3a. Verbal ambiguity: indefiniteness or multiplicity of meaning

5 ARISTOPHANES: Knights, [960-1089] 482a-483c / Wasps [471-507] 513a-c / Birds [959-991] 554c-555a; [1372-1409] 559b-c / Frogs [923-935] 575a-b / Plutus [1-55] 629a-d

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7 PLATO: Euthydemus 65a-84a,c / Cratylus, 107d-109a / Phaedrus, 132c-133a; 138c-141a,c / Republic, BK I, 297b-300b / Critias, 478c-d / Theaetetus, 520b / Sophist, 552b-c / Philebus, 609d-610a / Seventh Letter, 809c-810b

8 ARISTOTLE: Topics, BK I, CH 15 149d-152a; CH 18 [108a18-36] 152b-d; BK II, CH 3 154d-155d; BK VIII, CH 3 [158b8-24] 215b; CH 7 217c-d / Sophistical Refutations, CH I [165a5-13] 227b-c; CH 33 [182b13-31] 251d / Heavens, BK I, CH II [280b1-7] 371d-372a / Metaphysics, BK I, CH 9 [992a1-9] 510b; BK IV, CH 4 [1006a29-b18] 525c-d; BK VII, CH II [1037a5-9] 560c; BK VIII, CH 3 [1043a29-b4] 567d / Soul, BK III, CH 2 [425b26-426a26] 658a-c

9 ARISTOTLE: Parts of Animals, BK II, CH 2 [648a37]-CH 3 [649b22] 172d-174b / Ethics, BK V, CH 1 [1129a18-31] 376b-d / Politics, BK II, CH 3 456c-457a; BK III, CH 3 [1276a8-24] 473a / Rhetoric, BK III, CH 2 [1404b38-39] 655b; CH 5 657d-658c

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18 AUGUSTINE: Christian Doctrine, BK II, CH 6 638a-d; CH 10 640d-641a; BK III 657a-674d

20 AQUINAS: Summa Theologica, PART III, Q 60, A 3, REP 1 848d-849c

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25 MONTAIGNE: Essays, 253c-254a; 284d-285a; 517b-519a

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Knights, [960-1089] 482a-483c

Pa. O not yet, master. I beseech, not yet;
Wait till you've heard my oracles, I pray.
S.-S. And mine as well.
Pa. And if to *his* you listen,
You'll be a liquor-skin.
S.-S. And if to *his,*
You'll find yourself severely circumcised.
Pa. Nay mine foretell that over all the land
Thyself shalt rule, with roses garlanded.
S.-S. And mine that crowned, in spangled purple robe,
Thou in thy golden chariot shalt pursue
And sue the lady Smicythe and her lord.
Pa. Well, go and fetch them hither, so that *he*
May hear them.
S.-S. Certainly; and you fetch yours.
Pa. Here goes. *Exit to house of* DEMUS.
S.-S. Here goes, by Zeus. There's nought to stop us. *Exit.*

Chorus

O bright and joyous day,
O day most sweet to all
Both near and far away,
The day of Cleon's fall.
Yet in our Action-mart
I overheard by chance
Some ancient sires and tart
This counter-plea advance,
That but for him the State
Two things had ne'er possessed:—
A *stirrer*-up of hate,
A *pestle* of unrest.

His swine-bred music we
With wondering hearts admire;
At school, his mates agree,
He always tuned his lyre
In Dorian style to play.
His master wrathful grew;
He sent the boy away,

And this conclusion drew,
“This boy from all his friends
Donations seeks to wile,
His art begins and ends
In Dono-do-rian style.”
Pa. (*re-entering*) Look at them, see! and there are more behind.
S.-S. (*re-entering*) O what a weight! and there are more behind.
Dem. What *are* they?
Pa. Oracles!
Dem. All?
Pa. You seem surprised;
By Zeus, I’ve got a chestful more at home.
S.-S. And I garret and two cellars full.
Dem. Come, let me see. Whose oracles are these?
Pa. Mine are by Bakis.
Dem. (*To* SAUSAGE-SELLER) And by whom are yours?
S.-S. Mine are by Glanis, Bakis’ elder brother.
Dem. What do they treat of?
Pa. Mine? Of Athens, Pylus,
Of you, of me, of every blessed thing.
Dem. (*To* SAUSAGE-SELLER) And you; of what treat yours?
S.-S. Of Athens, pottage,
Of Lacedaemon, mackerel, freshly caught,
Of swinding barley-measurers in the mart,
Of you, of me. That nincompoop be hanged.
Dem. Well read them out; and prithee don’t forget
The one I love to hear about myself,
That I’m to soar, an Eagle, in the clouds.
Pa. Now then give ear, and hearken to my words:
“Heed thou well, Erechtheides, the oracle’s drift, which Apollo
Out of his secret shrine through priceless tripods delivered.
Keep thou safely the dog, thy jag-toothed holy protector.
Yapping before thy feet, and terribly roaring to guard thee,
He thy pay will provide: if he fail to provide it, he’ll perish;
Yea, for many the daws that are hating and cawing against him.”
Dem. This, by Demeter, beats me altogether.
What does Erechtheus want with daws and dog?
Pa. I am the dog: I bark aloud for you.
And Phoebus bids you guard the dog; that’s me.
S.-S. It says not that; but this confounded dog
Has gnawn the oracle, as he gnaws the door.
I’ve the right reading here about the dog.
Dem. Let’s hear; but first I’ll pick me up a stone

Lest this dog-oracle take to gnawing *me*.
S.-S. “Heed thou well, Erechtheides, the kidnapping Cerberus ban-dog;
Wagging his tail he stands, and fawning upon thee at dinner,
Waiting thy slice to devour when aught distract thine attention.
Soon as the night comes round he steals unseen to the kitchen
Dog-wise; then will his tongue clean out the plates and the—islands.”
Dem. Aye, by Poseidon, Glanis, that’s far better.
Pa. Nay, listen first, my friend, and then decide:
“Woman she is, but a lion she’ll bear us in Athens the holy;
One who for Demus will fight with an army of stinging mosquitoes,
Fight, as if shielding his whelps; whom see thou guard with devotion
Building a wooden wall and an iron fort to secure him.”
Do you understand?
Dem. By Apollo, no, not I.
Pa. The God, ‘tis plain, would have you keep me safely,
For I’m a valiant lion, for your sake.
Dem. What, you Antileon and I never knew it!
S.-S. One thing he purposely informs you not,
What that oracular wall of wood and iron,
Where Loxias bids you keep him safely, is.
Dem. What means the God?
S.-S. He means that you’re to clap
Paphlagon in the five-holed pillory-stocks.
Dem. I shouldn’t be surprised if that came true.
Pa. Heed not the words; for jealous the crows that are croaking against me.
Cherish the lordly falcon, not ever forget that he brought thee,
Brought thee in fetters and chains the young Laconian minnows.
S.-S. This did Paphlagon dare in a moment of drunken bravado.
Why think much of the deed, Cecropides foolish in counsel?
Weight a Woman will bear, if a Man impose it upon her,
Fight she won’t and she can’t: in fighting she’s always a fright in.
Pa. Nay, but remember the word, “How Pylus,” he said, “before Pylus”;
Pylus there is before Pylus.
Dem. What mean you by that “before Pylus”?
S.-S. Truly your pile of baths will he capture before you can take them.
Dem. O dear, then bathless must I go to-day
S.-S. Because he has carried off our pile of baths.
But here’s an oracle about the fleet;
Your best attention is required to this.
Dem. I’ll give it too; but prithee, first of all,
Read how my sailors are to get their pay.
S.-S. “O Aegeides, beware of the hound-fox, lest he deceive thee,
Stealthily snapping, the crafty, the swift, the tricky marauder.”

Know you the meaning of this?
Dem. Philostratus, plainly, the hound-fox.
S.-S. Not so; but Paphlagon is evermore
Asking swift triremes to collect the silver,
So Loxias bids you not to give him these.
Dem. Why is a trireme called a hound-fox?
S.-S. Why?
A trireme's fleet; a hound is also fleet.
Dem. But for what reason adds he "fox" to "hound"?
S.-S. The troops, he means, resemble little foxes,
Because they scour the farms and eat the grapes.
Dem. Good.
But where's the cash to pay these little foxes?
S.-S. That I'll provide: within three days I'll do it.
List thou further the rede by the son of Leto delivered;
"Keep thou aloof," said he, "from the wiles of hollow Cyllene."
Dem. Hollow Cyllene! what's that?
S.-S. 'Tis Paphlagon's hand he's describing.
Paphlagon's outstretched hand, with his "Drop me a coin in the hollow."
Pa. There this fellow is wrong. When he spake of the hollow Cyllene,
Phoebus was hinting, I ween, at the hand of the maimed Diopeithes.
Nay, but I've got me, for you, a winged oracular message,
"Thou shalt an Eagle become, and rule all lands as a Monarch."
S.-S. Nay, but I've got me the same: "and the Red Sea too thou shalt govern,
Yea in Ecbatana judge, rich cakes as thou judgest devouring."

