

the depths of our own being. The evil is so well screened, the secret so universally kept, that in this case each individual is the dupe of all: however severely we may profess to judge other men, at bottom we think them better than ourselves. On

this happy illusion much of our social life is grounded.

Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, I

## 9.7 | *Right and Wrong*

In ethics or moral philosophy, there is a fundamental division between two types of problems: on the one hand, the problem of what is good or evil for the individual man considered without reference to other men or to the community in which he lives; on the other hand, the problem of what is right or wrong in the behavior of one individual as it affects the lives of others or the welfare of the community. Unfortunately, this does not give us a rigid rule for using the words “good” and “right” in a nonoverlapping way; for it is often said in ordinary discourse that what is really good for the individual is right for him to seek, and that the individual who acts rightly toward others is a good man or one whose conduct is good. Nevertheless, the words “right” and “wrong” are most frequently applied to acts that affect others or the community. Wrongdoing injures others; conduct is said to be rightful or righteous if it benefits others or at least avoids injuring them.

Because the words “right” and “wrong” are usually employed with this connotation, they are often interchangeable with another pair of terms—“just” and “unjust.” We have, therefore, placed here quotations that discuss justice and injustice in the conduct of one individual toward others or toward the

community, and along with them discussions of the just and unjust man, justice as a moral virtue and injustice as a vice, and considerations of the question of whether it is better to do injustice or to suffer it, to wrong others or be wronged by them. The reader will find that the treatment of JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE in Section 12.2 deals mainly with social, political, and economic justice, not justice as a moral virtue or as a quality of human acts. The placement here of quotations dealing with justice as a virtue also explains why the enumeration of the virtues in the titles of Sections 9.11 through 9.15 omits justice and injustice.

Other closely related terms appear in the quotations below, such as righteousness, wickedness, benevolence, and iniquity. Since it is thought that to wrong another involves the violation or transgression of one’s rights, the reader should consult the discussion of RIGHTS—NATURAL AND CIVIL in Section 12.3. Since it is also thought that wrongdoing involves the violation of the moral law and that it is one’s basic moral obligation or duty to act righteously or in conformity with the moral law, the reader should consult Section 9.3 on MORAL LAW, Section 9.9 on DUTY: MORAL OBLIGATION, and Section 20.13 on SIN AND TEMPTATION.

1 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed.

Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, alter a flea.

The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killest me not.

For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

*1 Samuel 24:9-19*

2 How should man be just with God?

If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.

He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger.

Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.

Which maketh Ārc-tū-rūs, Ō-rī-ōn, and Plê-ā-dēs, and the chambers of the south.

Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.

How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?

Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?

If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.

This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?

*Job 9:2-24*

3 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

*Psalms 1:1-6*

4 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

For the froward is abomination to the Lord: but his secret is with the righteous.

The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

*Proverbs 3:27-33*

- 5 Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

*Zechariah 7:9-10*

- 6 *Chorus.* The man who does right, free-willed, without constraint

shall not lose happiness

nor be wiped out with all his generation.

But the transgressor, I tell you, the bold man who brings in confusion of goods unrightly won, at long last and perforce, when ship toils under tempest must strike his sail in the wreck of his rigging.

*Aeschylus, Eumenides, 550*

- 7 *Chorus.* God will not punish the man

Who makes return for an injury:

Deceivers may be deceived.

*Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, 228*

- 8 *Athenians at the Congress of the Peloponnesian Confederacy.* Men's indignation, it seems, is more excited by legal wrong than by violent wrong; the first looks like being cheated by an equal, the second like being compelled by a superior.

