the Cave is an apt simile for this education.

## **IV. Brief Summary**

### **A. Those in the ruling class are society's teachers**

- They frame laws which teach rabble self-discipline.
- They frame laws which teach soldiers courage.
- In order to teach, they must think abstractly about the skills and virtues they impart.
- They must know objects at right end of the Divided Line.
- They must therefore know the Forms.

### **B. Their education is allegorized by Simile of the Cave.**

### **C. The rationale for teaching as they do is partially communicable.**

# **Lecture 08 Notes**

# Introduction to Aristotle

## Plan of the Lecture

- I. Aristotle's Life and Work
- II. Beginning of the Nicomachean Ethics

## I. Aristotle's Life and Work

### A. Life and Times

- Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. in Macedonia. He was therefore born 15 years after the death of Socrates, Plato's teacher. Attentive readers will have noticed the following remark:

"We had perhaps better consider the universal good and discuss thoroughly what is meant by it, although such an inquiry is made an uphill one by the fact that the Forms have been introduced by friends of our own." (I.6)

- He was not a citizen of Athens; he was a resident alien.
- Aristotle broke with Plato on metaphysical questions (specifically Plato's theory of the Forms), defending a diametrically opposed view. As it is said: "Everyone is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian"
- Aristotle opened a school of his own, called the Lyceum. (Plato's school, you will recall, was the Academy).
- Like Plato, Aristotle was interested in all areas of philosophy and left writings on virtually every philosophical topic.
- Unlike Plato's corpus, however, only unpolished lecture notes remain from Aristotle's work. The arguments in these notes are extremely compressed and difficult.
- Aristotle was tutor to Alexander the Great, a Macedonian whose empire covered known world, including Athens. The death of Alexander precipitated anti-Macedonian backlash in Athens, and Aristotle fled Athens and died a year after Alexander.

### B. Introduction to Aristotle's Moral Philosophy

- Like Plato, Aristotle interested in the question, "What is it to be a good human being?"
- Also like Plato, Aristotle held that:
  1. There are right answers to these questions.
  2. These answers are rationally defensible by philosophical argument.
  3. The best political society should be structured to lead to virtue.
- Also like Plato, Aristotle's ideal political society was a relatively small city-state with high degree of moral and cultural homogeneity. Aristotle can presuppose a common cultural heritage; he can talk confidently of generally held opinions

- Notice, as you read, that considering the popular opinion is important to Aristotle's method.

## II. Beginning of the Nicomachean Ethics

### A. Construing the Question: Chapters 1 and 4

- As we said, Aristotle is interested in the question, "What is it to be a good human being?" This is equivalent to: "What is it to lead a good human life?" and "What is it to live well?"
- Chapter 1: Aristotle thinks of life as an activity, like playing golf, basketball or musical instrument; like carpentry and welding. Just as inquirers would learn what it is to golf well by learning what is to excel at performance of that activity, so the philosopher learns what it is to live well by learning what it is to excel at the activity of living.
- Question: How would we investigate excellence at these other activities?
  1. To determine what it is to perform these well, we must first determine the goal of the activity.
  2. We do this by looking at what people aim at, examining our own lives, and examining the opinions of the expert.
- Example: Suppose we want to learn what it is to be a good golfer. Proceed by asking people who play the game what they are trying to do. Then we learn what we can about the circumstances of the game. Then we try to play the game ourselves. Finally, we watch those who play, especially those generally regarded good players.
- This example is instructive, for as we observe, we learn:
  1. Golf integrates a number of subordinate skills-- putting, driving, chipping, etc.
  2. Many players know what the end is but lack the ability to attain it.
  3. Others know the end, but seek it in wrong way. For example, they might master some part of the game by holding themselves to the wrong standards.
  4. Because golf is highly rule-governed, it is possible to specify with some precision what good golf is and who is best at it.
- Living, Aristotle points out, is an activity, or a family of activities. To find out what it is to live well, we proceed as we would to find out what it is to golf well: we collect opinions from people about what they are trying to do; we learn what we can about the circumstances of the activity, such as the demands of family life, social life, material needs, physical ills and mortality. We look at our own experience of living. Finally, we look at those who are generally acknowledged to live well, the wise, who are experts in living.
- As we do so, we discover:
  1. The activity of living contains a number of subordinate activities--family life, having friends, the making of money, the enjoyment of culture, play.
  2. To lead a good life, these activities have to be properly integrated or harmonized, with some subordinated to others.

3. Some people seem to know what the end is, but lack ability to attain it. Perhaps they grew up in the wrong circumstances or they have mental or physical illness.
  4. Many people pursue the wrong things--they pursue the end of one part of life: wealth, power, honor, or sensual satisfaction.
  5. Unlike golf, life is not rule-governed, we cannot expect precision.
- Chapter 4. When we look at what people aim at, we find a general consensus that the end is happiness. This raises one of two problems:
    1. There are different ideas about what constitutes happiness, e.g., wealth, virtue, honor, health. There are also different ideas at different times, e.g., health when sick. These different ideas need to be examined (Chapter 5).
    2. This statement seems to be platitudinous, and therefore possibly vacuous (Chapter 7)

## B. An Exciting Preview and A Parenthetical Note

- Aristotle's thesis: Happiness is a life of virtuous activity.
  1. Happiness is the end or the objective of life. Life is an activity like playing, building, studying. The objective of life is performing activity of life well.
  2. Therefore, happiness is performing activity of life well. Acting well means living life of wisdom, justice, courage.
  3. Therefore, happiness is living a life of wisdom, justice, courage.
- It is important to distinguish a **state of mind**, or **condition**, from an **activity**.
  1. Examples of states of mind or conditions include drunkenness, health, and being at peace.
  2. Examples of activities include: playing violin, building bookcase, studying philosophy
- **Happiness is not a state of mind or condition.** These things could be produced by drugs, maintained while sleeping. And no one leading a good life while drunk or asleep.
- Parenthetical Note: to study ethics we "must have been brought up in good habits" (I.3), and we must not be too young (I.3). What would Aristotle's reasons for thinking these things be?

## C. Examining Different Ideas of Happiness - Chapter 5

- In order to establish Aristotle's thesis, we must consider different ideas of happiness:
- To speed consideration, we can note that despite the great variety, there are really only three types of life:
  1. The life "men lead, most men, and men of the most vulgar type" even "some in high places". This is the life of pleasure or enjoyment. On this view, **happiness = pleasure**.
  2. "The political life" in which **happiness = honor**. This is the life spent in pursuit of political responsibilities.
  3. "The contemplative life" in which **happiness = knowledge**. This is the life spent cultivating the mind.

4. Aristotle later adds "the life of money-making".

- The **Life of Contemplation**, Aristotle says, "we shall consider later" this leaves (1), (2) and (4). Let us consider them in turn.
- **Life of Pleasures**. Aristotle dismisses this as a "life suitable for beasts".
- **Life of Money-Making**. Aristotle rejects this as well. Money-making is done out of necessity. That is to say, money is always sought for the sake of something else. Specifically, it is sought for honor or for pleasure. But this means that these things must be more desirable than money.
- **Life of Honor**. The problem with the life of honor, Aristotle says, is that no one seeks just to be honored. We seek honor from those who know us, from those who honor us for right reasons. Specifically, we seek honor for our virtues. Therefore, virtue is the real good of which honor is sign.
- Notice where else these arguments may apply: intimacy, feeling important.

#### **D. The "Man's Function" Argument - Chapter 7**

- So at this point we know that: living well is a life of happiness; the life of virtue is better than honor or money-making; and the life of pleasure is a life suitable for beasts. Where do we go from here?
- Key Insight: **Functionalism**
  1. Note first that things human beings make have functions: the function of knife is to cut, the function of money is as a medium of exchange. Ways of life have functions as well: a carpenter builds, a doctor heals.
  2. Aristotle thinks that natural things have functions, or natural goals: (i) When a thing fulfills its function, it is said to be doing well; it is a good member of its kind. (ii) The function of plants and animals is simple, to live and reproduce.
  3. Aristotle concludes that human beings, as natural things, must have a specific function as well. (i) When a human fulfills its function, it is said to be living well; it is a good human being. (ii) So, to learn what the good life is, we must see what the human function is.
- What can the function of human beings be? It must be an activity in which only human beings engage. According to Aristotle, rational activity, "an active life of the element that has a rational principle," is the only activity peculiar to humans.
- **Therefore**, "the function of man is an activity of soul which follows or implies a rational principle" (I.7). The function of human beings is to perform acts as reason dictates. "The function of the good man [is] the good and noble performance of these" (I.7).
- To be a good person = to fulfil the human function = to perform acts characterized by excellence = to perform acts of virtue ("over a complete life").

#### **E. Beginning Book II: A Moral Virtue Is:**

1. A disposition of reason and the emotions,
2. A settled disposition, i.e., a habit,
3. A habit of choosing the mean with respect to food and drink, dangerous activity, etc.,
4. The person who has acquired the habit experiences pleasure in choosing rightly.

# Lecture 09 Notes

## Human Function and Moral Virtue

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. Happiness Revisited
- II. The Function Argument
- III. Example: Friendship
- IV. The Nature of Moral Virtue

### I. Happiness Revisited

#### A. What is the Good Life?

- To answer that question, we must first ask: What is the chief good of human life?
- And to answer that question, we must first ask: What is the goal or final end of life?
- And to answer that question, we must first ask: What do people take as their ends? The answer we all give is **happiness**:

“Since there are evidently more than one end and we choose some of these for the sake of something else, clearly not all are final ends; but the chief good is evidently something final. Therefore, if there is only one final end, this will be what we are seeking, and if there are more than one, the most final of these will be what we are seeking. Now we call that which is in itself worthy of pursuit more final than that which is worthy of pursuit for the sake of something else, and that which is never desirable for the sake of something else more final than the things that are desirable both in themselves and for the sake of that other thing, and therefore we call final without qualification that which is always desirable in itself and never for the sake of something else. Now such a thing happiness, above all else, is held to be.” (I.7)

#### B. There are Different Ideas About What the Goal of Life is:

- Aristotle considers pleasure, money, and honor.
- But he rejects all three. None can serve as the proper goal of human life. Therefore none can be the thing in which happiness is found.

#### C. Question: Don't pleasure, money or honor make (some) people happy?

- Does this show Aristotle was wrong? Consider examples:
  1. the libertine
  2. the greedy man

3. the resume-builder

- Are such people happy? Is are they flourishing as human beings? What do they all lack that flourishing human being has?

#### **D. Recall the Distinction between a State of Mind or a Condition and an Action:**

- **Happiness is not a state of mind or a condition.**
- This the libertine, greedy man, resume-builder, have in common: they are engaged in performing certain actions. Therefore as far as their states of mind are concerned, they are okay.
- Where they go wrong is in performing the wrong actions. Their actions fall short of what would be best.
- **Problem:** What more can we say about what they lack?

#### **E. Aristotle's Answer:**

- In all three cases, the person's actions governed by bad choices.
- According to Aristotle, a good life is a life of good choices. Good choices are made through the exercise of practical wisdom and the virtues. The virtues include wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance.
- It follows then, that the happy life is an active life lived according to the virtues. It is this way of life that is choiceworthy for its own sake.

## **II. The Function Argument**

### **A. In Short**

1. Aristotle argues that everything in the natural world has function. As human beings are part of the natural world, human beings have functions.
  2. The function of human beings must be activity unique to them. The activity unique to human beings is rational activity.
  3. **Therefore**, the function of human beings is to act in accord with reason.
- **But what are the relevant activities?**

### **B. Reason Permeates Human Activity**

- It is tempting to think that when Aristotle says we must act in accord with reason, he means we must spend lives engaged in **intellectual activity**, e.g., philosophy and the opera. **But this is not what he means!**
- Alternatively, it is tempting to think that rational activity is **calculating**. **But this is not what he means either!**
- Aristotle thinks that (almost) **everything** human beings do involves the exercise of reason, involves rational choice. This includes eating, playing, falling in love, politics, laying bricks, conceiving and raising children, as well as intellectual activity.

- What is distinctive here is that we must make wise choices about all these activities. This means doing the right thing in right way at right time. It also means combining these into a harmonious life.

### C. Human Beings Live Well When They:

- lead lives that integrate good performance of variety, which is equivalent to...
- exercising reason well in the performance of these, which is equivalent to...
- deliberate choices and proper feelings when engaged in these activities, which is equivalent to...
- leading lives governed by wise choices and virtues, which is equivalent to...
- leading lives of wisdom, justice, courage and temperance.
- **Therefore, Aristotle's Answer is vindicated!**

## III. Example: Friendship

### A. Friendship is a Rational Activity

- It involves rational decisions re: whom to become friends with, what to do with friends, extent to which you commit, how to sustain friendship, when to pull back or to break off.
- It requires that one perceive what's really going on in friendship. Is this an enriching friendship or an unhealthy one? Seeing things aright requires exercise of reason.
- It requires **feeling** properly, having an apt emotional response. Apt feelings involve emotions being properly responsive to reasoned judgment.

### B. Friendship is an Activity in Which Reason Can Function Well or Badly

- We can make wrong decisions about whom to befriend; we can decide to sustain a friendship by engaging in things shouldn't engage in; we might decide not to break off a friendship you should or by letting go of a friendship you should not.
- We might misperceive what's really going on in friendship: (i) we might not recognize the way friend is enriching life, that friend really does appreciate you. Or (ii), that a friend really is bad for you.
- We might have irrational feelings. We might be too attracted, or not drawn to someone who's good for you.
- So friendship is an activity, part of life in which can deliberate, choose and feel in accord with excellence of reason, or not.