Wasps [471-507] 513a-c

Bd. Can't we now, without this outcry, and this fierce denunciation,
Come to peaceful terms together, terms of reconciliation?
Ch. Terms with *thee*, thou people-hater, and with Bradisas, thou traitor,
Hand and glove! You who dare Woolly-fringed Clothes to wear,
Yes, and show Beard and hair Left to grow Everywhere.
Bd. O, by Zeus, I'd really liefer drop my father altogether
Than endure these daily conflicts, buffeting with waves and weather.
Ch. Why, as yet you've hardly entered on the parsley and the rue:
(That we'll just throw in, a sample of our three-quart words for you.)
Now you care not, wait a little, till the prosecutor trounce you,
Sluicing out these selfsame charges, and *conspirator* denounce you.
Bd. O by all the gods I ask you, will ye never go away?
Are ye quite resolved to linger, thwacked and thwacking all the day?
Ch. Never more Will I while There's grain Left of me
Leave your door, Traitor vile Bent to gain *Tyranny.*
Bd. Ay "Conspiracy" and "Tyrant," These with you are all in all,

Whatsoe'er is brought before before you, be the matter great or small.
Everywhere the name of Tyrant, now for fifty years unknown,
Is than cheap salt-fish at Athens commoner and cheaper grown.
Everywhere about the market it is bandied to and fro:
If you wish a basse to purchase, and without a pilchard go,
Straight the man who sells the pilchards grumbles from his stall hard by,
"Here is plainly one that caters with a view to Tyranny."
If a leek, besides, you order, relish for your sprats perchance,
Says the potherb-girl directly, eyeing you with looks askance,
"Leeks indeed! and leeks I prithee! what, with Tyranny in view?
Athens must be taxed, you fancy, relish to supply for *you*!"
Xa. Even so a naughty damsel yesternoon observed to me,
Just because I said her manners were a little bit too free,
She supposed that I was wishing Hippias's Tyranny.
Bd. Ay, by charges such as there our litigious friends they please.
Now because I'd have my father (quitting all this toil and strife,
This up-early-false-informing-troublesome-litigious life)
Live a life of ease and splendour, live like Morychus, you see
Straight I'm charged with Tyrant leanings, charged with foul conspiracy.

Birds [959-991] 554c-555a

Oracle-Monger. Forbear! touch not the goat awhile.
Pe. Eh? Who are you?
O.-M. A soothsayer.
Pe. You be hanged!
O.-M. O think not lightly, friend, of things divine;
Know I've an oracle of Bakis, bearing
On your Cloudcuckooburies.
Pe. Eh? then why
Did you not soothsay that before I founded
My city here?
O.-M. The Power within forbade me.
Pe. Well, well, there's nought like hearing what it says.
O.-M. "Nay but if once grey crows and wolves shall be banding together,
Out in the midway space, 'twixt Corinth and Sicyon, dwelling—"
Pe. But what in the world have I to do with Corinth?
O.-M. Bakis is riddling: Bakis means the Air.
"First to Pandora offer a white-fleeced ram for a victim.
Next, who first shall arrive my verses prophetic expounding,
Give him a brand-new cloak and a pair of excellent sandals."
Pe. Are sandals in it?
O.-M. Take the book and see.
"Give him moreover a cup, and fill his hands with the inwards."

Pe. Are inwards in it?
O.-M. Take the book and see.
“Youth, divinely, inspired, if thou dost as I bid, thou shalt surely
Soar in the clouds as an Eagle; refuse, and thou ne’er shalt become an
Eagle, or even a dove, or a woodpecker tapping the oak-tree.”
Pe. Is all that in it?
O.-M. Take the book and see.
Pe. O how unlike your oracle to mine,
Which from Apollo’s words I copied out;
“But if cheat, an impostor, presume to appear uninvited,
Troubling the sacred rites, and lusting to taste of the inwards,
Hit him betwixt the ribs with all your force and your fury.”
O.-M. You’re jesting surely.
Pe. Take the book and see.
“See that ye spare not the rogue, though he soar in the clouds as an Eagle,
Yea, be he Lampon himself or even the great Diopeithes.”
O.-M. Is all that in it?
Pe. Take the book and see.
Get out! be off, confound you! (*striking him*)
O.-M. O! O! O!
Pe. There, run away and soothsay somewhere else.
Exit ORACLE-MONGER; *enter* METON, *with the instruments of a land-surveyor.*

Birds [1372-1409] 559b-c
S.-St. I’ll do it too.
Pe. You’ll show your sense, by Zeus!
Exit SIRE-STRIKER; *enter* CINESIAS.
Cinesias. (singing) On the lightest of wings I am soaring on high,
Lightly from measure to measure I fly;
Pe. Bless me, this creature wants a pack of wings!
Ci. (singing) And ever the new I am flitting to find,
With timorless body, and timorless mind.
Pe. We clasp Cinesias, man of linden-wyth.
Why in the world have you whirled your splay foot hither?
Ci. (singing) To be a bird, a bird, I long,
A nightingale of thrilling song.
Pe. O stop that singing; prithee speak in prose.
Ci. O give me wings, that I may soar on high,
And pluck poetic fancies from the clouds,
Wild as the whirling winds, and driving snows.
Pe. What, do you pluck your fancies from the clouds?
Ci. Why our whole trade depends upon the clouds;

What are our noblest dithyrambs but things
Of air, and mist, and purple-gleaming depths,
And feathery whirlwings? You shall hear, and judge.
Pe. No, no, I won't.
Ci. By Heracles you shall.
I'll go through all the air, dear friend, for you.
(Singing) Shadowy visions of
Wing-spreading, air-treading,
Taper-necked birds.
Pe. Steady, there!
Ci. (singing) Bounding along on the path to the seas,
Fain would I float on the stream of the breeze.
Pe. O by the Powers, I'll stop your streams and breezes.
Ci. (singing) First do I stray on a southerly way;
Then to the northward my body I bear,
Cutting a harbourless furrow of air.
PEISTHETAERUS *begins to flap him round the stage.*
A nice trick that, a pleasant trick, old man.
Pe. O you don't like being feathery-whirlwinged, do you?
Ci. That's how you treat the Cyclian-chorus-trainer
For whose possession all the tribes compete!
Pe. Well, will you stop and train a chorus here
For Leotrophides, all flying birds,
Crake-oppidans?
Ci. You're jeering me, that's plain.
But I won't stop, be sure of that, until
I get me wings, and peragrate the air. *Exit.*

Frogs [923-935] 575a-b

Eu. So when he had humbugged thus awhile, and now his wretched play
Was halfway through, a dozen words, great wild-bull words, he'd say,
Fierce Bugaboos, with bristling crests, and shaggy eyebrows too,
Which not a soul could understand.
Aes. O heavens!
Di. Be quiet, do.
Eu. But not one single word was clear.
Di. St! don't your teeth be gnashing.
Eu. 'Twas all Scamanders, moated camps, and griffin-eagles flashing
In burnished copper on the shields, chivalric-precipice-high
Expressions, hard to comprehend.
Di. Aye, by the Powers, and I
Full many a sleepless night have spent in anxious thought, because
I'd find the tawny cock-horse out, what sort of bird it was!

Aes. It was a sign, you stupid dolt, engraved the ships upon.
Di. Eryxis I supposed it was, Philoxenus's son.
Eu. Now really should a cock be brought into a tragic play?