*Thucydides, Peloponnesian War, I, 77*

- 9 *Glaucon.* Now that those who practise justice do so involuntarily and because they have not the power to be unjust will best appear if we imagine something of this kind: having given both to the just and the unjust power to do what they will, let us watch and see whither desire will lead them; then we shall discover in the very act the just and unjust man to be proceeding along the same road, following their interest, which all natures deem to be their good, and are only diverted into the path of justice by the force of law. The liberty which we are supposing may be most completely given to them in the form of such a power as is said to have been possessed by Gyges the ancestor of Croesus the Lydian. According to the tradition, Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia; there was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he was feeding his flock. Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where, among other marvels, he beheld a hollow brazen horse, having doors, at which he stooping and looking in saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more

than human, and having nothing on but a gold ring; this he took from the finger of the dead and reascended. Now the shepherds met together, according to custom, that they might send their monthly report about the flocks to the king; into their assembly he came having the ring on his finger, and as he was sitting among them he chanced to turn the collet of the ring inside his hand, when instantly he became invisible to the rest of the company and they began to speak of him as if he were no longer present. He was astonished at this, and again touching the ring he turned the collet outwards and reappeared; he made several trials of the ring, and always with the same result—when he turned the collet inwards he became invisible, when outwards he reappeared. Whereupon he contrived to be chosen one of the messengers who were sent to the court; where as soon as he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help conspired against the king and slew him, and took the kingdom. Suppose now that there were two such magic rings, and the just put on one of them and the unjust the other; no man can be imagined to be of such an iron nature that he would stand fast in justice. No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of the market, or go into houses and lie with any one at his pleasure, or kill or release from prison whom he would, and in all respects be like a God among men. Then the actions of the just would be as the actions of the unjust; they would both come at last to the same point. And this we may truly affirm to be a great proof that a man is just, not willingly or because he thinks that justice is any good to him individually, but of necessity; for wherever any one thinks that he can safely be unjust, there he is unjust. For all men believe in their hearts that injustice is far more profitable to the individual than justice, and he who argues as I have been supposing, will say that they are right. If you could imagine any one obtaining this power of becoming invisible, and never doing any wrong or touching what was another's, he would be thought by the lookers-on to be a most wretched idiot, although they would praise him to one another's faces, and keep up appearances with one another from a fear that they too might suffer injustice. Enough of this.

Now, if we are to form a real judgment of the life of the just and unjust, we must isolate them; there is no other way; and how is the isolation to be effected? I answer: Let the unjust man be entirely unjust, and the just man entirely just; nothing is to be taken away from either of them, and both are to be perfectly furnished for the work of their respective lives. First, let the unjust be like other distinguished masters of craft; like the skilful pilot or physician; who knows intuitively his own powers and keeps within their limits, and who, if he fails at any point, is able to recover

himself. So let the unjust make his unjust attempts in the right way, and lie hidden if he means to be great in his injustice (he who is found out is nobody); for the highest reach of injustice is, to be deemed just when you are not. Therefore I say that in the perfectly unjust man we must assume the most perfect injustice; there is to be no deduction, but we must allow him, while doing the most unjust acts, to have acquired the greatest reputation for justice. If he have taken a false step he must be able to recover himself; he must be one who can speak with effect, if any of his deeds come to light, and who can force his way where force is required by his courage and strength, and command of money and friends. And at his side let us place the just man in his nobleness and simplicity, wishing, as Aeschylus says, to be and not to seem good. There must be no seeming, for if he seem to be just he will be honoured and rewarded, and then we shall not know whether he is just for the sake of justice or for the sake of honours and rewards; therefore, let him be clothed in justice only, and have no other covering; and he must be imagined in a state of life the opposite of the former. Let him be the best of men, and let him be thought the worst; then he will have been put to the proof; and we shall see whether he will be affected by the fear of infamy and its consequences. And let him continue thus to the hour of death; being just and seeming to be unjust. When both have reached the uttermost extreme, the one of justice and the other of injustice, let judgment be given which of them is the happier of the two.

*Socrates.* Heavens! my dear Glaucon . . . how energetically you polish them up for the decision, first one and then the other, as if they were two statues.