### C. What is it to be a Person Who Forms and Sustains Good Friendships?

- We must have good judgment about people and their needs. This requires self-knowledge, as well as stable and mature emotions. That is, we must have ingrained dispositions of judgment and sentiment. We must have good habits with respect to this area of life.
- In Aristotle's language, we must have the **virtues** associated with the activity of friendship. If Aristotle is right, there will be **happiness and pleasure in a virtuous friendship**.
- Note how we are led naturally from considering how some activity involves exercise of reason to Aristotle's account of virtue. **Our analysis of other activities will show the same thing.**



## IV. The Nature of Moral Virtue

### A. A State of Character

- Recall Aristotle interested in what it is to live well. Aristotle argued living well means leading life of virtue. So when we say someone lives a good human life, it is because of her virtue that she does so. When someone is a good friend, it is because of her virtue
- **Question:** What is a virtue?
  1. Cannot be a passion or emotion like anger, joy, sorrow. Having feelings is not what makes someone a good friend, e.g. Rather the feelings are signs of friendship
  2. Cannot be a faculty, a capacity to feel or to understand. Having human capacities does not make someone a good friend
  3. Therefore must be a **state of character**: the way feelings and capacities are developed

### B. To Choose the Mean

- What sort of character trait is virtue?
- What does it dispose us to do?
  1. A virtue is a disposition of the passions, emotions. All emotions admit of extremes: some feel too much affection, others are so cold that they show too little or none. The case is similar with respect to anger, fearlessness, etc. In all these, there are two extremes and the intermediate seems to be best.
  2. The wise or judicious thing is to moderate passions. This is what wise, judicious people who lead good lives do. Since virtue enables us to lead good lives, it must be a disposition to moderation, to choosing **the mean** between extremes
  3. A comparison with art suggestive.

### C. As Determined by Rational Perception

- Recall: When Aristotle says activities involve exercise of reason, he does **not** mean they involve **calculation**.
  1. In activities associated with friendship, we rarely engage in calculation or explicit reasoning about what to do. There is spontaneity about the activity, but it is nonetheless rational.
  2. So it is with other activities of virtue: the virtuous person perceives what is the right thing to do, and does it. The temperate person just sees and feels she has had enough. The courageous person just sees when to run and when not to.
  3. The goal of moral education is to train reason and emotion so that we choose the mean spontaneously, we take pleasure in doing so.

### D. Acquired by Habituation

- Question: How do people acquire the moral virtues?

- Answer: Moral virtues are habits or dispositions acquired by practice, repetition:
  1. We learn to be just by performing just actions. We learn to be temperate by performing temperate actions. We learn to be courageous by performing courageous actions.
  2. Aristotle is especially concerned with the moral formation of children and of the young. He recognizes that people may have to be forced to do these until they are fully virtuous. Some, unfortunately, must be coerced all their lives.
  
- It follows then that moral philosophy is part of political science.

# Lecture 10 Notes

## Aristotle on Friendship

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. Philosophical Problems and Puzzles
- II. A First Crack at Some Answers
- III. Types of Friendship
- IV. Equality and Friendship

## I. Philosophical Problems and Puzzles

### A. There are Many Kinds of Friendships

- The different kinds of friendships include: teammates, roommates, men and women who are in love (inc. husband and wife) drinking companions/fellow partiers parents and children, business friendship, and evil doers.
- Are all of these alike or do we need distinctions?

### B. Must Friends All Be Alike?

- If friends must be alike, in what respect must they be alike?
- Can we find real friendship with those quite different?

### C. Love is Central To Friendship

- What is love? Is it infatuation, or sentimentality, or a spirit of cooperation?
- What are its limits? Are there limits to whom or what we can love?

## II. A First Crack at Some Answers

- **Three Aspects of Friendship**

1. Love essential to friendship. to learn the nature of friendship, we must look at objects of love and the reasons for love Three reasons for loving something/someone include: good, pleasurable, and useful.
  2. Friends want good things for each other.
  3. Friendship is found only when it is mutual and mutually known that A wishes B well and B wishes A well, and A knows that B wishes her well and B knows that A wishes her well.
- "To be friends, then they must be mutually recognized as bearing goodwill and wishing well to each other for [reasons of good, pleasure or utility]" (VIII.2)

### **III. Types of Friendship (Chapters 3 and 4)**

#### **A. Love is the Essential Motive for Friendship**

- There are three reasons for loving.
- There are, therefore, three corresponding types of friendship:
  1. Friendships of utility. In this case, friends love one another for sake of what is good for themselves. What do you think this means, exactly? Can you think of any examples?
  2. Friendships based on what is pleasurable. What do you think Aristotle has in mind here?
  3. Friendships in which friends love each other for their virtue, their good character.

#### **B. An Important Qualification**

- Few friendships are exclusively one or another.
- Most contain elements of each. But having these distinctions helps us sort out the elements of the friendships we actually have.

#### **C. Type (3) is the Best Kind of Friendship**

- Good people are pleasurable company to one another.
- This kind of friendship lasts as long as character does and is therefore stable.
- This kind of friendship ought to be the most enriching, as it provides an opportunity to help one another grow.
- The good that we wish for each other in type (3) friendships is really good. There is none of the ambivalence of wishing something for a friend that friend shouldn't have.

#### **D. Implications**

- The best form of friendship takes a long time to develop: "such friendship requires time and familiarity" (VIII.3).
- Real friendship is rare, and with few people "one cannot be a friend to many people in the sense of having friendship of the perfect type with them." (VIII.6)

### **E. A Few Important Questions:**

- Is Aristotle right in thinking this is best?
- Is this what we want in our friends?
- Who has time for friendships like this?

### **F. A Few Important Notes:**

- The bad can't really be friends: "Wicked men have no steadfastness but become friends for a short time because they delight in each other's wickedness." (VIII.8)
- It is all too easy for us to confuse sorts of friendship. What is the shared intimacy of drinking companions? What is infatuation?
- If want best sort of friendship, know yourself, tendency to enter into friendships of other sorts

"On the other hand the friendship of young people seems to aim at pleasure; for they live under the guidance of emotion, and pursue above all what is pleasant to themselves and what is immediately before them .. This is why they quickly become friends and quickly cease to be so; their friendship changes with the object that is found pleasant, and such pleasure alters quickly. Young people are amorous, too; for the greater part of the friendship depends on emotion and aims at pleasure; this is why they fall in love and quickly fall out of love, changing often within a single day." (VIII.3)

- **Does this ring any bells?**

## **IV. Equality and Friendship**

### **A. Recall the question raised at the outset.**

- To what extent, if at all, must friends be alike?
- Opinion seems to be divided.

### **B. Features of False Friendship**

- In friendships of utility or pleasure, friendship based on "friends" each providing what other needs:
  1. In friendships based on pleasure, friends seek relaxation, a good time, or excitement in each other.
  2. In friendships based on utility, friends seek whatever else they seek through their friendship. In the modern idiom, friends are merely means and not ends.
- Notice that in each case, there is no obvious way in which the people need to be alike.

### **C. Features of True Friendship**

- Friends must be alike in being lovers of good character.
- Friendship depends on equality of moral development. This is a necessary condition of sharing and mutual appreciation.

# Lecture 11 Notes

## Wrapping Up Aristotle, Introducing Aquinas

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. An Important Remark
- II. Some Disturbing Suggestions
- III. The Internal Nature of Friendship
- IV. Some Closing Remarks on Aristotle
- V. Introduction to Thomas Aquinas

### I. An Important Remark

"And so too, it seems, should one make a return to those with whom one has studied philosophy; for their worth cannot be measured against money, and they can get no honor which will balance their services, but still it is perhaps enough, as it is with the gods and with one's parents, to give them what one can."

-IX.1

### II. Some Disturbing Suggestions

#### A. Friendship between Unequals: Differences in Virtue

"In all friendships implying inequality, the love should be proportional, i.e. the better should be more loved than he loves, and so should the more useful...for when the love is in proportion to the merit of the parties, then in a sense arises equality, which is certainly held to be characteristic of friendship" (VIII.7)

"But if one friend remained the same while the other became better and far outstripped him in virtue, should the latter treat the former as a friend. Surely he cannot. When the interval is great this becomes most plain, e.g. in childish friendships; if one remained a child .. while the other became a fully developed [adult] how could they be friends when they neither approved of the same things nor delighted in and were pained by the same things?" (IX.3)

- Aristotle has a point, particularly about the possibility of friendship between a grown-up and a child.
- While Aristotle argues that inequality always gets in the way, this seems to ignore important possibilities: love from someone better can be ennobling love. It can also call one to higher things.
- Does Aristotle ignore friendship based on shared history?

## **B. Friendship Between Unequals: Friendship with God**

- Aristotle writes, "when one party is removed to a great distance, as God is, the possibility of friendship ceases" (VIII.7).
- This claim contradicts the experience of many people of great sanctity.

## **C. Worth recalling the world in which Aristotle lives**

- His world was one in which human excellence was highly prized: athletic excellence, physical beauty, military valor.
- It was a world in which great and heroic deeds live on in stories.
- It was an aristocratic world in which heroes are above anyone else. That a hero could be a friend of someone ordinary was unthought. How many of you come from such a world?
- Aristotle's ideas about friendship and love owe nothing to gospel ideals, e.g., "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25.40, KJV) and "love your enemies, bless them that curse you" (Matt. 5.44, KJV).

## **D. Aristotle got lots of things right**

- The "Disturbing Suggestions" show the problems with Aristotle's view; Christian ethics will be an improvement.
- To see this, look at "Internal Nature of Friendship".

# **III. The Internal Nature of Friendship (Book 9)**

## **A. Importance of the Internal Nature of Friendship OR Friendships are Like Cars**

- **Do not** choose one because you look good with it. **Do not** choose one because it reinforces illusions about yourself. **Do not** treat one like a rental or short-term lease. **Do not** choose one because it has a flashy body
- **Do attend to what's going on under the hood!** Attend to your own and your friend's inner life.

## **B. The Virtue of Self-Love**

- "Friendship is based on self-love": chapter 4. To be a good friend to others, you must be friend to yourself.
  1. Friendship requires living together (chapter 12). You must take time with yourself, take inventory. If there are inner conflicts, resolve them.
  2. Friendship requires knowing yourself, your desires, your faults and virtues.

3. Be kind to yourself: treat yourself as would a friend. The person who is friend to herself is not at odds with herself (IX.4). She takes pleasure in her own company; she doesn't mind being alone (228). Bad people, by contrast, can't bear own company (IX.4). The person who loves self takes pleasure in good qualities as exemplified in activities of a particular ("determinate" p. IX.4) life she knows intimately: her own.
- Proper and Improper Self-Love: chapter 8. Friends value each other and wish good things for one another. What should we value in ourselves? Wish for ourselves?
    1. Aristotle rightly condemns the selfish: "people who assign themselves the greater share of wealth, honors and bodily pleasure" (IX.8)
    2. An account of proper self-love is more problematic: "assigns to himself what is noblest and best" and "those who busy themselves in an exceptional degree with noble actions" (IX.8)
  - **But:** excellence of sort Aristotle intends not open to many. What's under the hood there?

### C. The Virtue of Beneficence: chapter 7

- Aristotle takes it for granted that there is greater pleasure in benefitting others than in being benefitted. The problem is how to account for this.
- Aristotle's answer shows limitations of his ethic. He only allows for two causes for the pleasure:
  1. Those whom one benefits are products of craftsmanship: "This is what happens with craftsmen too; every man loves his own handiwork better than he would be loved if it came alive....This is what the position of benefactors is like; for that which they have treated well is their handiwork, and therefore they love this more than the handiwork does its maker." (IX.7)
  2. Benefitting others is a noble action; nobility elicits pleasure.
- Would Christianity give a different and better account? Would it even single out the same sorts of beneficent actions as most praiseworthy?

## IV. Some Closing Remarks on Aristotle

### A. Main Features of His View

- While Plato's philosophy might be called a "Morality of Order", Aristotle's defends what we might call a "Morality of Excellence".
- He lived in a world that valued excellence, beauty, and heroism.
- The good life, as Aristotle understood it, is a complete life. It includes activities which exemplify these values. This life, however, is available only to cultured, rich, male aristocrats.
- We may disagree with Aristotle; but we cannot ignore him.

## B. Four Reasons not to ignore Aristotle's view

- **REASON #1:** Plausible Ethic of Excellence. That the good life is found in pursuit of excellence is plausible. We have strong intuitions that something important is lost if we lived in a world that didn't try to elicit excellence. So Aristotle's ethic recognizes important, plausible human value.
- **REASON #2:** Importance of the Virtues. Aristotle is correct to say that the pursuit of human excellence requires the cultivation of states of character. Thinking about one's life as a project of developing one's character has attractions.
- **REASON #3:** The Discussion of Friendship. Aristotle has great insight into the nature and needs of friendship, as well as great insights into the virtues required for it. At a time of life when friendship is especially important, it is especially salutary to be reminded of them.
- **REASON #4:** Shortcomings of Pre-Christian View. We suggested that Aristotle falls short in self-love, beneficence. We wonder whether Christianity might do better. This sets the stage for the next great philosopher: Thomas Aquinas.

## V. Introduction to Thomas Aquinas

### A. The Method of Disputation

- Thomas Aquinas employs what is, to us, an eccentric expository style.
- His exposition takes the form of an elaborate set of arguments and counter-arguments. This can be his own view, hard to determine unless you read carefully.