Plutus [1-55] 629a-d

Scene: a street in Athens with the house of CHREMYLUS *in the background. Groping along in front is a* BLIND MAN *of sordid appearance, followed by* CHREMYLUS, *an elderly citizen, and a slave,* CARIO, *wreaths of bay.*
Cario. How hard it is, O Zeus and all ye Gods,
To be the slave of a demented master!
For though the servant give the best advice,
Yet if his owner otherwise decide,
The servant needs must share the ill results.
For a man's body, such is fate, belongs
Not to himself, but to whoe'er has bought it.
So much for that. But now with Loxias,
Who from his golden tripod chants his high
Oracular strains, I've got a bone to pick.
A wise Physician-seer they call him, yet
He has sent my master off so moody-mad,
That now he's following a poor blind old man,
Just the reverse of what he ought to do.
For we who see should go *before* the blind,
But he goes *after* (and constrains me too)
One who won't answer even with a gr-r-r.
I won't keep silence, master, no I won't,
Unless you tell me why you're following *him.*
I'll plague you, Sir; I know you won't chastise me
So long as I've this sacred chaplet on.
Cheremylus. I'll pluck it off, that you may smart the more,
If you keep bothering.
Ca. Humbug! I won't stop
Until you have told me who the fellow is.
You know I ask it out of love for you.
Chr. I'll tell you, for of all my servants you
I count the truest and most constant—thief.
—I've been a virtuous and religious man
Yet always poor and luckless.
Ca. So you have.
Chr. While Temple-breakers, orators, informers,
And knaves grow rich and prosper.
Ca. So they do.
Chr. So then I went to question of the God—

Not for myself, the quiver of my life
Is well-nigh emptied of its arrows now—
But for my son, my only son, to ask
If, changing all his habits, he should turn
A rogue, dishonest, rotten to the core.
For such as they, methinks, succeed the best.
Ca. And what droned Phoebus from his wreaths of bay?
Chr. He told me plainly that with whomsoe'er
I first forgathered as I left the shrine,
Of him I never should leave go again,
But win him back, in friendship, to my home.
Ca. With whom then did you first forgather?
Chr. Him.
Ca. And can't you see the meaning of the God,
You ignoramus, who so plainly tells you
Your son should follow the prevailing fashion?
Chr. Why think you that?
Ca. He means that even the blind
Can see 'tis better for our present life
To be a rascal, rotten to the core.
Chr. 'Tis not that way the oracle inclines,
It cannot be. 'Tis something more than that.
Now if this fellow told us who he is,
And why and wherefore he has come here now,
We'd soon discover what the God intended.

6 HERODOTUS: *History*, BK I, 11b-d; 21b-22a

History, BK I, 11b-d

52. These were the offerings sent by Crœsus to Delphi. To the shrine of Amphiaraus, with whose valour and misfortune he was acquainted, he sent a shield entirely of gold, and a spear, also of solid gold, both head and shaft. They were still existing in my day at Thebes, laid up in the temple of Ismenian Apollo.

53. The messengers who had the charge of conveying these treasures to the shrines, received instructions to ask the oracles whether Crœsus should go to war with the Persians, and if so, whether he should strengthen himself by the forces of an ally. Accordingly, when they had reached their destination and presented the gifts, they proceeded to consult the oracles in the following terms:—"Crœsus, king of Lydia and other countries, believing that these are the only real oracles in all the world, has sent you such presents as your discoveries deserved, and now inquires of you whether he shall go to war with the Persians, and if so, whether he shall

strengthen himself by the forces of a confederate." Both the oracles agreed in the tenor of their reply, which was in each case a prophecy that if Crœsus attacked the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire, and a recommendation to him to look and see who were the most powerful of the Greeks, and to make alliance with them.

54. At the receipt of these oracular replies Crœsus was overjoyed, and feeling sure now that he would destroy the empire of the Persians, he sent once more to Pytho, and presented to the Delphians, the number of whom he had ascertained, two gold staters apiece. In return for this the Delphians granted to Crœsus and the Lydians the privilege of precedency in consulting the oracle, exemption from all charges, the most honourable seat at the festivals, and the perpetual right of becoming at pleasure citizens of their town.

55. After sending these presents to the Delphians, Crœsus a third time consulted the oracle, for having once proved its truthfulness, he wished to make constant use of it. The question whereto he now desired an answer was—"Whether his kingdom would be of long duration?" The following was the reply of the Pythoness:—

> *Wait till the time shall come when a mule is monarch of Media;*
> *Then, thou delicate Lydian, away to the pebbles of Hermus;*
> *Haste, oh! haste thee away, nor blush to behave like a coward.*

History, BK I, 21b-22a

89. Cyrus, struck by what Crœsus had said, bade all the court to withdraw, and then asked Crœsus what he thought it best for him to do as regarded the plundering. Crœsus answered, "Now that the gods have made me thy slave, oh, Cyrus, it seems to me that it is my part, if I see anything to thy advantage, to show it to thee. Thy subjects, the Persians, are a poor people with a proud spirit. If then thou lettest them pillage and possess themselves of great wealth, I will tell thee what thou hast to expect at their hands. The man who gets the most, look to having him rebel against thee. Now, then, if my words please thee, do thus, oh! king:—Let some of thy body-guards be placed as sentinels at each of the city gates, and let them take their booty from the soldiers as they leave the town, and tell them that they do so because the tenths are due to Jupiter. So wilt thou escape the hatred they would feel if the plunder were taken away from them by force; and they, seeing that what is proposed is just, will do it willingly."

90. Cyrus was beyond measure pleased with this advice, so excellent did it seem to him. He praised Crœsus highly, and gave orders to his body-guard to do as he had suggested. Then, turning to Crœsus, he said, "Oh! Crœsus, I see that thou art resolved both in speech and act to show thyself a virtuous prince: ask me, therefore, whatever thou wilt as a gift at this moment." Crœsus replied, "Oh! my lord, if thou wilt suffer me to send these fetters to

the god of the Greeks, whom I once honoured above all other gods, and ask him if it is his wont to deceive his benefactors—that will be the highest favour thou canst confer on me." Cyrus upon this inquired what charge he had to make against the god. Then Crœsus gave him a full account of all his projects, and of the answers of the oracle, and of the offerings which he had sent, on which he dwelt especially, and told him how it was the encouragement given him by the oracle which had led him to make war upon Persia. All this he related, and at the end again besought permission to reproach the god with his behaviour. Cyrus answered with a laugh, "This I readily grant thee, and whatever else thou shalt at any time ask at my hands." Crœsus, finding his request allowed, sent certain Lydians to Delphi, enjoining them to lay his fetters upon the threshold of the temple, and ask the god, "If he were not ashamed of having encouraged him, as the destined destroyer of the empire of Cyrus, to begin a war with Persia, of which such were the first-fruits?" As they said this they were to point to the fetters; and further they were to inquire, "if it was the wont of the Greek gods to be ungrateful?"

91. The Lydians went to Delphi and delivered their message, on which the Pythoness is said to have replied:—"It is not possible even for a god to escape the decree of destiny. Crœsus has been punished for the sin of his fifth ancestor, who, when he was one of the bodyguard of the Heraclides, joined in a woman's fraud, and, slaying his master, wrongfully seized the throne. Apollo was anxious that the fall of Sardis should not happen in the lifetime of Crœsus, but be delayed to his son's days; he could not, however, persuade the Fates. All that they were willing to allow he took and gave to Crœsus. Let Crœsus know that Apollo delayed the taking of Sardis three full years, and that he is thus a prisoner three years later than was his destiny. Moreover, it was Apollo who saved him from the burning pile. Nor has Crœsus any right to complain with respect to the oracular answer which he received. For when the god told him that, if he attacked the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire, he ought, if he had been wise, to have sent again and inquired which empire was meant, that of Cyrus or his own; but if he neither understood what was said, nor took the trouble to seek for enlightenment, he has only himself to blame for the result. Besides, he had misunderstood the last answer which had been given him about the mule. Cyrus was that mule. For the parents of Cyrus were of different races, and of different conditions—his mother a Median princess, daughter of King Astyages, and his father a Persian and a subject, who, though so far beneath her in all respects, had married his royal mistress." Such was the answer of the Pythoness. The Lydians returned to Sardis and communicated it to Crœsus, who confessed, on hearing it, that the fault was his, not the god's. Such was the way in which Ionia was first conquered, and so was the empire of Crœsus brought to a close.

7 PLATO: *Euthydemus* 65a-84a,c / *Cratylus*, 107d-109a / *Phaedrus*, 132c-133a; 138c-141a,c / *Republic*, BK I, 297b-300b / *Critias*, 478c-d / *Theaetetus*, 520b / *Sophist*, 552b-c / *Philebus*, 609d-610a / *Seventh Letter,* 809c-810b

Euthydemus 65a-84a,c

Crito. Who was the person, Socrates, with whom you were talking yesterday at the Lyceum? There was such a crowd around you that I could not get within hearing, but I caught a sight of him over their heads, and I made out, as I thought, that he was a stranger with whom you were talking: who was he?

Socrates. There were two, Crito; which of them do you mean?

Cri. The one whom I mean was seated second from you on the right-hand side. In the middle was Cleinias the young son of Axiochus, who has wonderfully grown; he is only about the age of my own Critobulus, but he is much forwarder and very good-looking: the other is thin and looks younger than he is.