I do my best, he said. And now that we know what they are like there is no difficulty in tracing out the sort of life which awaits either of them. This I will proceed to describe; but as you may think the description a little too coarse, I ask you to suppose, Socrates, that the words which follow are not mine. Let me put them into the mouths of the eulogists of injustice: They will tell you that the just man who is thought unjust will be scourged, racked, bound—will have his eyes burnt out; and, at last, after suffering every kind of evil, he will be impaled: Then he will understand that he ought to seem only, and not to be, just.

Plato, *Republic*, II, 359A

- 10 *Socrates.* And surely . . . we have explained again and again how and by virtue of what quality a man will be just.

*Adeimantus.* That is very certain.

And is justice dimmer in the individual, and is her form different, or is she the same which we found her to be in the State?

There is no difference in my opinion, he said.

Because, if any doubt is still lingering in our minds, a few commonplace instances will satisfy us of the truth of what I am saying.

What sort of instances do you mean?

If the case is put to us, must we not admit that the just State, or the man who is trained in the principles of such a State, will be less likely than the unjust to make away with a deposit of gold or silver? Would any one deny this?

No one. . . .

Will the just man or citizen ever be guilty of sacrilege or theft, or treachery either to his friends or to his country?

Never.

Neither will he ever break faith where there have been oaths or agreements?

Impossible.

No one will be less likely to commit adultery, or to dishonour his father and mother, or to fail in his religious duties?

No one.

And the reason is that each part of him is doing its own business, whether in ruling or being ruled?

Exactly so.

Are you satisfied then that the quality which makes such men and such states is justice, or do you hope to discover some other?

Not I, indeed.

Then our dream has been realized; and the suspicion which we entertained at the beginning of our work of construction, that some divine power must have conducted us to a primary form of justice, has now been verified?

Yes, certainly.

And the division of labour which required the carpenter and the shoemaker and the rest of the citizens to be doing each his own business, and not another's, was a shadow of justice, and for that reason it was of use?

Clearly.

But in reality justice was such as we were describing, being concerned however, not with the outward man, but with the inward, which is the true self and concernment of man: for the just man does not permit the several elements within him to interfere with one another, or any of them to do the work of others,—he sets in order his own inner life, and is his own master and his own law, and at peace with himself; and when he has bound together the three principles within him, which may be compared to the higher, lower, and middle notes of the scale, and the intermediate intervals—when he has bound all these together, and is no longer many, but has become one entirely temperate and perfectly adjusted nature, then he proceeds to act, if he has to act, whether in a matter of property, or in the treatment of the body, or in some affair of politics or private business; always thinking and calling that which preserves and co-operates with this harmonious condition, just and good action, and the knowledge

which presides over it, wisdom, and that which at any time impairs this condition, he will call unjust action, and the opinion which presides over it ignorance.

You have said the exact truth, Socrates.

Very good; and if we were to affirm that we had discovered the just man and the just State, and the nature of justice in each of them, we should not be telling a falsehood?

Most certainly not.