### B. Nuts and Bolts

- Step One: He broaches a question.
- Step Two: He divides the question into sub-questions called "articles". Notice, for example, Question 2: "Of those things in which happiness consists". This question is divided into two articles: art.1 "Whether happiness consists in wealth" and art. 2 "Whether in honor".
- Each article poses a question Aquinas will answer.
  1. Before defending his own view, he adduces 3 (or more) reasons called "objections" for thinking the contrary.
  2. Then he adduces an authority (such as St. Paul or St. Augustine) agreeing with him.
  3. Then he defends his own view, beginning "I answer that..."
  4. Finally, he refutes the objections.
- So, in the example of Question 2: "Of those things in which happiness consists". Article 1 "Whether happiness consists in wealth", we get: "objection 1: It would seem that man's happiness consists in wealth [for reason 1]...On the contrary...Boethius says...I answer that it is impossible for man's happiness to consist in wealth...[for the following reasons]...replies to objections..."
- **The best thing to do when reading Thomas Aquinas is to read "I answer that..." first, then read the rest.**



# Lecture 12 Notes

## Thomas Aquinas on Happiness

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. The Life and Times of Thomas Aquinas
- II. Aquinas on Happiness

### I. The Life and Times of Thomas Aquinas

#### A. Facts of Life

- He was born c. 1224 in southern Italy, near the Abbey of Monte Casino, home of Benedictine monks.
- He joined the Dominican mendicants, which had been founded in 1217 by St. Dominic to serve the urban poor of Europe. The Dominicans were the fruit of revolutionary movement within church. They subsisted by begging. Dominicans taught at great universities of Europe
- Aquinas's family tried to dissuade him from entering (they even kidnapped him); but they finally relented when he showed his determination.
- He spent his life as professor of philosophy and theology at Paris, attached for a time to the Papal household.
- He had a mystical experience led him to give up intellectual work and died within a year en route to Council of Lyon; he was canonized within 50 years.

#### B. Intellectual Climate - Crucial Chapter in Intellectual History

- The most important element of intellectual climate is Catholic Christianity, the dominant intellectual, cultural, and political force in western Europe for almost 1000 years. Latin Europe was a spiritually unified entity. A dozen centuries' of Catholic thought struggled to absorb intellectual legacy of classical world.
- Aristotle was lost to Latin West; but intellectual ferment was occasioned by recovery of Aristotle.
- With the rediscovery of Aristotle came the observation of apparent tensions with Christianity:
  1. In Christianity, the nature of the good life is ordered to eternal life.
  2. In Christianity, the nature of God is all-loving, provident.
  3. The revival of Aristotelian provoked suspicion like that elicited by Darwinism today.

#### C. The Thomistic synthesis

- Aquinas's great intellectual accomplishment was to effect synthesis of Aristotelianism with Christianity. He recast Catholic theology and philosophy and used Aristotle to provide the intellectual underpinning for Catholicism.
- He produced an enormous body of work, of which the was the SUMMA THEOLOGIAE greatest. It provides a synthesis of all Catholic theology, written in four volumes for graduate students. It encompasses creation, divine, angelic and human natures, economy of salvation, and the return of all to God.
- Since we live in world in which belief is matter of taste, it can be difficult to appreciate the intellectual ambition of Aquinas's work.
- We will look at the discussions of happiness and law in order to see how Catholicism draws on classical sources to present a view of good life lived in good society.

#### **D. Thomism since Thomas**

- It was the basis of Catholic thought for 700 years.
- Catholic theology has moved on, but Thomas's achievement remains.

#### **E. A Word on Scholastic Method**

- We cannot help but notice Aquinas's appeal to authorities. These include:
  1. Scriptural
  2. Patristic, e.g., fathers of Church through 426 A.D.
  3. Philosophical, e.g., Boethius, "the Philosopher"
- Aquinas thought that there can be no contradiction between what we know on basis of faith and of reason. **Therefore**, if reason leads to one the conclusion, this can be reconciled with the authorities of faith. His format of invoking authorities' objections and replies responds to this program.

## **II. Aquinas on Happiness**

### **A. Aquinas Borrows From Aristotle**

- Following Aristotle, Aquinas argues that there is an ultimate end to human life and the ultimate end is happiness.
- Like Aristotle, he argues that we must look at what happiness consists in. He invokes a variety of opinions, giving weight to authoritative sources. Also like Aristotle, he argues that happiness is not found in wealth, honor, fame, power.
- Recall Aristotle's "man's function" argument. Aristotle concluded that happiness is found in a life characterized by excellent (virtuous) exercise of our highest faculties--those faculties which are distinctively human.
- Aquinas will argue for much same conclusion. The distinctively human faculties are reason and will; these faculties are exercised best in the beatific vision of God.

### **B. Aquinas Delivers a Subtler Analysis Than Aristotle's**

- Question (5) Does happiness consists in bodily goods? Answer--No. First Argument: our end cannot be self-preservation. Second argument:
  1. Suppose, for the sake of argument, our end **is** the preservation of being.
  2. Being consists in body and soul, **obviously**.
  3. The body depends on the soul, which we previously proved.
  4. ...is for its sake "as matter for its form, and the instruments for the man that puts them into motion" (FROM (iii))
  5. "Wherefore all goods of the body are ordained to the goods of the soul, as to their end."  
**So:** happiness, which is the ultimate end, is not a bodily good.
  
- Question (6) Does happiness consists in pleasure? Aquinas begins with a distinction: other delights vs. bodily pleasure.
- FIRST ARGUMENT: Happiness is not these other delights, e.g. intellectual pleasure, joy of discovery
  1. "the reason a man is delighted is that he has some fitting good"
  2. "Now a fitting good, if indeed it be the perfect good is precisely man's happiness; and if it is imperfect, it is a share of happiness"
  3. So delight "result[s] from happiness or some part of happiness".
  4. **So**, delight cannot **be** happiness
  
- SECOND ARGUMENT: Not only is happiness not bodily pleasure, it cannot even be natural result of happiness.
  1. Bodily pleasure is "from a good apprehended by sense" .
  2. Sense "makes use of the body", **obviously**.
  3. "The rational soul excels the capacity of corporeal matter", **obviously**.
  4. So "that part of the soul which is independent of corporeal matter has a certain infinity in regard to the body".
  5. "Therefore sense knows the singular, which is determinate through matter, whereas the intellect knows the universal, which ... contains an infinite number of singulars."
  
- REMARKS ON THE ARGUMENT:
  1. It is necessary to argue that happiness does not depend on body; this is a claim that Aquinas needs to support later claims about personal immortality.
  2. It reveals important claims about capacity of mind: its capacity is "infinite" in comparison w/ sensation. It is capable of grasping the abstract, grasping what is independent of matter. It is also capable of grasping such a thing that naturally results in delight: the "Eureka!" feeling.

## Lecture 13 Notes

# Thomas's Metaphysics of Happiness

## Plan of the Lecture

- I. Crucial Terms
- II. Implications for Happiness

## I. Crucial Terms

### A. Form and Matter

- Plant is composed of cellulose, chlorophyll, etc. These are its material components, its **matter**.
- Material components are arranged in a distinctive structure, organization, pattern, the **form**.
  1. It may seem that a distinctive structure is obvious to observation. But it is important to understand that the **form** is not identical to visual form.
  2. Rather, **form** is the structure that accounts for a substance having certain properties and qualities. The structure accounts for its doing what things of that kind do, for example, to propagate by seed vs. by spores as well as photosynthesize, and so on. When we recognize a thing as having a quality, we grasp its form, to some extent.
- **Form** can be considered in abstraction from **matter**. For example, the form of a cactus. In doing so, we consider what is common to many cacti. It these things that are "universal", found in all cacti. When we encounter form in particular chunk of matter, form is bounded and finite. But in abstraction, it is "infinite".
- Therefore material substances are **matter** and **form**. **Matter** is the material stuff of individual substance and **form** is the structure or organization of matter that:
  1. ...enables substance to perform certain functions.
  2. ...is grasped by the intellect in recognizing a thing.
  3. ...we can reason about in abstraction from matter.
  4. ...is common to many, the universal.

### B. Essence and Proper Accident

- We've seen that forms explain why substances have properties. Now we draw a distinction between two kinds of properties:
  1. Properties that things have that make them kind of thing they are: e.g. distinctive structure in virtue of which cactus is mesquite. These properties are **definitive** of the substance in question. A set of such definitive properties is the **essence** of substance, e.g. the structure of cactus, rationality in human beings. When we recognize a thing as member of a kind, we grasp its essence. To grasp its essence is also to grasp its purpose or **end**.

2. Other properties that things have in virtue of kind they are do not make them the kind they are. These might include thorns in cactus, risibility in human beings. Aquinas calls these **proper accidents**.

C. So Far, When We Recognize a Cactus as a Cactus, We:

1. Grasp the **form** of cactus conferring properties that make it a cactus.
  2. Grasp the **essence** of the cactus.
  3. Grasp its **end** or purpose.
- **Note** a distinction between potentiality and actuality: that before you grasp the essence, your intellect is capable of grasping it, but has not actually done so:
    1. Intellect is in **potency** or **potentiality** when, before you grasp the essence of the cactus, your intellect is capable of grasping it but has not actually done so.
    2. Once you grasp the essence, your intellect no longer in potency, it is in **act**, in a state of **actuality**. The essence of cactus is actually in intellect
  - **Potency** is a state of imperfection, something intellect lacks. **Actuality** is a perfection of intellect. It is not a complete perfection, as it is subject to interruption by sleeping, etc., and there is always more to learn.

D. In sum, when recognize cactus as such:

1. Grasp **form** conferring essential properties.
2. Grasp the **essence** of the cactus.
3. Grasp the **end** of the cactus.
4. Because form common to many cactus, we grasp the **universal**.
5. Grasping the essence of the cactus is the **operation** of the intellect
6. Because intellect had been in **potency** and is now in **act**, grasping essence is a completion or **perfection**.
7. Because this act brings intellect to a sort of perfection, because it completes the intellect, it is a **final act**.
8. This is not full perfection of the intellect because intellect is interrupted, it remains in potency.

## II. Implications for Happiness

A. This argument goes from analysis of human power to claim about happiness. More generally:

- Aristotle and Aquinas agree that happiness is the good exercise of distinctively human capacities.
- They agree on what good human capacities are.

- They agree that by analyzing those capacities and what perfects them, we can learn what a happy or good life is.

## **B. Important Distinction:**

- Aristotle lived in a pre-Christian world and did not believe in eternal life with an infinite God. Aquinas lives in Christian world; he does believe in this possibility.
- As a result, they have different ideas about the circumstances in which distinctively human capacities can be exercised.
- Moreover, they have different ideas about circumstances in which complete happiness is available:
  1. Aristotle thought complete happiness was available in this life, in the integrated and episodic pursuit of ends, including intellectual ones.
  2. Aquinas thinks complete happiness is the vision of God, available only in the next life. Even so, he agrees, roughly, with Aristotle about what happiness in this life is. But he thinks that happiness in the present life is incomplete. Complete happiness is a "continual, everlasting operation".

# Lecture 14 Notes

## Refining Happiness and the Background to Law

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. Aquinas on Happiness: Question 2
- II. Aquinas on Happiness: Question 3
- III. Background to Law

## **I. Aquinas on Happiness: Question 2**

### **A. Refinements**

- We can refine our arguments based on the crucial concepts we developed in the previous lecture.
- These were the concepts of matter/form, essence, accidental, end, and potency/act,

### **B. Question II, Article 5. Whether happiness consists in bodily goods?**

- First Argument: our end cannot be self-preservation.
- Second Argument:
  1. Suppose, for the sake of argument, our end is the preservation of being.

2. Being consists in body and soul, **obviously**.
  3. The body depends on the soul, which we previously proved.
  4. ...is for its sake "as matter for its form, and the instruments for the man that puts them in motion" (FROM (iii))
  5. "Wherefore all goods of the body are ordained to the goods of the soul, as to their end."  
**So:** happiness, which is the ultimate end, is not a bodily good.
- Question II: Article 6. Whether happiness consists in pleasure? Aquinas begins with a distinction: other delights vs. bodily pleasure.
  - FIRST ARGUMENT: Happiness is not these other delights, e.g. intellectual pleasure, joy of discovery
    1. "the reason a man is delighted is that he has some fitting good"
    2. "Now a fitting good, if indeed it be the perfect good is precisely man's happiness; and if it is imperfect, it is a share of happiness"
    3. So delight "result[s] from happiness or some part of happiness".
    4. **So,** delight cannot **be** happiness.
    - Now consider that delight is consequent on bodily goods and the argument has even more bite!
  - SECOND ARGUMENT: Not only is happiness not bodily pleasure, it cannot even be natural result of happiness.
    1. Bodily pleasure is "from a good apprehended by sense" .
    2. Sense "makes use of the body", **obviously**.
    3. "The rational soul excels the capacity of corporeal matter", **obviously**.
    4. So "that part of the soul which is independent of corporeal matter has a certain infinity in regard to the body".
    5. "Therefore sense knows the singular, which is determinate through matter, whereas the intellect knows the universal, which ... contains an infinite number of singulars."
    6. **Therefore, the good which is apprehended by sense is less than good apprehended by the intellect.**
    7. **"...it is evident that good which .. causes bodily delight through being apprehended by sense, is not man's perfect good, but is a trifle compared with good of soul". So, bodily pleasure is not a natural result of highest good, happiness.**
  - REMARKS ON THE ARGUMENT:
    1. It is necessary to argue that happiness does not depend on body. The problems here are that bodily pleasures are so attractive to us, they can lead us astray, and they can distract us from what is really important.
    2. This is a claim that Aquinas needs to support later claims about personal immortality.
    3. It reveals important claims about capacity of mind: its capacity is "infinite" in comparison w/ sensation. It is capable of grasping the abstract, grasping what is independent of matter. It is also capable of grasping such a thing that naturally results in delight: the "Eureka!" feeling.