Soc. He whom you mean, Crito, is Euthydemus; and on my left hand there was his brother Dionysodorus, who also took part in the conversation.

Cri. Neither of them are known to me, Socrates; they are a new importation of Sophists, as I should imagine. Of what country are they, and what is their line of wisdom?

Soc. As to their origin, I believe that they are natives of this part of the world, and have migrated from Chios to Thurii; they were driven out of Thurii, and have been living for many years past in these regions. As to their wisdom, about which you ask, Crito, they are wonderful—consummate! I never knew what the true pancratiast was before; they are simply made up of fighting, not like the two Acarnanian brothers who fight with their bodies only, but this pair of heroes, besides being perfect in the use of their bodies, are invincible in every sort of warfare; for they are capital at fighting in armour, and will teach the art to any one who pays them; and also they are most skilful in legal warfare; they will plead themselves and teach others to speak and to compose speeches which will have an effect upon the courts. And this was only the beginning of their wisdom, but they have at last carried out the pancratiastic art to the very end, and have mastered the only mode of fighting which had been hitherto neglected by them; and now no one dares even to stand up against them: such is their skill in the war of words, that they can refute any proposition whether true or false. Now I am thinking, Crito, of placing myself in their hands; for they say that in a short time they can impart their skill to any one.

Cri. But, Socrates, are you not too old? there may be reason to fear that.

Soc. Certainly not, Crito; as I will prove to you, for I have the consolation of knowing that they began this art of disputation which I covet, quite, as I

may say, in old age; last year, or the year before, they had none of their new wisdom. I am only apprehensive that I may bring the two strangers into disrepute, as I have done Connus the son of Metrobius, the harp-player, who is still my music-master; for when the boys who go to him see me going with them, they laugh at me and call him grandpapa's master. Now I should not like the strangers to experience similar treatment; the fear of ridicule may make them unwilling to receive me; and therefore, Crito, I shall try and persuade some old men to accompany me to them, as I persuaded them to go with me to Connus, and I hope that you will make one: and perhaps we had better take your sons as a bait; they will want to have them as pupils, and for the sake of them willing to receive us.

Cri. I see no objection, Socrates, if you like; but first I wish that you would give me a description of their wisdom, that I may know beforehand what we are going to learn.

Soc. In less than no time you shall hear; for I cannot say that I did not attend—I paid great attention to them, and I remember and will endeavour to repeat the whole story. Providentially I was sitting alone in the dressing-room of the Lyceum where you saw me, and was about to depart; when I was getting up I recognized the familiar divine sign: so I sat down again, and in a little while the two brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus came in, and several others with them, whom I believe to be their disciples, and they walked about in the covered court; they had not taken more than two or three turns when Cleinias entered, who, as you truly say, is very much improved: he was followed by a host of lovers, one of whom was Ctesippus the Paeanian, a well-bred youth, but also having the wildness of youth. Cleinias saw me from the entrance as I was sitting alone, and at once came and sat down on the right hand of me, as you describe; and Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, when they saw him, at first stopped and talked with one another, now and then glancing at us, for I particularly watched them; and then Euthydemus came and sat down by the youth, and the other by me on the left hand; the rest anywhere. I saluted the brothers, whom I had not seen for a long time; and then I said to Cleinias: Here are two wise men, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, Cleinias, wise not in a small but in a large way of wisdom, for they know all about war,—all that a good general ought to know about the array and command of an army, and the whole art of fighting in armour: and they know about law too, and can teach a man how to use the weapons of the courts when he is injured.

They heard me say this, but only despised me. I observed that they looked at one another, and both of them laughed; and then Euthydemus Those, Socrates, are matters which we no longer pursue seriously; to us they are secondary occupations.

Indeed, I said, if such occupations are regarded by you as secondary, what must the principal one be; tell me, I beseech you, what that noble study is?

The teaching of virtue, Socrates, he replied, is our principal occupation; and we believe that we can impart it better and quicker than any man.
My God! I said, and where did you learn that? I always thought, as I was saying just now, that your chief accomplishment was the art of fighting in armour; and I used to say as much of you, for I remember that you professed this when you were here before. But now if you really have the other knowledge, O forgive me: I address you as I would superior beings, and ask you to pardon the impiety of my former expressions. But are you quite sure about this, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus? the promise is so vast, that a feeling of incredulity steals over me.
You may take our word, Socrates, for the fact.
Then I think you happier in having such a treasure than the great king is in the possession of his kingdom. And please to tell me whether you intend to exhibit your wisdom; or what will you do?
That is why we have come hither, Socrates; and our purpose is not only to exhibit, but also to teach any one who likes to learn.
But I can promise you, I said, that every unvirtuous person will want to learn. I shall be the first; and there is the youth Cleinias, and Ctesippus: and here are several others, I said, pointing to the lovers of Cleinias, who were beginning to gather round us. Now Ctesippus was sitting at some distance from Cleinias; and when Euthydemus leaned forward in talking with me, he was prevented from seeing Cleinias, who was between us; and so, partly because he wanted to look at his love, and also because he was interested, he jumped up and stood opposite to us: and all the other admirers of Cleinias, as well as the disciples of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, followed his example. And these were the persons whom I showed to Euthydemus, telling him that they were all eager to learn: to which Ctesippus and all of them with one voice vehemently assented, and bid him exhibit the power of his wisdom. Then I said: O Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, I earnestly request you to do myself and the company the favour to exhibit. There may be some trouble in giving the whole exhibition; but tell me one thing,—can you make a good man of him only who is already convinced that he ought to learn of you, or of him also who is not convinced, either because he imagines that virtue is a thing which cannot be taught at all, or that you are not the teachers of it? Has your art power to persuade him, who is of the latter temper of mind, that virtue can be taught; and that you are the men from whom he will best learn it?
Certainly, Socrates, said Dionysodorus; our art will do both.
And you and your brother, Dionysodorus, I said, of all men who are now living are the most likely to stimulate him to philosophy and to the study of virtue?
Yes, Socrates, I rather think that we are.

Then I wish that you would be so good as to defer the other part of the exhibition, and only try to persuade the youth whom you see here that he ought to be a philosopher and study virtue. Exhibit that, and you will confer a great favour on me and on every one present; for the fact is I and all of us are extremely anxious that he should become truly good. His name is Cleinias, and he is the son of Axiochus, and grandson of the old Alcibiades, cousin of the Alcibiades that now is. He is quite young, and we are naturally afraid that some one may get the start of us, and turn his mind in a wrong direction, and he may be ruined. Your visit, therefore, is most happily timed; and I hope that you will make a trial of the young man, and converse with him in our presence, if you have no objection.

These were pretty nearly the expressions which I used; and Euthydemus, in a manly and at the same time encouraging tone, replied: There can be no objection, Socrates, if the young man is only willing to answer questions.

He is quite accustomed to do so, I replied; for his friends often come and ask him questions and argue with him; and therefore he is quite at home in answering.

What followed, Crito, how can I rightly narrate? For not slight is the task of rehearsing infinite wisdom, and therefore, like the poets, I ought to commence my relation with an invocation to Memory and the Muses. Now Euthydemus, if I remember rightly, began nearly as follows: O Cleinias, are those who learn the wise or the ignorant?

The youth, overpowered by the question blushed, and in his perplexity looked at me for help; and I, knowing that he was disconcerted, said: Take courage, Cleinias, and answer like a man whichever you think; for my belief is that you will derive the greatest benefit from their questions.

Whichever he answers, said Dionysodorus, leaning forward so as to catch my ear, his face beaming with laughter, I prophesy that he will be refuted, Socrates.

While he was speaking to me, Cleinias gave his answer: and therefore I had no time to warn him of the predicament in which he was placed, and he answered that those who learned were the wise.

Euthydemus proceeded: There are some whom you would call teachers, are there not?

The boy assented.

And they are the teachers of those who learn—the grammar-master and the lyre master used to teach you and other boys; and you were the learners?

Yes.

And when you were learners you did not as yet know the things which you were learning?

No, he said.

And were you wise then?