Plato, *Republic*, IV, 442B

- 11 *Athenian Stranger*. And now I can define to you clearly, and without ambiguity, what I mean by the just and unjust, according to my notion of them:—When anger and fear, and pleasure and pain, and jealousies and desires, tyrannize over the soul, whether they do any harm or not—I call all this injustice. But when the opinion of the best, in whatever part of human nature states or individuals may suppose that to dwell, has dominion in the soul and orders the life of every man, even if it be sometimes mistaken, yet what is done in accordance therewith, and the principle in individuals which obeys this rule, and is best for the whole life of man, is to be called just; although the hurt done by mistake is thought by many to be involuntary injustice.  
Plato, *Laws*, IX, 863B
- 12 The one thing which is wholly right and noble is to strive for that which is most honourable for a man's self and for his country, and to face the consequences whatever they may be.  
Plato, *Seventh Letter*
- 13 It is only between what is right and what seems right from habit, that some people are mad enough to see no difference.  
Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption*, 325<sup>a</sup>22
- 14 There being three objects of choice and three of avoidance, the noble, the advantageous, the pleasant, and their contraries, the base, the injurious, the painful, about all of these the good man tends to go right and the bad man to go wrong, and especially about pleasure.  
Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1104<sup>b</sup>31
- 15 Not every action nor every passion admits of a mean; for some have names that already imply badness, e.g. spite, shamelessness, envy, and in the case of actions adultery, theft, murder; for all of these and suchlike things imply by their names that they are themselves bad, and not the excesses or deficiencies of them. It is not possible, then, ever to be right with regard to them; one must always be wrong. Nor does goodness or badness with regard to such things depend on committing adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right way, but simply to do any of them is to go wrong. It would be equally absurd, then, to expect that in unjust, cowardly, and voluptuous action there should be a mean, an excess, and a deficiency; for at that rate there would be a mean of excess and of deficiency, an excess of excess, and a deficiency of deficiency. But as there is no excess and deficiency of temperance and courage because what is intermediate is in a sense an extreme, so too of the actions we have mentioned there is no mean nor any excess and deficiency, but however they are done they are wrong.  
Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1107<sup>a</sup>9
- 16 Justice, alone of the virtues, is thought to be 'another's good', because it is related to our neighbour; for it does what is advantageous to another, either a ruler or a copartner. Now the worst man is he who exercises his wickedness both towards himself and towards his friends, and the best man is not he who exercises his virtue towards himself but he who exercises it towards another; for this is a difficult task. Justice in this sense, then, is not part of virtue but virtue entire, nor is the contrary injustice a part of vice but vice entire.  
Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1130<sup>a</sup>3
- 17 It is a good precept that tells us not to do a thing if there is doubt whether it is right or wrong. Righteousness shines with its own brilliance. But doubt is a sign that we are possibly considering a wrong.  
Cicero, *De Officiis*, I, 9
- 18 While wrong may be committed by force or by treachery, both ways are bestial. Treachery belongs to the fox and force to the lion. Both are utterly unworthy of a man. But treachery is the more contemptible.  
Cicero, *De Officiis*, I, 13
- 19 The man that's just and resolute of mood  
No craze of people's perverse vote can shake,  
Nor frown of thrcat'ning monarch make  
To quit a purposed good.  
Horace, *Odes*, III, 3
- 20 It is a mark of a good way of life that, among other things, it satisfies and abides; bad behaviour, constantly changing, not for the better, simply into different forms, has none of this stability.  
Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, 47
- 21 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:  
Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.  
Matthew 7:13–14
- 22 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit;