## II. Aquinas on Happiness: Question 3: Article 8: Does Happiness Consist in Vision of Divine Essence?

1. "The object of the intellect is what a thing is, i.e. the essence of the thing"
2. "The perfection of any power is determined by the nature of its object"
3. "Wherefore the intellect attains perfection insofar as it knows the essence of a thing" (FROM (1) AND (2))
4. "When we know an effect, and know that it has a cause there remains the desire to know about the cause what it is" -- i.e. to know the essence of the cause
5. "Man is not perfectly happy, so long as something remains for him to desire and seek."
6. "If the human intellect, knowing some created effect [of God] knows no more of God than that He is there remains desire"
7. "Wherefore it is not perfectly happy" (FROM (4),(5) AND (6))
8. THEREFORE "for perfect happiness, the intellect needs to reach the very essence of the First Cause".

## III. Background to Law

### A. Introduction

- Aquinas's discussion of law is taken from the *Summa Theologiae*, as is his discussion of happiness.
- Between the two discussions, there is a great deal of important material on human action and virtue. These includes discussions of:
  1. ...what makes actions voluntary and involuntary.
  2. ...what faculties are involved in human actions.
  3. ...what makes human action good or bad.
  4. ...virtues in which good human life consists.
- On many of these topics, Aquinas follows Aristotle closely, though he provides a more detailed analysis.
- The section on law is an interesting point of divergence. It is the most original, best known and influential parts of *Summa Theologiae* and one of best known and most influential bits of Catholic thought.
- Salient features: there are many kinds of law with special relations among them.

### B. Recall several important points we made when talking about Plato and Aristotle:

- Plato thinks that the attainment of virtue requires a good society. In a good society, the legislators know the human good and establish by mandate what is to be feared in the soldiering class laws and instill temperance in the commercial class.
- Aristotle argues that ethics, study of the human good or human happiness, is part of "political science", i.e. study of how institutions arranged. The laws must take account of what the human good, or human happiness, is.
- Both think we can know what human good is. Both think that they know how virtue is acquired. Both think a good society is one which helps people become good and virtuous.



- They have different views of how virtue is known and acquired. These different views lead to very different conceptions of good society.

### C. Some Similarities Between the Ancients and Aquinas

- Aquinas too thinks that he knows the human good: it is a virtuous life.
- Aquinas too thinks that the good achieved only in good society.
- Aquinas too thinks that laws of a good society are framed to lead members of society to their good.

### D. Two Important Differences

- **First**, Aquinas stresses that societies are **communities**. To understand importance of this, take the example of Notre Dame:
  1. In virtue of being here, we have a relationship with other Notre Dame people as such, and only with them.
  2. The quality of that relationship depends on health of institution, whether it is achieving its goals of providing good education, good dorm life, and so on.
  3. Whether institution does well, e.g., achieves its goals, depends on what the members do. Their working together to realize goals itself builds relationships.
  4. The well-being of institutions, and of relationships in institutional life, is itself an important element of the happiness of members, as well as an important element of their living good life.
- **So**, the goods of the Notre Dame community are **common goods**. Aquinas stresses that communities have common goods
- **Second**, Aquinas stresses that we are members of many communities:
  1. Each of which has a common good: political society aims at justice, peace, moral virtue of members. Humanity aims at flourishing of human beings. Catholic Christendom aims at salvation. The created universe reflects various aspects of God's glory. The "city of God" aims to praise, glorify, and contemplate God.
  2. Whether each achieves its good depends on the commitments and collective activities of members.
  3. When each community achieves common good, it perfects the relations among members, including the friendship relation. Thus, friendship + flourishing of community are important elements of members' good.
- **Therefore**, for Aquinas, in order to achieve the human good, find happiness, and leading a good life, one must be good member of communities

### E. This suggests a very complicated picture of human happiness:

- Different qualities of character, different virtues seem appropriate to life in different communities. Life in political society demands patriotism, courage, justice. These might

seem quite different from virtues required of members of city of God, whose goal is contemplation.

- Aquinas thinks that these virtues and qualities of character are complementary; a good life combines them.
- Communities are well-structured insofar as they foster these virtues in their members.
- **Recall** that for Plato and Aristotle, a society can be good, such that it can lead its members to virtue, only if it has good laws. The same is true for Aquinas: communities to which human beings belong have laws to guide their members. **Different communities will have different types of law.**

# Lecture 15 Notes

## The Essence of Law

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. The Essence of Law
- II. Three Implications

### I. The Essence of Law

#### A. The idea of a Perfect or Complete Community

- Aquinas considers a number of communities: political society, humanity, Christendom, and the created universe.
- Each, he thinks, is, **in a sense**, complete or perfect, with a **common good**:
  1. The political community is complete just as Aristotle thought.
  2. Catholic Christendom is complete or self-sufficient in that there no larger, more embracing earthly spiritual society, no higher spiritual authority than the Pope, and no resources more efficacious than sacraments.
  3. The created universe is paradigmatically self-sufficient.

#### B. Human Beings Achieve Their Ends as Members of Such Community

- Political community. Human beings cannot achieve goods of culture, intellect, leisure, various forms of work, friendship, outside complex political community THEREFORE cannot live good life outside political community
- Catholic Christendom. The good life as Aristotle describes it is not all the good there is. To achieve eternal life, we need the sacraments. To live as well as can in this one, we need to hear the gospel. **Therefore**, we cannot attain human good without Christendom.

- The Created Universe. Human beings are made in God's image and likeness. Insofar as we live well, we image one aspect of God's perfection. So too do other creatures. **Therefore**, our good is appreciated in context of all creation

### C. Human Beings are Naturally "Parts" of Such a Community

- Because we achieve the good, i.e., live a good human life, within complete communities, we are **parts** of perfect communities, as hand is part of human body.
- "Moreover, since every part is ordained to the whole as imperfect to perfect, and since one man is part of the perfect community..."

### D. Such a Community Must be Good

- There must be good laws for various communities to be healthy and well-functioning. Communities to which human beings belong have laws to guide their members to the common goods of those communities.
- "...the law must needs regard the proper relationship to universal happiness. Wherefore the Philosopher mentions both happiness and the body politic...since the state is a perfect community[.]" (Question 90, article 3)

## II. Three Implications

### A. People Achieve Their Good in Perfect Communities and are Naturally Parts of Such Communities.

- **Core Idea:** People lead good lives by being part of something bigger, more embracing than themselves.
- **Therefore**, thought that liberty and individuality are ultimate goods, just as anathema to him as to Plato, Aristotle.

### B. Human Good in This Life is Activity According to Reason.

- That is, the good life is a life of actions and choices governed by reason well-exercised. **Therefore**, the good exercise of reason is a standard or norm against which human act is judged: "the rule and measure of human acts is reason" (Q. 90, art. 1)
- Good law is also a measure or standard of human acts. **Therefore**, good law is law made according to right reason.
- Together, good law is made by reason about what common good requires.

### C. Kinds of Law

- As we saw, Aquinas thinks human beings: members of many communities;
- achieve their good as such since communities are guided by laws, there must be various kinds of law to govern the various communities:

1. The **Created Universe** is governed by **Eternal Law**
2. **Humanity** is governed by **Natural Law**.

3. **Catholic Christendom** is governed by **Divine Law**.
4. **Political Communities** are governed by various codes of **Human Law**.

# Lecture 16 Notes

## The Kinds of Law

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. Eternal Law
- II. Natural Law
- III. Divine Law
- IV. Human Law

## I. Eternal Law (Question 93, Article 1)

### A. The Plan of Creation

- God created all things as an artisan makes artifices.
- **Therefore**, God must have had a plan in mind. "And just as the type of things yet to be made by an art is called the art or exemplar of the products of that art, so too the type in him who governs the acts of his subjects bears the character of law"

### B. The Common Good

- The common good is reflected in various aspects of divine glory, i.e. various creatures, when they function well, reflect some aspect of it.
- Since things realize their good by obeying laws, there must be a law governing all created things and leading to their end.
- **Therefore**, there is a law that governs operations of all creation from lowest to highest, from rocks to angelic choirs.

### C. Divine Providence

- All things are subject to divine providence. "He governs the acts and movements [of] each single creature"

(A) + (B) + (C) = Eternal Law

## II. Natural Law

### A. All Creatures are Subject to Eternal Law.

- All are subject to God's original plan and governance, his continuing providence.
- Human beings realize or frustrate the divine plan by acting. They govern their own action through their faculties of reason and choice. **So**, the good human life requires the perfection of these faculties.
- This entails that human beings are subject to divine guidance in special way. God doesn't guide human action like the acts of rocks, plants, other animals. **So**, if our choices are to be guided by eternal law, this guidance must appeal to our reason, the faculty by which we guides ourselves.
- In other words, **natural law = eternal law** as it is apprehended by and guides rational creatures. Aquinas writes: "participation of eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law" (Question 91, art. 2)

## B. Two Important Points

- **Question:** how does natural law guide us? How is it known or promulgated (cf. Q. 90, art. 4) to us? **Answer:** a human being "has natural inclination to its proper end", i.e. we have a natural inclination to do the right thing. In other words, we are naturally so constituted that we take pleasure in it. Some details:
  1. We can distinguish primary and secondary precepts of the natural law. Primary precepts are the rudiments of morality. Secondary precepts are more specific moral injunctions.
  2. The inclination of the natural law needs to be trained so that we learn to recognize it and are moved by moral precepts. In other words, proper moral education is essential.
  3. Even with a bad environment, the rudiments (primary precepts) are never eradicated from a person.
- The natural law guides us only to our natural end. To achieve our supernatural end, more is needed--**divine law**.

## III. Divine Law

### A. Old Testament Law

- Old Testament law governed the community of Israel before the birth of Christ.
- These laws included dietary laws, laws of ritual purity and impurity, and laws governing how religious ceremonies were performed. Consult the biblical books of [Leviticus](#) and [Deuteronomy](#).
- These laws structure every aspect of Jewish life. Part of leading a good life as member of the community of Israel involved following these laws.
- **As a result**, Aquinas took them very seriously. However, nothing in classical philosophy, and thus nothing in Aristotle, looks remotely like this.

### B. New Testament Law

- New Testament injunctions are even further from what we find in classical philosophy. Consider the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew:

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

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

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth,

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

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

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

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

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven. (Matt. 5.3-12, KJV)

- There is nothing like the Beatitudes in Aristotle, yet Aquinas insists that they "contain the whole process of forming the life of the Christian" (Quest. 108, art. 3).
- It therefore seems that either:
  1. The beatitudes do not guide us to good human life.
  2. Aristotle was wrong about what good life requires.
- This creates a dilemma: clearly (1) can't be true, and (2) doesn't seem so great either. What is Aquinas to do?
- Aquinas's Solution: Aristotle was wrong, but he didn't make any mistakes. The Old Testament laws are to guide the community of Israel in developing and sustaining relationship with God. The New Testament laws are to guide us in seeking God's kingdom: living as well as possible in this life and attaining happiness in the next. Figuring this out was beyond the capacity of human reason--even Aristotle could not have figured it out.
- The Divine Law had to be revealed by God gradually, through the Old Testament and the New Testament. Together these contain a body of precepts leading to our supernatural end.
- **Divine Law, too, is part of Eternal Law.**

## IV. Human Law

### A. Question: By What Laws Will We Guide our Communities?

- Law is to guide us to our good by guiding communities of which we are parts to their goods, yet the communities and laws discussed so far seem insufficient for a number of reasons:
  1. We don't often think of ourselves as members of these communities, that is, as trying to meet their demands.
  2. These communities don't seem to exercise coercive force threat of which makes us obey. But the communities of which we are most obviously members are human political communities. These communities, on the other hand, exercise force necessary to compel obedience.

- It is **therefore** important to look at laws of such communities. The laws that govern these communities, **human laws**, are necessary if we are to lead lives of virtue.

## **B. Answer: Human Law**

- Leading life of virtue requires moral formation and education. This takes place only in a well-structured community, with coercive power exercised to restrain the recalcitrant. Therefore proper moral education requires good laws.
- Since human law is to lead human beings to virtue, law must have moral purposes. Consider the following.
  1. It should foster religion, as much as possible, given the circumstances.
  2. It should provide discipline: helping people to develop right habits.
  3. It should promote the common good of political society. This includes promoting civic friendship, peace, and justice.
- Human law can fulfil moral purposes only if it is based on morality, based on the precepts leading us to a good life. In other words, only if it is based on divine and natural law (Q. 95, art. 3). Some features of this relationship include:
  1. Human law cannot be contrary to either divine law or natural law.
  2. Insofar as human law fosters religion by requiring performance of religious ceremonies, repressing heresy, fostering the virtue of charity, it is to that extent it is based on divine law.
  3. Human law's relationship to natural law has the following features. First, human law is derived as a conclusion of natural law. For example, the human crime of involuntary manslaughter is derived from the precept, "do harm to no one." Second, human law is a determination or specification of general precept. For example, natural law says that thieves are to be punished and human law specifies how this is to be done.

**This concludes our discussion of Aquinas, ancient and medieval philosophy!**

# **Lecture 17 Notes**

## **Introduction to Descartes**

### **Plan of the Lecture**

- I. Background to the Second Half of the Term
- II. Important Characteristics of the Modern Period
- III. Introduction to Descartes

IV. Meditation 1  
V. Meditation 2: The Cogito

## **I. Background to the Second Half of the Term**

- **With the move from Plato and Aristotle to Aquinas, we moved from the classical or ancient period to the Medieval.**
- **With the move from Thomas Aquinas to Descartes, Hobbes, and Kant (later, to Dostoevski) we move from the Medieval to the modern period of European history and thought.**

## **II. Important Characteristics of Modern Period**

### **A. Age of Discovery**

- The age of discovery begins with the explorations of the Portuguese. It culminates in Columbus's voyage of 1492 and Magellan's circumnavigation of globe.
- It is made possible by national states funding expeditions. Returns from these expeditions brought enormous amounts of money into them.

### **B. Age of Humanism**

- Scholars return to classical Greek and Roman learning and literature during 1500's.
- It marks the beginning of modern biblical criticism.
- There is increased emphasis on humanistic, secular values.