No, indeed, he said.
But if you were not wise you were unlearned?
Certainly.
You then, learning what you did not know, were unlearned when you were learning?
The youth nodded assent.
Then the unlearned learn, and not the wise, Cleinias, as you imagine.
At these words the followers of Euthydemus, of whom I spoke, like a chorus at the bidding of their director, laughed and cheered. Then, before the youth had time to recover his breath, Dionysodorus cleverly took him in hand, and said: Yes, Cleinias; and when the grammar master dictated anything to you, were they the wise boys or the unlearned who learned the dictation?
The wise, replied Cleinias.
Then after all the wise are the learners and not the unlearned; and your last answer to Euthydemus was wrong.
Then once more the admirers of the two heroes, in an ecstasy at their wisdom, gave vent to another peal of laughter, while the rest of us were silent and amazed. Euthydemus, observing this, determined to persevere with the youth; and in order to heighten the effect went on asking another similar question, which might be compared to the double turn of an expert dancer. Do those, said he, who learn, learn what they know, or what they do not know?
Again Dionysodorus whispered to me: That, Socrates, is just another of the same sort.
Good heavens, I said; and your last question was so good!
Like all our other questions, Socrates, he replied—inevitable.
I see the reason, I said, why you are in such reputation among your disciples.
Meanwhile Cleinias had answered Euthydemus that those who learned learn what they do not know; and he put him through a series of questions the same as before.
Do you not know letters?
He assented.
All letters?
Yes.
But when the teacher dictates to you, does he not dictate letters?
To this also he assented.
Then if you know all letters, he dictates that which you know?
This again was admitted by him.
Then, said the other, you do not learn that which he dictates; but he only who does not know letters learns?
Nay, said Cleinias; but I do learn.

Then, said he, you learn what you know, if you know all the letters?
He admitted that.
Then, he said, you were wrong in your answer.
The word was hardly out of his mouth when Dionysodorus took up the argument, like a ball which he caught, and had another throw at the youth.
Cleinias, he said, Euthydemus is deceiving you. For tell me now, is not learning acquiring knowledge of that which one learns?
Cleinias assented.
And knowing is having knowledge at the time?
He agreed.
And not knowing is not having knowledge at the time?
He admitted that.
And are those who acquire those who have or have not a thing?
Those who have not.
And have you not admitted that those who do not know are of the number of those who have not?
He nodded assent.
Then those who learn are of the class of those who acquire, and not of those who have?
He agreed.
Then, Cleinias, he said, those who do not know learn, and not those who know.
Euthydemus was proceeding to give the youth a third fall; but I knew that he was in deep water, and therefore, as I wanted to give him a respite lest he should be disheartened, I said to him consolingly: You must not be surprised, Cleinias, at the singularity of their mode of speech: this I say because you may not understand what the two strangers are doing with you; they are only initiating you after the manner of the Corybantes in the mysteries; and this answers to the enthronement, which, if you have ever been initiated, is, as you will know, accompanied by dancing and sport; and now they are just prancing and dancing about you, and will next proceed to initiate you; imagine then that you have gone through the first part of the sophistical ritual, which, as Prodicus says, begins with initiation into the correct use of terms. The two foreign gentlemen, perceiving that you did not know, wanted to explain to you that the word "to learn" has two meanings, and is used, first, in the sense of acquiring knowledge of some matter of which you previously have no knowledge, and also, when you have the knowledge, in the sense of reviewing this matter, whether something done or spoken by the light of this newly-acquired knowledge; the latter is generally called "knowing" rather than "learning," but the word "learning" is also used; and you did not see, as they explained to you, that the term is employed of two opposite sorts of men, of those who know, and of those who do not know. There was a similar trick in the second question, when

they asked you whether men learn what they know or what they do not know. These parts of learning are not serious, and therefore I say that the gentlemen are not serious, but are only playing with you. For if a man had all that sort of knowledge that ever was, he would not be at all the wiser; he would only be able to play with men, tripping them up and over setting them with distinctions of words. He would be like a person who pulls away a stool from some one when he is about to sit down, and then laughs and makes merry at the sight of his friend overturned and laid on his back. And you must regard all that has hitherto passed between you and them as merely play. But in what is to follow I am certain that they will exhibit to you their serious purpose, and keep their promise (I will show them how); for they promised to give me a sample of the hortatory philosophy, but I suppose that they wanted to have a game with you first. And now, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, I think that we have had enough of this. Will you let me see you explaining to the young man how he is to apply himself to the study of virtue and wisdom? And I will first show you what I conceive to be the nature of the task, and what sort of a discourse I desire to hear; and if I do this in a very inartistic and ridiculous manner, do not laugh at me, for I only venture to improvise before you because I am eager to hear your wisdom: and I must therefore ask you and your disciples to refrain from laughing. And now, O son of Axiochus, let me put a question to you: Do not all men desire happiness? And yet, perhaps, this is one of those ridiculous questions which I am afraid to ask, and which ought not to be asked by a sensible man: for what human being is there who does not desire happiness?

There is no one, said Cleinias, who does not.

Well, then, I said, since we all of us desire happiness, how can we be happy?—that is the next question. Shall we not be happy if we have many good things? And this, perhaps, is even a more simple question than the first, for there can be no doubt of the answer.

He assented.

And what things do we esteem good? No solemn sage is required to tell us this, which may be easily answered; for every one will say that wealth is a good.

Certainly, he said.

And are not health and beauty goods, and other personal gifts?

He agreed.

Can there be any doubt that good birth, and power, and honours in one's own land, are goods?

He assented.

And what other goods are there? I said. What do you say of temperance, justice, courage: do you not verily and indeed think, Cleinias, that we shall

be more right in ranking them as goods than in not ranking them as goods? For a dispute might possibly arise about this. What then do you say?
They are goods, said Cleinias.
Very well, I said; and where in the company shall we find a place for wisdom—among the goods or not?
Among the goods.
And now, I said, think whether we have left out any considerable goods.
I do not think that we have, said Cleinias.
Upon recollection, I said, indeed I am afraid that we have left out the greatest of them all.
What is that? he asked.
Fortune, Cleinias, I replied; which all, even the most foolish, admit to be the greatest of goods.
True, he said.
On second thoughts, I added, how narrowly, O son of Axiochus, have you and I escaped making a laughing-stock of ourselves to the strangers.
Why do you say so?
Why, because we have already spoken of good-fortune, and are but repeating ourselves.
What do you mean?
I mean that there is something ridiculous in again putting forward good-fortune, which has a place in the list already, and saying the same thing twice over.
He asked what was the meaning of this, and I replied: Surely wisdom is good-fortune; even a child may know that.
The simple-minded youth was amazed; and, observing his surprise, I said to him: Do you not know, Cleinias, that flute-players are most fortunate and successful in performing on the flute?
He assented.
And are not the scribes most fortunate in writing and reading letters?
Certainly.
Amid the dangers of the sea, again, are any more fortunate on the whole than wise pilots?
None, certainly.
And if you were engaged in war, in whose company would you rather take the risk—in company with a wise general, or with a foolish one?
With a wise one.
And if you were ill, whom would you rather have as a companion in a dangerous illness—a wise physician, or an ignorant one?
A wise one.
You think, I said, that to act with a wise man is more fortunate than to act with an ignorant one?
He assented.

Then wisdom always makes men fortunate: for by wisdom no man would ever err, and therefore he must act rightly and succeed, or his wisdom would be wisdom no longer.
We contrived at last, somehow or other, to agree in a general conclusion, that he who had wisdom had no need of fortune. I then recalled to his mind the previous state of the question. You remember, I said, our making the admission that we should be happy and fortunate if many good things were present with us?
He assented.
And should we be happy by reason of the presence of good things, if they profited us not, or if they profited us?
If they profited us, he said.
And would they profit us, if we only had them and did not use them? For example, if we had a great deal of food and did not eat, or a great deal of drink and did not drink, should we be profited?
Certainly not, he said.
Or would an artisan, who had all the implements necessary for his work, and did not use them, be any the better for the possession of them? For example, would a carpenter be any the better for having all his tools and plenty of wood, if he never worked?
Certainly not, he said.
And if a person had wealth and all the goods of which we were just now speaking, and did not use them, would he be happy because he possessed them?
No indeed, Socrates.
Then, I said, a man who would be happy must not only have the good things, but he must also use them; there is no advantage in merely having them?
True.
Well, Cleinias, but if you have the use as well as the possession of good things, is that sufficient to confer happiness?
Yes, in my opinion.
And may a person use them either rightly or wrongly?
He must use them rightly.
That is quite true, I said. And the wrong use of a thing is far worse than the non-use; for the one is an evil, and the other is neither a good nor an evil.
You admit that?
He assented.
Now in the working and use of wood, is not that which gives the right use simply the knowledge of the carpenter?
Nothing else, he said.
And surely, in the manufacture of vessels, knowledge is that which gives the right way of making them?