- but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.  
A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.  
Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.  
Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.  
*Matthew 7:17–20*
- 23 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.  
Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.  
*Romans 12:19–20*
- 24 Who can hesitate to number among the faults an affectation which makes one ashamed to do what is right?  
*Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, XII, 5*
- 25 Courage and wisdom are, indeed, rarities amongst men, but of all that is good, a just man it would seem is the most scarce.  
*Plutarch, Flamininus*
- 26 In his ordinary language he [Agesilaus] was always observed to be a great maintainer of justice, and would commend it as the chief of virtues, saying, that valour without justice was useless, and if all the world were just, there would be no need of valour.  
*Plutarch, Agesilaus*
- 27 A good man does nothing for the sake of appearance, but for the sake of doing right.  
*Epietetus, Discourses, III, 24*
- 28 I who have seen the nature of the good that it is beautiful, and of the bad that it is ugly, and the nature of him who does wrong, that it is akin to me, not only of the same blood or seed, but that it participates in the same intelligence and the same portion of the divinity, I can neither be injured by any of them, for no one can fix on me what is ugly, nor can I be angry with my kinsman, nor hate him. For we are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. To act against one another thou is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away.  
*Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, II, 1*
- 29 One thing here is worth a great deal, to pass thy life in truth and justice, with a benevolent disposition even to liars and unjust men.  
*Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, VI, 47*
- 30 Generally, wickedness does no harm at all to the universe; and particularly, the wickedness of one man does no harm to another. It is only harmful to him who has it in his power to be released from it, as soon as he shall choose.  
*Marcus Aurelius, Meditations, VIII, 55*
- 31 It is owing to the various conditions of men that certain acts are virtuous for some, as being proportionate and fitting to them, while they are vicious for others, as being not proportioned to them.  
*Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I–II, 94, 3*
- 32 To his neighbours a man behaves himself well both in particular and in general. In particular, as to those to whom he is indebted by paying his debts, and in this sense is to be taken the commandment about honouring one's parents. In general, as to all men by doing harm to none, either by deed, or by word, or by thought. By deed harm is done to one's neighbour sometimes in his person, that is, to his personal existence, and this is forbidden by the words, *Thou shalt not kill*; sometimes in a person united to him as to the propagation of offspring, and this is prohibited by the words, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*; sometimes in his possessions, which are directed to both of these, and with regard to this it is said, *Thou shalt not steal*. Harm done by word is forbidden when it is said, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*; harm done by thought is forbidden in the words, *Thou shalt not covet*.  
*Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I–II, 100, 5*
- 33 If we speak of legal justice, it is evident that it stands foremost among all the moral virtues, for as much as the common good transcends the individual good of one person. In this sense the Philosopher [Aristotle] declares that *the most excellent of the virtues would seem to be justice, and more glorious than either the evening or the morning star*. But, even if we speak of particular justice, it excels the other moral virtues for two reasons. The first reason may be taken from the subject, because justice is in the more excellent part of the soul, viz. the rational appetite or will, whereas the other moral virtues are in the sensitive appetite, whereunto appertain the passions which are the matter of the other moral virtues. The second reason is taken from the object, because the other virtues are commendable in respect of the sole good of the virtuous person himself, whereas justice is praiseworthy in respect of the virtuous person being well disposed towards another, so that justice is somewhat the good of another person.  
*Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II–II, 58, 12*
- 34 Every excellence proper to a thing is to be loved in that thing; as in masculinity to be well bearded, and in femininity to be well smooth of beard over all the face. As in a setter, good scent, and in a boarhound, good speed. And the more proper is the excellence the better is it to be loved; where-

fore, though every virtue is to be loved in man, that is most to be loved in him which is most human; and that is justice, which abides only in the rational or intellectual part, to wit in the will. This is so much to be loved that . . . they who are its foes, as are robbers and plunderers, love it; and therefore we see that its contrary, to wit injustice, is most hated; as treachery, ingratitude, forgery, theft, rapine, cheating and their likes.

Dante, *Convivio*, I, 12

- 35 Enough is opened to thee now the labyrinth which hid from thee the living justice of which thou hast made question so incessantly; for thou didst say: 'A man is born upon the bank of Indus and there is none to tell of Christ, nor none to read, nor none to write; and all his volitions and his deeds are good so far as human reason seeth, sinless in life or in discourse.

He dieth unbaptised and without faith; where is that justice which condemneth him? where is his fault, in that he not believes?'

- Now who art thou who wouldst sit upon the seat to judge at a thousand miles away with the short sight that carries but a span?

Truly to him who goeth subtly to work with me, were not the Scripture over you, there were marvellous ground for questioning.

O animals of earth, minds gross! the primal Will, good in itself, never departed from its own self which is the highest good.

All is just which doth harmonise with it; no created good draweth it to itself, but it by raying forth giveth rise to it.

Dante, *Paradiso*, XIX, 67

- 36 There are lawful vices, as there are many either good or excusable actions that are unlawful.

Montaigne, *Essays*, III, 1, The Useful and the Honorable

- 37 *The King*. What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!

Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just,  
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,  
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

Shakespeare, *II Henry VI*, III, ii, 232

- 38 *Lear*. O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light. Yet you see how this world goes.

*Gloucester*. I see it feelingly.