### **C. Age of Science**

- In 1543, Copernicus published hypothesis of heliocentrism.
- In 1610, Galileo published an argument, based on evidence gathered by telescope, that Copernicus was right.
- In the mid-1600's, Newton published the work in which he invented mathematical physics. His work effectively brought to an end the hegemony of Aristotelian science.

### **D. Age of Reformation**

- In 1517, a young German monk named Martin Luther tacked "95 Theses" to church door in Wittenberg, Germany thereby changed face of Europe forever. Luther may only have wanted to reform Catholic Church, but he instead invented Protestantism. It spread rapidly throughout Germany, Switzerland, finally reaching England.
- By the 1530's, states could sever financial, political, and legal ties with Rome.
- The end of Roman Catholic hegemony brought large-scale religious and moral pluralism to Europe. Some continued to think of Christendom as spiritual unity, but Protestantism and pluralism were entrenched in European life by last third of 1500's.

### **E. Comparative Characteristics of the Late Medieval Period and the Modern Period**



Late Medieval Period	Early Modern Period
Increasing concentration of power in nation-states	Nation-states are the political entities of Europe
Large-scale religious unity of Catholic Christendom	Large-scale religious pluralism prevails in Europe
Dominance of religious authority of Catholic Church	Many nation-states and citizens independent of Church authority
Intellectual ferment over recovery of Aristotle	Intellectual ferment over rise of science and humanistic studies
For Thomas Aquinas, paradigm of knowledge is philosophy and theology	Paradigm of knowledge is increasingly science, and the mathematics on which it is based

## F. Changes in Philosophy

- By 300 years after Aquinas's birth, his intellectual, political and spiritual world was in fragments. By 350 years after his death, it was ground to dust, blown away.
- Philosophy concerns itself with the place of human beings in world with what they are, what they are to do, how they are to live.
- **Therefore**, philosophy must change with the world: old accounts of politics are swept away and new ones defended. Old accounts of ethics are put aside and new ones are articulated. Old accounts of how human beings can know should be forgotten and new ones put forward. Philosophy must begin anew: enter Descartes.

## III. Introduction to Descartes

### A. Life and Times

- Rene Descartes 1596-1650.
- He was a contemporary of Shakespeare (d. 1620), Galileo (d. 1643), and Rembrandt (d. 1669).
- Philosophy aside, his life was made interesting only by circumstances of death, tutoring the Swedish queen.

### B. Descartes' Philosophical Program

- He studied Thomistic philosophy as taught in his time, knew it well, and accepted it for a time.
- He also studies of physics and mathematics, giving his name to Cartesian geometry, which he invented. This set of studies convinced him of its inadequacy of Thomistic philosophy, insofar as he was impressed with the certainty and structure of geometry.
- He wanted all knowledge to be as certain as that found in geometry, and wanted a philosophy to show how this could be so.

## IV. Meditation 1

## A. The Existence of Doubt

- We have vast number of beliefs.
- But not many of them seem to enjoy certainty. With sufficient ingenuity, we can see that **all** can be doubted:
  1. Sense and memory deceive us.
  2. We dream when we are sleeping
  3. Could it be that God deceives us?
  4. It is certainly possible that an evil genius, a demon, is deceiving us so that nothing we believe is true.

## B. The Method of Doubt

- A hypothesis is necessary to determine which beliefs are certain. Through this hypothesis, we can:
  1. determine which beliefs a person committed only to certainty should believe.
  2. isolate a few beliefs which are as certain as the axioms of geometry seem, and from there, get to others.

"Archimedes, that he might transport the entire globe from the place it occupied to another, demanded only a point that was firm and immovable; so, also, I shall be entitled to entertain the highest expectations, if I am fortunate enough to discover only one thing that is certain and indubitable."  
(Meditation 2, Paragraph 1)

- Descartes hopes to show that much of what we think we know is in fact secure, if he can find but one secure foundation. **But what can it be?**

## V. Meditation 2: The Cogito

### A. This is the most famous passage in all of philosophy:

"But I had the persuasion that there was absolutely nothing in the world, that there was no sky and no earth, neither minds nor bodies; was I not, therefore, at the same time, persuaded that I did not exist? Far from it; I assuredly existed, since I was persuaded. But there is I know not what being, who is possessed at once of the highest power and the deepest cunning, who is constantly employing all his ingenuity in deceiving me. Doubtless, then, I exist, since I am deceived; and, let him deceive me as he may, he can never bring it about that I am nothing, so long as I shall be conscious that I am something. So that it must, in fine, be maintained, all things being maturely and carefully considered, that this proposition (pronunciatum) *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true each time it is expressed by me, or conceived in my mind." (Meditation 2, Paragraph 3)

### B. How is the Argument to be Understood?

- I have persuaded myself that everything is subject to doubt.
- But I was persuaded and I did the persuading.
- THEREFORE "I did exist".

### C. Objection and Reply

- Objection: Isn't it possible I am deceived about my existence?
- Reply: "If he is deceiving me, there is no doubt that I exist."

### D. The Inference

- Engagement in mental activity, cogitation, proves to me that I exist while doing it.
- **Cogito ergo sum** means "**I think**" therefore "**I am**".
- 'Think' covers a range of mental activity, including: doubt, affirm, deny, and know.
- The secure foundation of all knowledge--his and ours--is this inference.

### E. Two Points the Argument Does Not Prove

- We conceive of ourselves as persisting through periods of mental inactivity, including coma, dreamless sleep, and unconsciousness. The argument is consistent with our "popping" in and out of existence as mental activity begins and ceases. **Therefore**, the argument does not show that we exist in way we may usually think.
- We normally conceive of ourselves as sensing things outside us, as imagining based on sensation, as beings with bodies. But the fact that we are persuaded and deceived is consistent with our lacking bodies, lacking sensation, and lacking imagination. **Therefore**, the argument does not prove that we exist as we normally conceive ourselves to be.

### F. Two Questions About the Argument that Descartes Doesn't Consider:

- In (E) above, we saw that Descartes thinks the argument establishes only that I exist whenever I am engaged in mental activity. This is consistent with my popping in and out of existence. But does the argument even prove that much? It seems only to license the claim that some thinking being exists during episodes of mental activity. Why think any of these beings are identical with any other?
- Why conclude that thinking implies an 'I' at all? Descartes moves from "I think" to existence of thinking thing, a thinking subject. **But** is he entitled to the premise "I think", or rather to the weaker "there is thinking going on", that doesn't obviously imply a subject. Perhaps he supposes thinking and self-awareness go together.

# Lecture 18 Notes

## Meditation 2

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. A Brief Review
- II. Some Doubts About Doubt
- III. Meditation 2

## **I. A Brief Review**

### **A. Rival Paradigms of Knowledge**

- Where Aquinas took theological and philosophical knowledge as the paradigm of knowledge, Descartes thinks geometrical knowledge is paradigmatic:
  1. Its foundations are most evidently secure to us.
  2. It displays an internal structure that guarantees certainty.

### **B. Descartes' Program**

- Descartes tries to determine which of his beliefs are certain, that is, which can be made conform to the geometric model.
- The task of philosophy is to determine which are as certain as axioms, or which follow from such beliefs by self-evident steps.

### **C. Sources of Doubt in Meditation I**

- Sensory Error
- Dream Hypothesis
- Deception by God
- Evil Genius

## **II. Some Doubts About Doubt**

### **A. MEDITATION I begins modern philosophy:**

- For Aquinas, **how** we know requires an explanation, i.e. by reference to the forms, etc. **That** we know is unproblematic. Descartes introduces question of whether we know. This question has captivated modern philosophy since.
- There is something captivating about the question. Surely what Descartes suggests seems intriguing; it is the stuff of science fiction. And insofar as we can write science fiction about it, it must be possible. Philosophy's job is to investigate all possibilities.

### **B. Two Problems About the Hypothesis of Meditation 1**

- The argument of Meditation 1 makes essential use of the notions of 'doubt' and 'certainty': we doubt whatever is not certain. These notions are meaningful in ordinary circumstances: if we have doubt whether crime has been committed, a person isn't guilty. Following this example, in order to make meaningful use of the notion of doubt, we must have standards of evidence about how doubt is dispelled. Those standards themselves depend upon paradigms of certainty. Therefore, some philosophers think it is incoherent to doubt everything.

- We might also think that standards of evidence depend upon the existence of a community that accepts and uses standards. Descartes' doubt depends on a community of readers of his book. As a result, the solitary doubt of Meditation 1 is incoherent.

### III. Meditation 2: Knowledge of Mind, Knowledge of Matter

#### A. Challenge to Descartes

- The 'I' of the cogito is mysterious and elusive.
  1. It is mysterious because, though we know that it thinks, doubts, etc., we don't know how it does these, what holds powers together.
  2. It is elusive because it is hard or impossible to perceive the self.
- **Therefore**, we don't seem to know it very well. There must be other, better foundations. How can the cogito, Descartes' knowledge that he is a thinking thing, be the foundation of all knowledge? Our knowledge of bodies seems so vivid and pungent, so clear and distinct. Don't we know bodies through sensation better than we know minds through introspection?

#### B. Descartes's Reply

- What makes the perception of bodies seem so clear are their appearance, smell, taste, touch. Consider, for example, a solid piece of wax. So if what we know most vividly is what we know most truly, then it must be that we know bodies through sensations. **But** we don't know a body through these, since a body can remain the same thing, through these changes, e.g., wax. **Therefore**, we cannot know bodies through the senses
- What we can know about wax is that it has the property of extension (takes up space) and it remains the same through melting. These things we know by intellectual inspection of wax. During inspection, mind is perceived and known more clearly than the wax.

#### C. Problems With Descartes's Reply

- Mind is more clearly known in intellectual activity than the object of that activity, for example, wax. Two points about this claim:
  1. It is not obviously true: consider being absorbed by music.
  2. It sets up a claim that is very important for Descartes: we know best what we know clearly and distinctly

**Next Time: we will see how this argument functions in Descartes's argument for the existence of God.**

# Lecture 19 Notes

## Meditation 5

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. A Word of Background
- II. First Proof of God's Existence
- III. The Argument of Meditation 5
- IV. Objections
- V. The Cartesian Circle

### I. A Word of Background

- Remember the context of the *Meditations*: ages of science and reform. Descartes's is an age of reform in which Catholicism perceived to be intellectually embattled.
- Descartes presents *Meditations* to Theology Faculty in Paris in presentation epistle, says that wants to demonstrate Catholic doctrine even to unbelievers includes most fundamental doctrine - existence of God
- Aquinas had argued that the existence of God can be proven. He offered five of his own proofs which proceeded from observed facts about the world: e.g. it is ordered, things change, have purpose. Descartes thought that all of these premises were dubitable.
- Cartesian proofs of God's existence must begin elsewhere.

### II. First Proof of God's Existence

- The argument of Meditation 5 is the second "proof" of God's existence. In Meditation 3, Descartes finds in himself the idea of God. This raises a question: Where did this idea come from? What is best explanation for having the idea? Descartes argues that the best explanation for his having the idea is that there is a being corresponding to it.
- The **core idea** of the argument in Meditation 3 is this: the idea of God is so real that it can have no other cause than God. Let's look briefly at the argument. Doing so will help us understand the argument of Meditation 5.
- To see how argument goes, look at a couple of questions:
  1. Consider a character on "[Melrose Place](#)": Amanda. Now consider the producer of "Melrose Place": Aaron Spelling. Can Amanda be the cause of Aaron Spelling? he of her? The answer seems to be "no", and it is grounded on **Principle A**: A fictional character can't cause a non-fictional one. To see why **Principle A** is true, let's ask another question:
  2. There is a device running through a memorable episode of "[Party of Five](#)". Julia's boyfriend is writing story optimistically based on them. But he is fictional TV character and the characters in his story are fictional too. Could they cause him? Could he cause them?

This gives us **Principle B**: A cause must have at least as much reality as its effect: "there must at least be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect" (Meditation 3, Paragraph 14).

- **Principle B** should seem plausible, it explains **Principle A**. But the argument for **Principle B** ignores an important possibility. Consider a criminal trial in which a child is the only witness. Imagine that the child recounts the crime in great and vivid detail. Imagine further that the child is moved to strong emotion by his own testimony and that the jury accepts testimony. Why does it do so? Consider **Principle C**: some ideas have so much reality that a person having them could not be the cause of those ideas.
- **Principle B + Principle C = Principle D** (D for 'Descartes'): The cause of an idea must have at least as much formal reality as the idea has objective reality.
- Put together the idea of an infinite God, the finitude of Descartes and **Principle D**. It follows that there is a God who causes this idea like "the mark of a workman impressed on his work" (Meditation 3, Paragraph 38). Note how this argument depends on clarity and distinctness.

### III. The Argument of Meditation 5

#### A. The Veracity of Clear and Distinct Perception

- Descartes has argued previously that everything he perceives "clearly and distinctly" by the "natural light" is true.
  1. Some truths seem to have an obviousness about them. They have what philosophers have since called "self-evidence", e.g.  $2+2=4$ , "every bachelor is unmarried", "squares have 4 sides", and "parallel lines never meet". These are things we perceive clearly and distinctly to be true. Descartes thinks that everything that has this obviousness about it must be true.
  2. "Natural light" is by Descartes's time a dead metaphor. It began with theological provenance: in Augustine, light is Christ's provenance. The metaphor is therefore ironic

#### B. Perception of God's Nature is Clear and Distinct

"It is certain that I no less find the idea of a God in my consciousness, that is the idea of a being supremely perfect, than that of any figure or number whatever: and I know with not less clearness and distinctness that an [actual and] eternal existence pertains to his nature than that all which is demonstrable of any figure or number really belongs to the nature of that figure or number." (Meditation 5, Paragraph 7)

- Descartes understands clearly and distinctly that: it belongs to nature of the number 4 to be a square. It belongs to nature of the number 5 to be the sum of two primes. It belongs to nature of triangle to have three sides. To understand the nature of these things is to see a property that is part of that nature.