He agreed.
And in the use of the goods of which we spoke at first-wealth and health and beauty, is not knowledge that which directs us to the right use of them, and regulates our practice about them?
He assented.
Then in every possession and every use of a thing, knowledge is that which gives a man not only good-fortune but success?
He again assented.
And tell me, I said, O tell me, what do possessions profit a man, if he have neither good sense nor wisdom? Would a man be better off, having and doing many things without wisdom, or a few things with wisdom? Look at the matter thus: If he did fewer things would he not make fewer mistakes? if he made fewer mistakes would he not have fewer misfortunes? and if he had fewer misfortunes would he not be less miserable?
Certainly, he said.
And who would do least—a poor man or a rich man?
A poor man.
A weak man or a strong man?
A weak man.
A noble man or a mean man?
A mean man.
And a coward would do less than a courageous and temperate man?
Yes.
And an indolent man less than an active man?
He assented.
And a slow man less than a quick; and one who had dull perceptions of seeing and hearing less than one who had keen ones?
All this was mutually allowed by us.
Then, I said, Cleinias, the sum of the matter appears to be that the goods of which we spoke before are not to be regarded as goods in themselves, but the degree of good and evil in them depends on whether they are or are not under the guidance of ignorance, they are greater evils than their opposites, inasmuch as they are more able to minister to the evil principle which rules them; and when under the guidance of wisdom and prudence, they are greater goods: but in themselves they are nothing?
That, he replied, is obvious.
What then is the result of what has been said? Is not this the result—that other things are indifferent, and that wisdom is the only good, and ignorance the only evil?
He assented.
Let us consider a further point, I said: Seeing that all men desire happiness, and happiness, as has been shown, is gained by a use, and a right use, of the things of life, and the right use of them, and good fortune in the use of

them, is given by knowledge,-the inference is that everybody ought by all means to try and make himself as wise as he can?
Yes, he said.
And when a man thinks that he ought to obtain this treasure, far more than money, from a father or a guardian or a friend or a suitor, whether citizen or stranger—the eager desire and prayer to them that they would impart wisdom to you, is not at all dishonourable, Cleinias; nor is any one to be blamed for doing any honourable service or ministration to any man, whether a lover or not, if his aim is to get wisdom. Do you agree? I said.
Yes, he said, I quite agree, and think that you are right.
Yes, I said, Cleinias, if only wisdom can be taught, and does not come to man spontaneously; for this is a point which has still to be considered, and is not yet agreed upon by you and me—
But I think, Socrates, that wisdom can be taught, he said.
Best of men, I said, I am delighted to hear you say so; and I am also grateful to you for having saved me from a long and tiresome investigation as to whether wisdom can be taught or not. But now, as you think that wisdom can be taught, and that wisdom only can make a man happy and fortunate will you not acknowledge that all of us ought to love wisdom, and you individually will try to love her?
Certainly, Socrates, he said; I will do my best.
I was pleased at hearing this; and I turned to Dionysodorus and Euthydemus and said: That is an example, clumsy and tedious I admit, of the sort of exhortations which I would have you give; and I hope that one of you will set forth what I have been saying in a more artistic style: or at least take up the enquiry where I left off, and proceed to show the youth whether he should have all knowledge; or whether there is one sort of knowledge only which will make him good and happy, and what that is. For, as I was saying at first, the improvement of this young man in virtue and wisdom is a matter which we have very much at heart.
Thus I spoke, Crito, and was all attention to what was coming. I wanted to see how they would approach the question, and where they would start in their exhortation to the young man that he should practise wisdom and virtue. Dionysodorus, who was the elder, spoke first. Everybody's eyes were directed towards him, perceiving that something wonderful might shortly be expected. And certainly they were not far wrong; for the man, Crito, began a remarkable discourse well worth hearing, and wonderfully persuasive regarded as an exhortation to virtue.
Tell me, he said, Socrates and the rest of you who say that you want this young man to become wise, are you in jest or in real earnest?
I was led by this to imagine that they fancied us to have been jesting when we asked them to converse with the youth, and that this made them jest

and play, and being under this impression, I was the more decided in saying that we were in profound earnest. Dionysodorus said:
Reflect, Socrates; you may have to deny your words.
I have reflected, I said; and I shall never deny my words.
Well, said he, and so you say that you wish Cleinias to become wise?
Undoubtedly.
And he is not wise as yet?
At least his modesty will not allow him to say that he is.
You wish him, he said, to become wise and not, to be ignorant?
That we do.
You wish him to be what he is not, and no longer to be what he is?
I was thrown into consternation at this.
Taking advantage of my consternation he added: You wish him no longer to be what he is, which can only mean that you wish him to perish. Pretty lovers and friends they must be who want their favourite not to be, or to perish!
When Ctesippus heard this he got very angry (as a lover well might) and said: Stranger of Thurii—if politeness would allow me I should say, A plague upon you! What can make you tell such a lie about me and the others, which I hardly like to repeat, as that I wish Cleinias to perish?
Euthydemus replied: And do you think, Ctesippus, that it is possible to tell a lie?
Yes, said Ctesippus; I should be mad to say anything else.
And in telling a lie, do you tell the thing of which you speak or not?
You tell the thing of which you speak.
And he who tells, tells that thing which he tells, and no other?
Yes, said Ctesippus.
And that is a distinct thing apart from other things?
Certainly.
And he who says that thing says that which is?
Yes.
And he who says that which is, says the truth. And therefore Dionysodorus, if he says that which is, says the truth of you and no lie.
Yes, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus; but in saying this, he says what is not.
Euthydemus answered: And that which is not is not?
True.
And that which is not is nowhere?
Nowhere.
And can any one do anything about that which has no existence, or do to Cleinias that which is not and is nowhere?
I think not, said Ctesippus.
Well, but do rhetoricians, when they speak in the assembly, do nothing?
Nay, he said, they do something.

And doing is making?
Yes.
And speaking is doing and making?
He agreed.
Then no one says that which is not, for in saying what is not he would be doing something; and you have already acknowledged that no one can do what is not. And therefore, upon your own showing, no one says what is false; but if Dionysodorus says anything, he says what is true and what is.
Yes, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus; but he speaks of things in a certain way and manner, and not as they really are.
Why, Ctesippus, said Dionysodorus, do you mean to say that any one speaks of things as they are?
Yes, he said—all gentlemen and truth-speaking persons.
And are not good things good, and evil things evil?
He assented.
And you say that gentlemen speak of things as they are?
Yes.
Then the good speak evil of evil things, if they speak of them as they are?
Yes, indeed, he said; and they speak evil of evil men. And if I may give you a piece of advice, you had better take care that they do not speak evil of you, since I can tell you that the good speak evil of the evil.
And do they speak great things of the great, rejoined Euthydemus, and warm things of the warm?
To be sure they do, said Ctesippus; and they speak coldly of the insipid and cold dialectician.
You are abusive, Ctesippus, said Dionysodorus, you are abusive!
Indeed, I am not, Dionysodorus, he replied; for I love you and am giving you friendly advice, and, if I could, would persuade you not like a boor to say in my presence that I desire my beloved, whom I value above all men, to perish.
I saw that they were getting exasperated with one another, so I made a joke with him and said: O Ctesippus, I think that we must allow the strangers to use language in their own way, and not quarrel with them about words, but be thankful for what they give us. If they know how to destroy men in such a way as to make good and sensible men out of bad and foolish ones—whether this is a discovery of their own, or whether they have learned from some one else this new sort of death and destruction which enables them to get rid of a bad man and turn him into a good one—if they know this (and they do know this—at any rate they said just now that this was the secret of their newly-discovered art)—let them, in their phraseology, destroy the youth and make him wise, and all of us with him. But if you young men do not like to trust yourselves with them, then *fiat experimentum in corpore senis*; I will be the Carian on whom they shall