*Lear*. What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

*Glou.* Ay, sir.

*Lear*. And the creature run from the cur?

There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.

Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!

Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;

Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind

For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;  
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,

And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;

Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.

None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em.

Take that of me, my friend, who have the power

To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;

And, like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not.

Shakespeare, *Lear*, IV, vi, 148

- 39 The names of *just* and *unjust*, when they are attributed to men, signify one thing, and when they are attributed to actions, another. When they are attributed to men, they signify conformity, or inconformity of manners, to reason. But when they are attributed to actions, they signify the conformity, or inconformity to reason, not of manners, or manner of life, but of particular actions. A just man therefore is he that taketh all the care he can that his actions may be all just; and an unjust man is he that neglecteth it. And such men are more often in our language styled by the names of *righteous* and *unrighteous* than *just* and *unjust*, though the meaning be the same. Therefore a righteous man does not lose that title by one or a few unjust actions that proceed from sudden passion, or mistake of things or persons, nor does an unrighteous man lose his character for such actions as he does, or forbears to do, for fear: because his will is not framed by the justice, but by the apparent benefit of what he is to do. That which gives to human actions the relish of justice is a certain nobleness or gallantness of courage, rarely found, by which a man scorns to be beholding for the contentment of his life to fraud, or breach of promise. This justice of the manners is that which is meant where justice is called a *virtue*; and injustice, a *vice*.

But the justice of actions denominates men, not just, but *guiltless*: and the injustice of the same (which is also called injury) gives them but the name of *guilty*.

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I, 15

- 40 Wrong-doing cannot be conceived of, but under dominion—that is, where, by the general right of the whole dominion, it is decided what is good and what evil, and where no one does anything rightfully, save what he does in accordance with the general decree or consent. For that . . . is wrong-doing, which cannot lawfully be cominit-

ted, or is by law forbidden. But obedience is the constant will to execute that, which by law is good, and by the general decree ought to be done.

Yet we are accustomed to call that also wrong, which is done against the sentence of sound reason, and to give the name of obedience to the constant will to moderate the appetite according to the dictate of reason: a manner of speech which I should quite approve, did human liberty consist in the licence of appetite, and slavery in the dominion of reason. But as human liberty is the greater, the more man can be guided by reason, and moderate his appetite, we cannot without great impropriety call a rational life obedience, and give the name of wrong-doing to that which is, in fact, a weakness of the mind, not a licence of the mind directed against itself, and for which a man may be called a slave, rather than free.

Spinoza, *Political Treatise*, II, 19-20

- 41 We find in history a thousand examples of pusillanimous or ambitious rulers, who were ruined by their slackness or their pride; not one who suffered for having been strictly just. But we ought not to confound negligence with moderation, or clemency with weakness. To be just, it is necessary to be severe; to permit vice, when one has the right and the power to suppress it, is to be oneself vicious.

Rousseau, *Political Economy*

- 42 Right . . . comprehends the whole of the conditions under which the voluntary actions of any one person can be harmonized in reality with the voluntary actions of every other person, according to a universal law of freedom.

Kant, *Introduction to the Science of Right*, B

- 43 The dictum of equity may be put thus: "The strictest right is the greatest wrong."

Kant, *Introduction to the Science of Right*, F

- 44 "Do wrong to no one." This formula may be rendered so as to mean: "Do no wrong to any one, even if thou shouldst be under the necessity, in observing this duty, to cease from all connection with others and to avoid all society."

Kant, *Division of the Science of Right*, A

- 45 It is not enough to do what is right, but we should practise it solely on the ground of its being right.