- Descartes understands just as clearly and distinctly that: it belongs to the nature of God to exist. To understand the nature of God is to see that existence is part of God's nature.

### **C. (A) + (B), Descartes thinks, Demonstrates that God Exists**

1. Everything Descartes perceives clearly and distinctly is true.
2. Descartes perceives clearly and distinctly that existence belongs to the nature of God.
3. **Therefore**, "although all the conclusions of the preceding Meditations were false, the existence of God would pass with me for a truth at least as certain as I ever judged any truth of mathematics to be". (Meditation 5, Paragraph 7)

### **D. Ontological Argument**

- "Ontology is study of being, existence".
- This argument seems to depend on the nature of existence.
- It is a very old form of argument for God's existence that has continuing fascination: even if it does work, it shouldn't.

## **IV. Objections**

### **A. Is Existence Really a Perfection?**

- Is it better to exist than not to exist?
- Is existence really a property like omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence?

### **B. Do We Really Conceive of God Clearly and Distinctly?**

- Can we have such a grasp of an infinite nature?
- Perhaps we could grasp divine nature only if God is not as Descartes alleges.

## **V. The Cartesian Circle**

### **A. Statement of Premise 1**

- "The Cartesian Circle", the most serious and famous objection to Descartes, begins with a close examination of Premise 1 (III.A. above): everything perceived clearly and distinctly is true.
- But how do we know this? Can't things so perceived still be false?

### **B. How Does Descartes Justify Premise 1?**

- Descartes can't say that this premise is perceived clearly and distinctly on pain of circularity. Consider what he says:

"for I may persuade myself that I have been so constituted by nature as to be sometimes deceived, even in matters which I think I apprehend with the greatest evidence and certitude, especially when I



recollect that I frequently considered many things to be true and certain which other reasons afterward constrained me to reckon as wholly false. But after I have discovered that God exists, seeing I also at the same time observed that all things depend on him, and that he is no deceiver, and thence inferred that all which I clearly and distinctly perceive is of necessity true.... And thus I very clearly see that the certitude and truth of all science depends on the knowledge alone of the true God, insomuch that, before I knew him, I could have no perfect knowledge of any other thing." (Meditation 5, Paragraphs 14-16)

#### D. The Trouble

- **So**, the argument that premise (1) is true depends upon knowing that God exists.
- **But** we know God exists by relying on premise (1), which also plays a role in argument for God's existence in Meditation III.
- **Therefore**, Descartes has argued in a circle.

## Lecture 20 Notes

### Meditation 6 and Descartes's Legacy

#### Plan of the Lecture

- I. Meditation 6
- II. Descartes's Legacy

#### I. Meditation 6

##### A. Taking Stock: Where is Descartes at opening of Meditation VI?

- Descartes is a thing which thinks - Meditation II.
- He has proven that there is a God who is all good - Meditation III.
- He has proven that what he perceives clearly and distinctly is true - Meditations III and V.
- He has still has not dispelled much of the doubt of Meditation I. He doesn't yet know whether there are bodies, so he doesn't yet know whether he has a body. As a result, he doesn't yet know whether his mind interacts with a body, and thus doesn't yet know whether what bodily sensations reveal to his mind is accurate to the way the world is.
- The **Task of Meditation 6** is to dispel these remaining doubts. There are two obstacles: (1) Mind-Body Interaction and (2) Personal Immortality. Descartes must give a plausible account of (1) without giving up (2).

##### B. Mind-Body Interaction

- Your Body and Your Thought Interact in Complex Ways.

1. CASE 1: reading about something that makes you angry. You see letters, understand words, and feel anger in thought and body.
  2. CASE 2: sexual desire. Your thoughts and bodily sensations build on or quell one another.
  3. CASE 3: recognizing sight of a familiar face. Your sensation, memory, judgment work together immediately.
- **Your** body interacts with **your** thought, not someone else's. There is a clear union of **your** body and what does **your** thinking.
  - Questions:
    1. What is the nature of this union?
    2. How are things united: **your** body and what does **your** thinking? How are they related to **you**?
    3. Are **you** one, not other? Are **you** the union?

### C. Descartes could begin by trying to account for the union and defend either:

- "Materialism" = "Mr. Data" View
  1. What does **your** thinking is itself a body-part, e.g. brain. What is usually called **your** 'mind' is just is that body-part. What **you** are just is that body, part of which does thinking.
  2. **But** how can a body-part, a piece of matter, **think**? If we understood how pieces of matter interact, would we really understand thinking? Can some pieces of matter, us on this view, really **understand** how other pieces interact?
- Aquinas's View
  1. **You** are the union of immaterial soul and material body. What does **your** thinking is a part of your soul. **Your** soul just is a thing that can form union with body.
  2. **But**, as with the Mr. Data view, so with this, how do **you** survive death?
- The Mr. Data View and Aquinas's View surmount obstacle (1), trip up on obstacle (2).

### D. Descartes adopts neither "Mr. Data View" nor "Aquinas's View"

- **You** are a thinking thing, see Meditation 2. What does **your** thinking is "really distinct" from a body (51). What does your thinking is different kind of thing from body. Therefore **you** are "really distinct" from a body. Therefore **you** can exist without a body, at least by God's power.
- Descartes can surmount obstacle (2), but what of (1)? How can Descartes account for mind-body interaction? for the union it seems to imply? How can two things that are "really distinct" form a union? How can they form a union necessary for reliable sensation? Descartes tries gamely, with the help of God and the pineal gland.
- Consensus: he has at least as much trouble with obstacle (1) as Aquinas and Data do on obstacle (2).

## II. Descartes's Legacy

## A. Cartesian Skepticism.

- Descartes is not the first philosopher to cast all beliefs into doubt. But the doubt of the First Meditation has captivated philosophers since.
  1. Some argue, as we saw, that Cartesian doubt unintelligible.
  2. Others, taken with the thought that it is possible, have tried to determine how we can know anything at all.
- Why should this be? A crude conjecture:
  1. Recall that Descartes lived at dawn of modern science modern science: the science of matter in motion.
  2. This raises a "Paradox of Science", at the heart of modern philosophy: "How can humans be objects and practitioners of science?" If we are objects, then humans are material. But then how can we think? On the other hand, if we are practitioners, then we are immaterial things. But then how can we be known?
  3. Descartes was the first to appreciate paradox and try to tackle it. It is a paradox other philosophers have tried to solve since.

## B. Cartesian Dualism

- The "Paradox of Science" as Descartes addresses it depends upon the assumption that a thinking thing is not a material thing. Thinking is activity of the mind not, the body.
  1. This is the claim Descartes endorses in Meditation 6.
  2. It relies on the conclusion, "I [am] distinct from my body" (Meditation 6, Paragraph 9).
  3. I must be my soul and not my body if I am to survive death.
  4. Yet Descartes recognizes this and defends the claim that he has a body.
- Dualism is the view that human beings are of dual composition. This thesis has two parts: First: human = mind + body. Second: mind and body are really distinct. The legacy of this view:
  1. Everyone agrees that human beings are really one substance. A human being is not a "ghost in a machine". But how are these two aspects united to form a unity? How can minds and body interact in sensation?
  2. Despite these puzzles and problems, dualism is another of Descartes's legacies to modern philosophy.

**Next Time: Begin looking at Hobbes, who gave modern political philosophy its start.**

# Lecture 21 Notes

# Introduction to Thomas Hobbes

## Plan of the Lecture

- I. The Life and Tumultuous Times of Thomas Hobbes
- II. Leviathan: Background and Method
- III. Leviathan: Religion and Nature

## I. The Life and Tumultuous Times of Thomas Hobbes

### A. Time of Great Intellectual Ferment

- Hobbes (1588-1679) was born 8 years before Descartes and died 29 years after. This was a wonderful time to be young, brilliant, and privileged.
- He was a contemporary of Shakespeare, Rembrandt, and Newton. He knew Galileo and corresponded with Descartes.
- He was born at end of the Renaissance, by death the modern period was under way. He was born into age of humanism, died in an age of science.

### B. An Age of Religious Reform

- The Reformation began less than 70 years before Hobbes's birth. The English Reformation under Henry VIII began later.
- There were deep religious divisions in England among Catholics and several forms of Protestantism, including the Church of England and congregationalism. Protestantism had upper hand, but this was not firmly cemented in England until the Glorious Revolution, a decade after Hobbes's death. That it took revolution to cement Protestantism suggests that religious divisions had political implications.

### C. Highly Politicized Religious Divisions Set the Stage for Political Divisions:

- 1642: English civil war breaks out.
- 1649: Charles I executed.
- 1653: Protectorate established under Oliver Cromwell.
- 1660: Restoration. Charles II assumes throne.
- 1680's: "Exclusion Crisis".
- 1689: Glorious (and bloodless) Revolution.
- Hobbes did not live to see a peaceful resolution to political unrest. He saw only the civil wars of his adulthood.
- In Aquinas we studied a thinker who helped to make Catholic church. Hobbes, like Descartes, is a thinker who helped to make modern world. He stood at point at which great forces of modern world intersected: Humanism, Modern Science, Modern Religion, Modern Politics; all of which he helped to invent.

## II. Leviathan: Background and Method

### A. Hobbes's Work Was Shaped By the Confluence of Several Forces

- Age of Humanism
  1. Hobbes is noted for a command of the classical languages and his translations.
  2. Hobbes did the greatest translation of Thucydides into English. Recall the passage from Thucydides.
  3. Thucydides' analysis of the **Peloponnesian War** suggested that power in Greek world differed from Plato vastly; this influenced Hobbes profoundly.
- Age of Science
  1. Hobbes, like Descartes had abiding interest in modern science.
  2. Like Descartes, he takes geometry as paradigm of knowledge. Geometry is certain because it is founded on clear definitions. Politics could be a science if it were begun the same way.
  3. According to Hobbes, definitions must comport with the terms of Modern Science. Since politics studies human beings, we can give a mechanistic description: "For what is the heart but a spring, and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints but so many wheels, giving motion to the whole body, such as intended by the artificer." (Introduction)
- Age of Reform: Religion and Religious Upheaval Everywhere
  1. **Leviathan** takes its title from the Biblical book of Job. It names a beast which, once disturbed, cannot be controlled. The name becomes a symbol of primordial chaos. Hobbes's title plays on these associations
  2. **Leviathan** addresses conditions of English civil war. The English civil war was in large part, as mentioned, a religious war. England is society disturbed by a religiously based war. This disturbance reawakens the primordial chaos of the original human condition. Question: now that beast has been awakened, how can it be controlled? Hobbes's Answer: the **Leviathan** can be controlled only if subjected to a keeper with unlimited power.
- Hobbes is a defender of "Absolute Monarchy", an idea which included unlimited power over politics and religion vested in the sovereign. In an Age of Reform (and chaos) Absolutism is only way to peace.
- The argument for Absolutism shows how Hobbes draws on Humanism and Science to solve problem set by Reform.

### B. Hobbes's Method

- Modern Science sees everything as aggregation of material parts.
  1. We understand a phenomenon by analysing it into constituent parts. We then understand how those constituent parts work singly, followed by they work together.
  2. Hobbes thinks that political phenomena should be studied this way: (i) political society is an artificial human being; (ii) human beings are mechanically described; **so** (iii) we can

analyse political society into its parts: people. Moreover, people can be analysed into **their** working parts, **hence** the painstaking analysis in early part of **Leviathan**.

3. Once the scientific analysis is done, we have a clear view of human beings and their motives.
4. A clear scientific view of human beings and their motives is crucial: human conflict is rooted in confusion about, e.g. religious claims. It is exacerbated by sloppy thinking about conflict itself. A good contemporary example is abortion.

- **Geometry**

1. Religious and political conflict is rooted in linguistic confusion. This includes confusion about ethical terms, such as what 'good' and 'right' mean and the obscurantism of Scholastic theology, e.g., 'transsubstantiation'. The conflict can be eliminated only if we understand terms clearly. It is characteristic of geometry to begin with clear definitions **so**, the study of politics should, in this way, follow geometric model.
2. In **Leviathan** Hobbes sets himself the task of attaining geometric clarity through scientific analysis of politics and humanity. **Thus**, Hobbes draws on Science to solve problem set by Reform.

- It is not enough that Hobbes define religious and ethical terms clearly to avoid conflict. We must also insure that everybody adheres to right usage so that confusion is not reintroduced by introduction of new opinions. Thucydides explained that conflict can be avoided only by ruthless use of power. Following this model, Hobbes argues that conflict can be avoided only if the Sovereign exercises absolute power over religion, politics, thought and speech. In this way, he draws on Humanism + Science to solve problem set by Reform.

### **C. Hobbes Invents Modern Politics**

- Hobbes's defense of absolute sovereignty is a radical conclusion.
- Returning to the contemporary American political dispute, abortion seems to be rooted in linguistic and political uncertainty about moral terms such as "human being" and "human life" These terms are also rooted in great theological uncertainty. But why doesn't this lead to greater violence than it does? Why doesn't **this** religious conflict lead to civil war? Why doesn't it lead to the problem for which Hobbes thought Absolutism the only solution? Why is our America different from Hobbes's England?
- Let us now turn to Hobbes's arguments and see his method at work.

## **III. Leviathan: Religion and Nature**

### **A. Reminder of Hobbes's Method**

- We study politics by analysing society into parts.
- Individual human beings are building blocks of society.
- **Therefore**, we begin to study politics by looking at human nature, then look how society trains and shapes us.