operate. And here I offer my old person to Dionysodorus; he may put me into the pot, like Medea the Colchian, kill me, boil me, if he will only make me good.
Ctesippus said: And I, Socrates, am ready to commit myself to the strangers; they may skin me alive, if they please (and I am pretty well skinned by them already), if only my skin is made at last, not like that of Marsyas, into a leathern bottle, but into a piece of virtue. And here is Dionysodorus fancying that I am angry with him, when really I am not angry at all; I do but contradict him when I think that he is speaking improperly to me: and you must not confound abuse and contradiction, O illustrious Dionysodorus; for they are quite different things.
Contradiction! said Dionysodorus; why, there never was such a thing.
Certainly there is, he replied; there can be no question of that. Do you, Dionysodorus, maintain that there is not?
You will never prove to me, he said, that you have heard any one contradicting any one else.
Indeed, said Ctesippus; then now you may hear me contradicting Dionysodorus.
Are you prepared to make that good?
Certainly, he said.
Well, have not all things words expressive of them?
Yes.
Of their existence or of their non-existence?
Of their existence.
Yes, Ctesippus, and we just now proved, as you may remember, that no man could affirm a negative; for no one could affirm that which is not.
And what does that signify? said Ctesippus; you and I may contradict all the same for that.
But can we contradict one another, said Dionysodorus, when both of us are describing the same thing? Then we must surely be speaking the same thing?
He assented.
Or when neither of us is speaking of the same thing? For then neither of us says a word about the thing at all?
He granted that proposition also.
But when I describe something and you describe another thing, or I say something and you say nothing—is there any contradiction? How can he who speaks contradict him who speaks not?
Here Ctesippus was silent; and I in my astonishment said: What do you mean, Dionysodorus? I have often heard, and have been amazed to hear, this thesis of yours, which is maintained and employed by the disciples of Protagoras, and others before them, and which to me appears to be quite wonderful, and suicidal as well as destructive, and I think that I am most

likely to hear the truth about it from you. The dictum is that there is no such thing as falsehood; a man must either say what is true or say nothing. Is not that your position?
He assented.
But if he cannot speak falsely, may he not think falsely?
No, he cannot, he said.
Then there is no such thing as false opinion?
No, he said.
Then there is no such thing as ignorance, or men who are ignorant; for is not ignorance, if there be such a thing, a mistake of fact?
Certainly, he said.
And that is impossible?
Impossible, he replied.
Are you saying this as a paradox, Dionysodorus; or do you seriously maintain no man to be ignorant?
Refute me, he said.
But how can I refute you, if, as you say, to tell a falsehood is impossible?
Very true, said Euthydemus.
Neither did I tell you just now to refute me, said Dionysodorus; for how can I tell you to do that which is not?
O Euthydemus, I said, I have but a dull conception of these subtleties and excellent devices of wisdom; I am afraid that I hardly understand them, and you must forgive me therefore if I ask a very stupid question: if there be no falsehood or false opinion or ignorance, there can be no such thing as erroneous action, for a man cannot fail of acting as he is acting—that is what you mean?
Yes, he replied.
And now, I said, I will ask my stupid question: If there is no such thing as error in deed, word, or thought, then what, in the name of goodness, do you come hither to teach? And were you not just now saying that you could teach virtue best of all men, to any one who was willing to learn?
And are you such an old fool, Socrates, rejoined Dionysodorus, that you bring up now what I said at first—and if I had said anything last year, I suppose that you would bring that up too—but are non-plussed at the words which I have just uttered?
Why, I said, they are not easy to answer; for they are the words of wise men: and indeed I know not what to make of this word "nonplussed," which you used last: what do you mean by it, Dionysodorus? You must mean that I cannot refute your argument. Tell me if the words have any other sense.
No, he replied, they mean what you say. And now answer.
What, before you, Dionysodorus? I said.
Answer, said he.
And is that fair?

Yes, quite fair, he said.
Upon what principle? I said. I can only suppose that you are a very wise man who comes to us in the character of a great logician, and who knows when to answer and when not to answer—and now you will not open your mouth at all, because you know that you ought not.
You prate, he said, instead of answering. But if, my good sir, you admit that I am wise, answer as I tell you.
I suppose that I must obey, for you are master. Put the question.
Are the things which have sense alive or lifeless?
They are alive.
And do you know of any word which is alive?
I cannot say that I do.
Then why did you ask me what sense my words had?
Why, because I was stupid and made a mistake. And yet, perhaps, I was right after all in saying that words have a sense;—what do you say, wise man? If I was not in error, even you will not refute me, and all your wisdom will be non-plussed; but if I did fall into error, then again you are wrong in saying that there is no error,—and this remark was made by you not quite a year ago. I am inclined to think, however, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, that this argument lies where it was and is not very likely to advance: even your skill in the subtleties of logic, which is really amazing, has not found out the way of throwing another and not falling yourself, now any more than of old.
Ctesippus said: Men of Chios, Thurii, or however and whatever you call yourselves, I wonder at you, for you seem to have no objection to talking nonsense.
Fearing that there would be high words, I again endeavoured to soothe Ctesippus, and said to him: To you, Ctesippus, I must repeat what I said before to Cleinias—that you do not understand the ways of these philosophers from abroad. They are not serious, but, like the Egyptian wizard, Proteus, they take different forms and deceive us by their enchantments: and let us, like Menelaus, refuse to let them go until they show themselves to us in earnest. When they begin to be in earnest their full beauty will appear: let us then beg and entreat and beseech them to shine forth. And I think that I had better once more exhibit the form in which I pray to behold them; it might be a guide to them. I will go on therefore where I left off, as well as I can, in the hope that I may touch their hearts and move them to pity, and that when they see me deeply serious and interested, they also may be serious. You, Cleinias, I said, shall remind me at what point we left off. Did we not agree that philosophy should be studied? and was not that our conclusion?
Yes, he replied.
And philosophy is the acquisition of knowledge?

Yes, he said.
And what knowledge ought we to acquire? May we not answer with absolute truth—A knowledge which will do us good?
Certainly, he said.
And should we be any the better if we went about having a knowledge of the places where most gold was hidden in the earth?
Perhaps we should, he said.
But have we not already proved, I said, that we should be none the better off, even if without trouble and digging all the gold which there is in the earth were ours? And if we knew how to convert stones into gold, the knowledge would be of no value to us, unless we also knew how to use the gold? Do you not remember? I said.
I quite remember, he said.
Nor would any other knowledge, whether of money-making, or of medicine, or of any other art which knows only how to make a thing, and not to use it when made, be of any good to us. Am I not right?
He agreed.
And if there were a knowledge which was able to make men immortal, without giving them the knowledge of the way to use the immortality, neither would there be any use in that, if we may argue from the analogy of the previous instances?
To all this he agreed.
Then, my dear boy, I said, the knowledge which we want is one that uses as well as makes?
True, he said.
And our desire is not to be skilful lyre-makers, or artists of that sort—far otherwise; for with them the art which makes is one, and the art which uses is another. Although they have to do with the same, they are divided: for the art which makes and the art which plays on the lyre differ widely from one another. Am I not right?
He agreed.
And clearly we do not want the art of the flute-maker; this is only another of the same sort?
He assented.
But suppose, I said, that we were to learn the art of making speeches—would that be the art which would make us happy?
I should say no, rejoined Cleinias.
And why should you say so? I asked.
I see, he replied, that there are some composers of speeches who do not know how to use the speeches which they make, just as the makers of lyres do not know how to use the lyres; and also some who are of themselves unable to compose speeches, but are able to use the speeches

which the others make for them; and this proves that the art of making speeches is not the same as the art of using them.
Yes, I said; and I take your words to be a sufficient proof that the art of making speeches is not one which will make a man happy. And yet I did think that the art which we have so long been seeking might be discovered in that direction; for the composers of speeches, whenever I meet them, always appear to me to be very extraordinary men, Cleinias, and their art is lofty and divine, and no wonder. For their art is a part of the great art of enchantment, and hardly, if at all, inferior to it: and whereas the art of the enchanter is a mode of charming snakes and spiders and scorpions, and other monsters and pests, this art of theirs acts upon dicasts and ecclesiasts and bodies of men, for the charming and pacifying of them. Do you agree with me?
Yes, he said, I think that you are quite right.
Whither then shall we go, I said, and to what art shall we have recourse?
I do not see my way, he said.
But I think that I do, I replied.
And what is your notion? asked Cleinias.
I think that the art of the general is above all others the one of which the possession is most likely to make a man happy.
I do not think so, he said.
Why not? I said.
The art of the general is surely an art of hunting mankind.
What of that? I said.
Why, he said, no art of hunting extends beyond hunting and capturing; and when the prey is taken the huntsman or fisherman cannot use it; but they hand it over to the cook, and the geometricians and astronomers and calculators (who all belong to the hunting class, for they do not make their diagrams, but only find out that which was previously contained in them)—they, I say, not being able to use but only to catch their prey, hand over their inventions to the dialectician to be applied by him, if they have any sense in them.
Good, I said, fairest and wisest Cleinias. And is this true?
Certainly, he said; just as a general when he takes a city or a camp hands over his new acquisition to the statesman, for he does not know how to use them himself; or as the quail-taker transfers the quails to the keeper of them. If we are looking for the art which is to make us blessed, and which is able to use that which it makes or takes, the art of the general is not the one, and some other must be found.
Cri. And do you mean, Socrates, that the youngster said all this?
Soc. Are you incredulous, Crito?
Cri. Indeed, I am; for if he did say so, then in my opinion he needs neither Euthydemus nor any one else to be his instructor.