Kant, *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, 53

- 46 Life as the sum of ends has a right against abstract right. If for example it is only by stealing bread that the wolf can be kept from the door, the action is of course an encroachment on someone's property, but it would be wrong to treat this action as an ordinary theft. To refuse to allow a man in jeopardy of his life to take such steps for self-pres-

ervation would be to stigmatize him as without rights, and since he would be deprived of his life, his freedom would be annulled altogether. Many diverse details have a bearing on the preservation of life, and when we have our eyes on the future we have to engage ourselves in these details. But the only thing that is necessary is to live *now*, the future is not absolute but ever exposed to accident. Hence it is only the necessity of the immediate present which can justify a wrong action, because not to do the action would in turn be to commit an offence, indeed the most wrong of all offences, namely the complete destruction of the embodiment of freedom.

Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Additions, Par. 127

- 47 Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now.

Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

- 48 The only freedom I care about is the freedom to do right; the freedom to do wrong I am ready to part with on the cheapest terms to any one who will take it of me.

T. H. Huxley, *Descartes' "Discourse on Method"*

- 49 Speaking in a general way, a person is understood to deserve good if he does right, evil if he does wrong; and in a more particular sense, to deserve good from those to whom he does or has done good, and evil from those to whom he does or has done evil. The precept of returning good for evil has never been regarded as a case of the fulfilment of justice, but as one in which the claims of justice are waived, in obedience to other considerations.

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, V

- 50 We do not call anything wrong, unless we mean to imply that a person ought to be punished in some way or other for doing it; if not by law, by the opinion of his fellow-creatures; if not by opinion, by the reproaches of his own conscience. This seems the real turning point of the distinction between morality and simple expediency.

Mill, *Utilitarianism*, V

- 51 *Prince Andrew*. It is not given to man to know what is right and what is wrong. Men always did and always will err, and in nothing more than in what they consider right and wrong.

Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, V, 11

- 52 Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just. Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must



Disappointment all I endeavour end?  
 Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,  
 How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou  
 dost  
 Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust  
 Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,  
 Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes  
 Now, leavèd how thick! lacèd they are again  
 With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes  
 Them; birds build—but not I build; no, but  
 strain,  
 Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that  
 wakes.

Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.  
 G. M. Hopkins, *Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord*

53 To talk of intrinsic right and intrinsic wrong is absolutely nonsensical; intrinsically, an injury, an oppression, an exploitation, an annihilation can be nothing wrong, inasmuch as life is *essentially* (that is, in its cardinal functions) something which functions by injuring, oppressing, exploiting, and annihilating, and is absolutely inconceivable without such a character.

Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, II, 11

## 9.8 | Happiness

In the discussion of this pivotal notion, concerning which there appear to be many disagreements, several points that have seldom if ever been disputed stand out. One is the fact that the word “happiness” is generally used to name something that is desired for its own sake, not as a means to some end beyond itself. Another is the fact that happiness is not one good among others, which a man might possess and still desire many other goods; it is rather the complete good, or summation of goods. The reader will find this conception of happiness expressed in Augustine’s “Happy is he who has all that he desires, provided that he desire nothing amiss,” and in the statement by Boethius that happiness consists in the possession in aggregate of all good things.

The understanding of these two points is profoundly affected by a fundamental difference among the writers quoted here in their use of the word “happiness.” Some of them use it in an exclusively ethical sense to denote the quality of a whole human life. When it is thus used, happiness is not something that can be experienced at a particu-

lar time, or enjoyed at one time and not at another. Other writers—and most people generally—use the term to denote a psychological state, a feeling of contentment, joy, or satisfaction, which can be experienced at one time and not at another.

Writers who use the word in such totally different senses may appear to disagree with one another in what they say about happiness, but, in view of their equivocal use of the term, they will be only in apparent, not real disagreement. Thus, for example, Kant, who uses the term “happiness” to name a feeling of contentment that results from the satisfaction of whatever desires a person may happen to have, whether or not one’s desires are themselves morally sound, may reach the ethical conclusion that persons who obey the moral law do not seek happiness but rather seek to deserve it. That conclusion does not really disagree with the ethical principle enunciated by Aristotle, Augustine, and others that people should seek happiness conceived as a whole life made good by the possession of all the goods that a virtuous person ought to desire.