### **B. Religion is among the causes of social conflict, applies method to it**

- Among seeds of religion in human nature are ignorance of the causes of natural phenomena as well as personification or reification of unknown causes. People worship what they don't understand.
- Social training: the cultivation of seeds by pagans who do so "according to own invention" by founders of Judaeo-Christian tradition is essential. Proper cultivation makes people good citizens: "Both sorts have done it with a purpose to make those men that relied on them more apt to obedience, laws, peace, charity and civil society." (Chapter 12)

# Lecture 22 Notes

## Humanity and the State

### Plan of the Lecture

- I. The Natural Condition of Humanity
- II. The Generation of the Commonwealth
- III. The Power of Sovereigns By Institution
- IV. Hobbes's Legacy

## I. The Natural Condition of Humanity

### A. People are Naturally Free and Equal

- There is rough parity of physical strength.
- There is rough parity of intellectual ability.
- There is no naturally or divinely constituted authority.
- There are no shared moral standards.

### B. The Consequences of Our Nature

- "...war of every man against everyman" (Chapter 13)
- "...life of man is everywhere solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Chapter 13)

### C. Evidence supporting Hobbes's account

- The evidence is not historical, archeological, or scriptural.
- Our question: does it fit with our behavior, intuitions, and knowledge of history?

## II. The Generation of the Commonwealth

- How do people in state of nature institute an absolute sovereign?
- What motivates people to alter their natural condition?

## A. People Want to Leave Natural Condition, and Must Know How To Do So

- It is natural to fear death and lesser evils, to desire things "necessary for commodious living" (Chapter 13). Therefore those in state of nature have these fears and desires. Therefore those in the state of nature want to leave it behind.
- Those in state of nature are rational; they are capable of figuring out how to leave the state of nature and secure their lives. They are also capable of apprehending the law of nature.
- Contrast the law of nature in Aquinas and Hobbes. For Aquinas, the natural law is part of God's plan for the universe, contained in that part of morality knowable by reason. For Hobbes, the law of nature consists of rules of rational action that prescribe what it would be prudent to do to attain end, for example, the rules of prudent conduct to get into medical school.
- Crucial precepts of law of nature:
  1. "every man ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of attaining it" (Chapter 14)
  2. "that a man be willing, when others are too, as far-forth for peace and defense of himself as he shall think it necessary, to lay down his right to all things, and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself" (Chapter 14)
- Given (1) and (2), we will agree with others to quit fighting if they will too.

## B. Problem

- What holds people to their agreements? How can we be sure that others will stop fighting?

"it is no wonder if there be something else required besides covenant to make their agreement constant and lasting, which is a common power to keep them in awe, and to direct their actions to common benefit. The only way to erect such a common power as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners and the injuries of one another... is to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills by plurality of voices unto one will, which is as much as to say, to appoint one man to bear their person, and everyone to own and acknowledge himself to be author of whatsoever he that so beareth their person shall act ... and therein submit their wills, everyone to his will, and their judgments to his judgment. ... as if every man should say to every man "I authorise and give up my right of governing myself to this man or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner". ... This is the generation of that great Leviathan, that moral god to which we owe our peace and defense. For by this authority, ... he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred upon him that by terror thereof he is enabled to conform the will of them all to peace[.]"

-LEVIATHAN, Chapter 17

- **Important Points:**
  1. Hobbes **is not** making a historical claim about how the various governments actually came to be. Whether or not some government originated by contract is irrelevant to Hobbes's argument.



2. Hobbes is making a claim about what sort of government is best given the kind of creatures human beings are. By human nature we are prone to violence, greed, and religion. Given that, when institutions are badly structured, we are naturally prone to revert to our natural condition.
3. In order to argue that absolute sovereignty best given human nature, Hobbes looks at our natural condition, the state of nature. Hobbes argues that absolute sovereignty would be best choice.
4. To defeat Hobbes, one must refute either the account of the natural human condition, or the choice of absolute sovereignty.

### **III. The Power of Sovereigns By Institution**

#### **A. Enumerated Powers Include the Following**

- The Sovereign can establish laws of property and of justice.
- The Sovereign has the "right of judicature"--to decide controversies between subjects.
- Subjects cannot change form of government.
- The Sovereign's power cannot be lost by breach of covenant with God or the people.
- Subjects cannot accuse the sovereign of injustice.
- Subjects cannot punish the sovereign.
- The Sovereign decides what doctrines and opinions--including religious doctrines--may be taught or published.

#### **B. Powers Indivisible**

"if he transfer the militia, he retains the judicature in vain, for want of execution of the laws; or if he grant away the power of raising money, the militia is in vain; or if he give away the government of doctrines, men will be frighted into rebellion with the fear of spirits. And so if we consider any one of the said rights, we shall presently see that the holding of the rest will produce no effect, in the conservation of peace and justice, the end for which all commonwealths are instituted." (Chapter 18)

#### **C. Contrast with American system**

- The defense of absolutism does not commit Hobbes to monarchy. His view is consistent with an absolute government with a complex structure. Therefore, the fact that we don't have a monarch does not itself imply that the American is departure from the Hobbesian view.
- The real difference is that supreme power is impossible to locate in the American system:
  1. Power is retained by the people to change the government.
  2. The liberty of the people, notably religious liberty "American experiment", was never before tried on large scale.
  3. The divisions of power between state governments and national government together with the three coequal branches of national government decentralize supreme power.

### **C. The American System Works Because of Political Culture**

- Hobbes could not foresee responsiveness to political pressure; allegiance to liberal democracy; and voluntary compliance (e.g. US v. Nixon).

## **III. Hobbes's Legacy**

### **A. Relations Between States**

- Hobbes thought human beings were social atoms who voluntarily united to form nation states with sovereign borders. He denied that the world is a spiritually united Christendom. He pays little attention to nationalism and claims of empire.
- Nation states are in state of nature with respect to one another.
- Later thinkers and diplomats, from Richilieu to Gorbachev, try to work out terms of peace among sovereign states.

### **B. Internal Structure of States**

- States are thought of as result of a voluntary contract among free, equal individuals. This is a persistent idea in political philosophy.
- Hobbes defended a different internal structure than we would because there are workable political cultures that he could not foresee. This democratic political culture has proven workable in lucky places.
- Hobbes set in motion intellectual forces that formed our democratic political culture.

### **C. The Dissipation of Hobbes's legacy**

- We have witnessed the eclipse of the nation state, as well as the reassertion of national and ethnic identities. On top of this are mass migrations and the flight of refugees across national borders. We have also seen the rise of regional economic unions.
- The problem internal to liberal political culture is that it doesn't maintain the conditions necessary for own survival.

**\*Read the Gospel of Matthew as background to Dostoevsky--any version of the Bible will do.**

# **Lecture 23 Notes**

## **The Problem of Evil**

### **Plan of the Lecture**

- I. Introduction to Dostoevsky
- II. The Importance of Free Will: The Free Will Defense
- III. The Nature of Freedom: The Gospel of Matthew

## **I. Introduction to Dostoevsky**

### **A. Life and Times**

- Dostoevsky lived from 1821-1881 in czarist Russia.
- For most of this time, Russia under a feudal system; serfs were freed only in the 1860's.
- Russian czars ruled with absolute power and with complicity of Russian orthodox church.
- There is a great deal of political ferment, underground political activity.
- Dostoevsky was swept up in this activity; he was imprisoned and exiled to Siberia.
- As young man achieved great fame before age 30.
- He was besieged by debt, but produced a staggering output.
- He ranks, with Tolstoy, among history's greatest novelists.

### **B. Work**

- Dostoevsky was not a philosopher, not figure usually studied in philosophy. He does not put forward views in argument form. Moreover, he would have been uninterested in philosophical problems.
- Nevertheless, he has a profound view of some of the central features of the human condition: religion, guilt, sin, redemption, and Christianity. His novels are profoundly psychological.
- His views on these subjects are explored and expressed in novels which are among greatest ever written: *Poor Folk*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *House of the Dead*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

### **C. A Word about *The Brothers Karamazov*.**

- It is the story of four brothers and the father they despise:
  1. Dmitri, the sensualist.
  2. Ivan, the intellectual, an amateur theologian and atheist.
  3. Alyosha, the postulant in Russian orthodox monastery.
  4. Smerdyakov, the illegitimate half-brother, a serf and valet.
- "The Grand Inquisitor" comes part-way through story told by Ivan to Alyosha. The point of story is to raise questions about:
  1. whether freedom God seems to have given us is good.
  2. whether there is a God who loves us at all.
- The story is prefaced with a catalogue of evils in the world, especially focused on the suffering of children. Why does God allow it?

## **II. The Importance of Free Will: The Free Will Defense**

## A. Typical response on behalf of God is "Free Will Defense"

- Evil in the world is result of acts of free agents.
- God grants us freedom, knowing that evil will come of it, because the good of freedom outweighs evil.

## B. Ivan Karamazov Tries to Undercut the Free-Will Defense

- Ivan tries to undercut this by arguing that freedom is **not** a good for us.
- He argues that that a God who really loved us would not have freed us. This is one of conclusions of "The Grand Inquisitor".

## C. What Can We Learn From the Free Will Defense?

- Evil in world raises questions about whether God loves us.
- If God does, freedom must outweigh consequent evil.
- If it does, it is because people freely turn to God.
- This presupposes that enough people can use their freedom rightly. What do we know about the freedom God has given us?

# III. The Nature of Freedom: The Gospel of Matthew

## A. Introduction to the Gospel

- This Gospel does not purport to be a sophisticated theological treatment. The theology of the gospel, as well as the portrait of Jesus presented are **not** what you would get in a good theology class.
- Our purpose is to present the gospel as read by Dostoevsky; the producer of "Jesus of Montreal". Today, we have two objectives:
  1. To re-familiarize you with important gospel episodes.
  2. To show the kind of freedom that God gives humanity through the ethical teachings of Jesus. This is exactly the kind of freedom called into question by the film and the story.
- **Core Idea:** people are free to direct own lives so long as they love. This is New Law of Love brought by Jesus. The New Law of gospel supercedes the Old Law of the Old Covenant. This is a "Supercessionist" reading of the gospel.

## B. Important Gospel Episodes as Recounted by Matthew

- The Infancy narratives tell us where Jesus grew up: Nazareth.
- We don't know what Jesus did until the public ministry begins.
- John the Baptist is taken by many to be the messiah. But he says, "but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear" (Matt. 3:11, KJV)
- Satan comes to Jesus in the desert, tempts Jesus three times.
- Call of the disciples (Matt. 4:18ff.); including a tax collector (Matt. 10:3).

- Teaching the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12).
- Jesus draws crowds everywhere, including sinners (Matt. 9:10-11).
- Jesus is moved with pity: feeds, cures, raises dead (Matt. 9:18ff.).
- Matthew depicts time Jesus spends eating, story-telling and talking with disciples.
- The triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Matt. 21:5ff.): "the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David" (KJV).
- Jesus cleanses the temple (Matt. 21:12); is anointed with oil (Matt. 26:7).
- Jesus's run-ins with Pharisees increase in drama as the end nears.
- The Passion, Death and Resurrection. Jesus is silent before Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate. There are women at the foot of the cross and at the tomb. The tomb is given by Joseph of Arimathea, a member of Sanhedrin.

### C. The Nature of Freedom: What are We Free From?

- Consider Jesus's encounters with the Pharisees and Sadducees:
  1. Early in gospel, they reproach Jesus because the disciples pluck grain, Jesus cures on the sabbath (Matt. 12:1ff.) and the disciples neglect to wash their hands before eating (Matt. 15:2).
  2. Later encounters are more tense: they question Jesus about: his authority (Matt. 21:23), paying taxes (Matt. 22:17), the greatest commandment (Matt. 22:36), and whose son is the Christ (Matt. 22:42). This line of questioning culminates in the great denunciations of chapter 23.
- The Pharisees represent the Old Law. This is the Law given to the people of Israel by Moses in the Old Covenant. Keeping the Law maintains people's relationship with God.
  1. The most prominent parts of the Old Law are the Ten Commandments.
  2. But it includes much else--it regulates every aspect of Jewish life. See Leviticus: "Burnt Offering", "Grain Offering", "Law Concerning Leprosy", "Trespass Offering", "Offering w/ Restitution", "Peace Offering", Rituals after Childbirth, Laws Regulating Conduct of Priests, Laws about Feasts, Property Ownership, and Ritual Washing. There are also 47 long verses of dietary laws.
  3. It's in the name of these laws that Pharisees rebuke Jesus.
- How does Jesus reply?
  1. **Stop Worrying!** "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30, KJV)
  2. In response to the charge that Jesus worked on the sabbath by curing, Jesus says: "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27, KJV) and "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof." (Matt. 6:25-34, KJV)

- What of the Old Law? Jesus says the following:
  1. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33, KJV)
  2. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:20-21, KJV)
  3. "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak" (Matt. 10:19, KJV)
  4. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. 21:22, KJV)
  5. "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" (Matt. 22:37-40, KJV)
  6. "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me." (Matt. 19:21, KJV)
- The New Law brings freedom from rigid, ancient strictures. Is it good for us? How many of us can follow it?

**Note: the movie "Jesus of Montreal" is required watching to accompany "The Grand Inquisitor".**

## Lecture 24 Notes

### How Would We Treat Jesus?

## Plan of the Lecture

- I. Introduction to Ivan's Challenge
- II. "The Grand Inquisitor" and "Jesus of Montreal"

### I. Introduction to Ivan's Challenge

#### A. Dostoevsky Asks: How Would We Treat Jesus if He Came Again?

- The central question in *The Idiot* is obviously central to "The Grand Inquisitor". It is by exploring this question that Ivan presses his challenge.
- This same question is obviously central to "Jesus of Montreal".
- Consider the following.
  1. The movie raises the same questions about human freedom that the story does.
  2. The answer given in the story and the movie is essentially the same.
  3. Both "Jesus of Montreal" and "Grand Inquisitor" reach same troubling conclusion about **us**.
  4. The challenge is to convince you of this, to convince you that the conclusion is plausible.

#### B. Why is Dostoevsky's Question a Challenge?

- It raises deeply disturbing questions about organized religion, about the purposes religion serves, the needs it meets and the motives of those who provide and organize it.
- It thereby raises profoundly disturbing questions about us:
  1. Do we need or want religion?
  2. Are we capable of doing right thing, of treating Jesus properly?
  3. Are we beings capable of moral progress?
- Often people think we have progressed a lot. We have control over environment, the physical world, and the genetic world. We have enormous advances in public health and life expectancy. Democratic political culture has taken root here and it is spreading. Whatever is true elsewhere in world, we in rich liberal democracies of the west think we, our lives, our culture, show that moral progress possible.
- The challenge of the story and the movie is this--**have we misread the evidence?**

### II. "The Grand Inquisitor" and "Jesus of Montreal"

#### A. Story and Movie Invite us to Consider 3 Times, 2 Time Intervals

- Times:
  1. The time in which the Gospels set.
  2. 15th century Seville: "that terrible period of the Inquisition".
  3. 20th century Montreal: rich, media-centered, over-sexed.

- We are forced to ask the following questions:
  1. How much does either the second or third coming differ from
  2. How much did we improve between the first coming and the second, between the time when we watch heretics being burnt and the time when we gather to watch whatever movie industry puts out?
  3. How much moral progress has there been?
  4. How much difference have 2000 years of Christianity made?
  
- "The Grand Inquisitor" and "Jesus of Montreal" Answer:
  1. 2000 years ago, we crucified an innocent man and distorted his message. 500 years ago, Dostoevsky says, we would have burned him. Now, the movie suggests, we'd do roughly same thing if given the chance.
  2. If anything, "The Grand Inquisitor" suggests that we've gotten worse. "The population rushes towards him as if propelled by some irresistible force; it surrounds, throngs, and presses around, it follows him." "Children strew flowers along his path and sing to him, 'Hosannah!'" (This is reminiscent of what gospel scene?) "To-morrow I will condemn and burn thee on the stake, as the most wicked of all the heretics; and that same people, who to-day were kissing thy feet, to-morrow at one bend of my finger, will rush to add fuel to thy funeral pyre." Consider the time interval between adulation and execution.

**B. Making the Case:**

- To see how the case against us--against freedom--is made, we have to see why Grand Inquisitor arrests Jesus.
- To see why the Grand Inquisitor arrests Jesus, it helps to see why the priest stops the play.

**C. Parallels Between Jesus and Daniel Coulombe:**

Daniel	Jesus
(1) begins public life at 30	(1) begins public life at 30
(2) gathering of the players, including Mirielle Martin	(2) call of the disciples, including Matthew and Mary Magdalen
(3) refuses wine to console himself after priest protests play	(3) refuses wine as an anaesthetic on cross



(4) eats, drinks, talks with friends	(4) ministry is eating, drinking, and talk
(5) calls forth something special from ordinary people	(5) calls forth something from ordinary people
(6) confronts religious authorities	(6) confronts religious authorities
(7) Mirielle gives bubble bath	(7) anointing with oil worth 40 pieces
(8) breaks up commercial scene, whips producer with cords	(8) cleansing of temple, disperses money-lenders with whip
(9) silent at his trial	(9) silent at trial before Pilate
(10) women with him to the end	(10) two Marys at foot of cross
(11) taken to Jewish hospital	(11) Joseph of Arimethea gives tomb
(12) physical resurrection	(12) physical resurrection

#### **D. Back to the case against us, the case against human freedom**

- To see how the case against us, against freedom is made, we have to see why the Grand Inquisitor arrests Jesus.
  1. One might think he does so because either (i) doesn't know who Jesus is or (ii) the Grand Inquisitor likes wealth and power and sees Jesus as a threat.
  2. Alyosha raises both of these. We must dismiss (i), this misses the genius of the story. Alyosha raises (ii) we will return to this point at end. For now, the objection is mistaken, it misses point of story.
- To see why the Grand Inquisitor arrests Jesus, we must see why the priest stops the play.
  1. At the end of first performance we get this message: life is simple, we should love one another.
  2. The play urges people to think for themselves, to rely on themselves.
  3. The play thereby engenders confusion in minds of the people.
  4. The play should be saccharine performance leaving things as they are.
- Why then does the Grand Inquisitor arrest Jesus?
  1. If Jesus preached again, it would only confuse people.

2. 1500 years ago, Jesus preached a message of simplicity and love that people didn't understand.
  3. He replaced an "old and wise law" that regulated every aspect of life with a law of simplicity and love (see Matthew 6:25ff.).
  4. The Grand Inquisitor and his ilk had to take control for good of the people.
- A Comparative Jesus: Palestine, Seville, Montreal
    1. In all three cases, Jesus is said to be naive, a fool who doesn't know what people are really like.
    2. In all three cases, he came to preach a message bound to cause confusion and misunderstanding.
    3. In all three cases, he came to preach a message of simplicity, that he wants people to follow freely when incapable of doing so.
    4. In all three cases, he should have known better, he should have known what people are really like: "Thou hast been fairly warned of it, but evidently to no use, since thou has rejected the only means which could make mankind happy; fortunately at thy departure Thou has delivered the task to us..."

**How should Jesus have known? How should Daniel have known?**

**Whom should they have listened to learn what people really like?**

## Lecture 25 Notes

### Three Temptations

#### Plan of the Lecture

- I. A Brief Review
- II. The Three Temptations
- III. In Sum

#### I. A Brief Review

##### A. Question: Why would Jesus be put to death if he came again?

- Dostoevsky clearly raises this question in "The Grand Inquisitor".
- It is also raised in "Jesus of Montreal".
- We suggest that the movie and the story give the same answer.

## B. Why Does the Grand Inquisitor Arrest Jesus?

- To see why the Grand Inquisitor arrests Jesus, we need to see why the priest stops the play.
- That the movie and story illuminate one another in this way suggests that they answer question in the same way. In both cases, Jesus brings a confusing message. The message is confusing because of what people are really like.

## C. At the Heart of the Answer is a Conception of Human Nature

- Human beings are unruly children incapable of growing up. They are incapable of grasping the simple message Jesus brings because most people care about other things instead.
- To see what people care about, we look at what advice Jesus got from Satan in the desert and the advice Daniel Coulombe got from devils of Montreal.

## D. Human Nature and the Three Temptations

- In "The Grand Inquisitor", the advice about what human beings are really like is offered to Jesus as a reading of three temptations.
- The three temptations are three things Jesus could do to induce people to follow him. Temptations are also offered to Daniel in "Jesus of Montreal".

# II. The Three Temptations

## A. The First Temptation: The Problem of Bread

- Satan tempts Jesus to turn stones into bread: "Seest Thou these stones in the parched and barren wilderness? Turn them into bread, and mankind will run after Thee like a flock of sheep, grateful and obedient".
  1. Jesus rejects the temptation, wants to offer the bread of heaven.
  2. Earthly bread is something all people are **capable** of caring about. Bread is what people **really** worship:

"Thou has promised to them the bread of life, the bread of heaven; but I ask Thee again, can that bread ever equal in the sight of the weak and the vicious, the ever ungrateful human race, their daily bread on earth? And even supposing that thousands and tens of thousands follow Thee in the name of, and for the sake of, Thy heavenly bread, what will become of the millions and hundreds of millions of human beings to weak to scorn the earthly for the sake of Thy heavenly bread? Or is it but those tens of thousands chosen among the great and the mighty, that are so dear to Thee, while the remaining millions, innumerable as the grains of sand in the seas, the weak and the loving, have to be used as material for the former?"

- Where in "Jesus of Montreal" do we hear Daniel told this "fundamental secret of human nature": that people are **capable** only of base desires, that what satisfies desires is what people **really** worship?
  1. The producers and writers of the beer commercial say: "beer drinker has an IQ of a dog, any lower, he'd be a geranium". "Maria Callas couldn't turn these guys on". "Nothing's sacred to you but a good glass of brew". "We worship beer".
  2. A priest tells Daniel: "just tell them a nice story".

- **Message of the First Temptation:** all most people want are beer, bread, sexual fantasies, and entertainment. Most people really aren't capable of wanting any more. It's either naive (e.g., the first actress) or cruel to suppose otherwise.
- **Problem:** This message isn't really plausible! People do seem to want more out of life. People do seem to have an interest in the meaning of life.
  1. In "The Grand Inquisitor": "But he alone will prove capable of silencing and quieting their consciences, that shall succeed in possessing himself of the freedom of men. With "daily bread" an irresistible power was offered Thee: show a man "bread" and he will follow Thee, for what can he resist less than the attraction of bread? But if, at the same time, another succeed in possessing himself of his conscience--oh! then even Thy bread will be forgotten, and man will follow him who seduced his conscience. So far Thou wert right. For the mystery of human being does not solely rest in the desire to live, but in the problem--for what should one live at all? Without a clear perception of his reasons for living, man will never consent to live, and will rather destroy himself than tarry on earth, though he be surrounded with bread."
  2. In "Jesus of Montreal": people are hungry for more than bread--the makers of the cosmic movie try to provide it. Moreover, the play is popular because it has spiritual dimension.
- **Therefore,** people do want something more. **But what?**

## B. The Second Temptation: The Problem of Conscience

- It might seem that people want "something to live for". It might seem that people want the religion that Jesus offers. But it is imperative to see what people really want from religion:
  1. "firm foundation for setting the conscience at rest forever"
  2. "miracle, mystery, authority"
- Jesus could have provided these. Jesus could have cast himself from temple parapet. Jesus could have come down from the cross, when tempted. Instead, Jesus:
  1. "Thou hast chosen to stir up in him all that is abnormal, mysterious, and indefinite, all that is beyond human strength, and has acted as if Thou never hadst any love for him, and yet Thou wert He who came to "lay down His life for His friends!" Thou hast burdened man's soul with anxieties hitherto unknown to him. Thirsting for human love freely given, seeking to enable man, seduced and charmed by Thee, to follow Thy path of his own free-will, instead of the old and wise law which held him in subjection, Thou hast given him the right henceforth to choose and freely decide what is good and bad for him, guided but by Thine image in his heart. ". Contrast Leviticus 11:1-28 with Matthew 6:25ff.
  2. "not to enslave man through miracle, but to obtain faith in Thee freely and apart from any miraculous influence. Thou thirstest for free and uninfluenced love, and refuses the passionate adoration of the slave before a Potency which would have subjected his will once for ever."
- Where in "Jesus of Montreal" do we hear that: "no sooner would man reject miracle than he would reject God likewise"; "it is beyond the power of man to remain without miracles, so, rather than live without, he will create for himself new wonders of his own making; and he will bow to and worship the soothsayer's miracles, the old witch's sorcery, were he a rebel, a heretic, and an atheist a hundred times over."?
  1. Galileans wanted a magic show--Palestine was full of them.
  2. People don't want to be religiously challenged, they want a saccharine passion play.

3. What people really want out of religion is what brings the halt, the lame, the Haitain charwomen to church: holy water, a cure, some counseling in confession. They want something to make them feel good.

- **Messages of the Second Temptation:**

1. To satisfy the need most people have for religion, we must baffle them, put on magic show, make them feel good, and tell them what to do.
2. If the church doesn't provide this, the coke pushers will.
3. If people aren't provided this, they will look for it anyway--they will follow messianic political movements from medieval heresies to 20th century Nazism that "drenches the earth with blood".
4. Jesus wouldn't provide this 2000 years ago, wouldn't provide it 500 years ago, wouldn't provide it if he came to Montreal now.
5. So if Jesus won't provide it, the Grand Inquisitor will: "We corrected and improved thy work and based it on miracle, mystery and authority."

- **Problem:** It's not enough to have something to worship. People need to worship together in "universal unity". People need to be in a "common and harmonious ant-hill".
- **Therefore,** there is one more thing Christ should have provided.

### **C. The Third Temptation: The Problem of Unity**

- "...they felt the stronger necessity of universal union among men..."
- Jesus refused to do so, refused all the kingdoms of the earth. Since Jesus wouldn't satisfy the "craving for universal unity", the Grand Inquisitor will "Eight hundred years now since we accepted from him the gift rejected by Thee with indignation; that last gift which he offered Thee from the high mountain when, showing all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, he saith unto Thee: "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou will fall down and worship me!" We took Rome from him and the glaive of Caesar, and declared ourselves alone the kings of this earth, its sole kings, though our work is not yet fully accomplished. But who is to blame for it? Our work is but in its incipient stage, but it is nevertheless started."
- Daniel refused the lawyer's offer. His disciples did not, and began their work at the end of film.

## **III. In Sum**

### **A. What Are We Really Like?**

- According to "The Grand Inquisitor" and "Jesus of Montreal", we are violent and rebellious children who care about being fed, about having our consciences captured by magic and authority. We are prey to religious and political charlatans, ready to "cast down temples and drench the earth with blood" in the name of religion, or political unity.
- A few may be capable of living the beatitudes, of bearing the cross.
- But most of us are too weak and vicious. We may love Jesus, but we are incapable of living the message.

### **B. Regardless of Who Loves Humanity More, Whose Side is Human History On?**

### **C. If History is On The Grand Inquisitor's Side, If He is Right, What's to be Done?**

- People need to be fed. People need to have some moral purpose to their lives. This purpose must come with "miracle, mystery, authority". People need to be part of something bigger than themselves.
- Institutions which leave people free to decide for themselves what to do will ultimately breed chaos, violence, unhappiness.
- **Problem:** does the Grand Inquisitor's solution lead people to damnation?
- **Answer:** if we take Christ at his word, if following the gospel freely is a requirement of eternal happiness, then most people won't make it anyway.

**D. One of the tasks of philosophy is to show that the Grand Inquisitor is wrong.**