Soc. Perhaps I may have forgotten and Ctesippus was the real answerer.
Cri. Ctesippus! nonsense.
Soc. All I know is that I heard these words, and that they were not spoken either by Euthydemus or Dionysodorus. I dare say, my good Crito, that they may have been spoken by some superior person: that I heard them I am certain.
Cri. Yes, indeed, Socrates, by some one a good deal superior, as I should be disposed to think. But did you carry the search any further, and did you find the art which you were seeking?
Soc. Find! my dear sir, no indeed. And we cut a poor figure; we were like children after larks, always on the point of catching the art, which was always getting away from us. But why should I repeat the whole story? At last we came to the kingly art, and enquired whether that gave and caused happiness, and then we got into a labyrinth, and when we thought we were at the end, came out again at the beginning, having still to seek as much as ever.
Cri. How did that happen, Socrates?
Soc. I will tell you; the kingly art was identified by us with the political.
Cri. Well, and what came of that?
Soc. To this royal or political art all the arts, including the art of the general, seemed to render up the supremacy, that being the only one which knew how to use what they produce. Here obviously was the very art which we were seeking—the art which is the source of good government, and which may be described, in the language of Aeschylus, as alone sitting at the helm of the vessel of state, piloting and governing all things, and utilizing them.
Cri. And were you not right, Socrates?
Soc. You shall judge, Crito, if you are willing to hear what followed; for we resumed the enquiry, and a question of this sort was asked: Does the kingly art, having this supreme authority, do anything for us? To be sure, was the answer. And would not you, Crito, say the same?
Cri. Yes, I should.
Soc. And what would you say that the kingly art does? If medicine were supposed to have supreme authority over the subordinate arts, and I were to ask you a similar question about that, you would say—it produces health?
Cri. I should.
Soc. And what of your own art of husbandry, supposing that to have supreme authority over the subject arts—what does that do? Does it not supply us with the fruits of the earth?
Cri. Yes.
Soc. And what does the kingly art do when invested with supreme power? Perhaps you may not be ready with an answer?
Cri. Indeed I am not, Socrates.

Soc. No more were we, Crito. But at any rate you know that if this is the art which we were seeking, it ought to be useful.
Cri. Certainly.
Soc. And surely it ought to do us some good?
Cri. Certainly, Socrates.
Soc. And Cleinias and I had arrived at the conclusion that knowledge of some kind is the only good.
Cri. Yes, that was what you were saying.
Soc. All the other results of politics, and they are many, as for example, wealth, freedom, tranquillity, were neither good nor evil in themselves; but the political science ought to make us wise, and impart knowledge to us, if that is the science which is likely to do us good, and make us happy.
Cri. Yes; that was the conclusion at which you had arrived, according to your report of the conversation.
Soc. And does the kingly art make men wise and good?
Cri. Why not, Socrates?
Soc. What, all men, and in every respect? and teach them all the arts,—carpentering, and cobbling, and the rest of them?
Cri. I think not, Socrates.
Soc. But then what is this knowledge, and what are we to do with it? For it is not the source of any works which are neither good nor evil, and gives no knowledge, but the knowledge of itself; what then can it be, and what are we to do with it? Shall we say, Crito, that it is the knowledge by which we are to make other men good?
Cri. By all means.
Soc. And in what will they be good and useful? Shall we repeat that they will make others good, and that these others will make others again, without ever determining in what they are to be good; for we have put aside the results of politics, as they are called. This is the old, old song over again; and we are just as far as ever, if not farther, from the knowledge of the art or science of happiness.
Cri. Indeed, Socrates, you do appear to have got into a great perplexity.
Soc. Thereupon, Crito, seeing that I was on the point of shipwreck, I lifted up my voice, and earnestly entreated and called upon the strangers to save me and the youth from the whirlpool of the argument; they were our Castor and Pollux, I said, and they should be serious, and show us in sober earnest what that knowledge was which would enable us to pass the rest of our lives in happiness.
Cri. And did Euthydemus show you this knowledge?
Soc. Yes, indeed; he proceeded in a lofty strain to the following effect: Would you rather, Socrates, said he, that I should show you this knowledge about which you have been doubting, or shall I prove that you already have it?

What, I said, are you blessed with such a power as this?
Indeed I am.
Then I would much rather that you should prove me to have such a knowledge; at my time of life that will be more agreeable than having to learn.
Then tell me, he said, do you know anything?
Yes, I said, I know many things, but not anything of much importance.
That will do, he said: And would you admit that anything is what it is, and at the same time is not what it is?
Certainly not.
And did you not say that you knew something?
I did.
If you know, you are knowing.
Certainly, of the knowledge which I have.
That makes no difference;—and must you not, if you are knowing, know all things?
Certainly not, I said, for there are many other things which I do not know.
And if you do not know, you are not knowing.
Yes, friend, of that which I do not know.
Still you are not knowing, and you said just now that you were knowing; and therefore you are and are not at the same time, and in reference to the same things.
A pretty clatter, as men say, Euthydemus, this of yours! and will you explain how I possess that knowledge for which we were seeking? Do you mean to say that the same thing cannot be and also not be; and therefore, since I know one thing, that I know all, for I cannot be knowing and not knowing at the same time, and if I know all things, then I must have the knowledge for which we are seeking—May I assume this to be your ingenious notion?
Out of your own mouth, Socrates, you are convicted, he said.
Well, but, Euthydemus, I said, has that never happened to you? for if I am only in the same case with you and our beloved Dionysodorus, I cannot complain. Tell me, then, you two, do you not know some things, and not know others?
Certainly not, Socrates, said Dionysodorus.
What do you mean, I said; do you know nothing?
Nay, he replied, we do know something.
Then, I said, you know all things, if you know anything?
Yes, all things, he said; and that is as true of you as of us.
O, indeed, I said, what a wonderful thing, and what a great blessing! And do all other men know all things or nothing?
Certainly, he replied; they cannot know some things, and not know others, and be at the same time knowing and not knowing.
Then what is the inference? I said.

They all know all things, he replied, if they know one thing.
O heavens, Dionysodorus, I said, I see now that you are in earnest; hardly have I got you to that point. And do you really and truly know all things, including carpentering and leather cutting?
Certainly, he said.
And do you know stitching?
Yes, by the gods, we do, and cobbling, too.
And do you know things such as the numbers of the stars and of the sand?
Certainly; did you think we should say no to that?
By Zeus, said Ctesippus, interrupting, I only wish that you would give me some proof which would enable me to know whether you speak truly.
What proof shall I give you? he said.
Will you tell me how many teeth Euthydemus has? and Euthydemus shall tell how many teeth you have.
Will you not take our word that we know all things?
Certainly not, said Ctesippus: you must further tell us this one thing, and then we shall know that you are speak the truth; if you tell us the number, and we count them, and you are found to be right, we will believe the rest.
They fancied that Ctesippus was making game of them, and they refused, and they would only say in answer to each of his questions, that they knew all things. For at last Ctesippus began to throw off all restraint; no question in fact was too bad for him; he would ask them if they knew the foulest things, and they, like wild boars, came rushing on his blows, and fearlessly replied that they did. At last, Crito, I too was carried away by my incredulity, and asked Euthydemus whether Dionysodorus could dance.
Certainly, he replied.
And can he vault among swords, and turn upon a wheel, at his age? has he got to such a height of skill as that?
He can do anything, he said.
And did you always know this?
Always, he said.
When you were children, and at your birth?
They both said that they did.
This we could not believe. And Euthydemus said: You are incredulous, Socrates.
Yes, I said, and I might well be incredulous, if I did not know you to be wise men.
But if you will answer, he said, I will make you confess to similar marvels.
Well, I said, there is nothing that I should like better than to be self-convicted of this, for if I am really a wise man, which I never knew before, and you will prove to me that I know and have always known all things, nothing in life would be a greater gain to me.
Answer then, he said.

Ask, I said, and I will answer.
Do you know something, Socrates, or nothing?
Something, I said.
And do you know with what you know, or with something else?
With what I know; and I suppose that you mean with my soul?
Are you not ashamed, Socrates, of asking a question when you are asked one?
Well, I said; but then what am I to do? for I will do whatever you bid; when I do not know what you are asking, you tell me to answer nevertheless, and not to ask again.
Why, you surely have some notion of my meaning, he said.
Yes, I replied.
Well, then, answer according to your notion of my meaning.
Yes, I said; but if the question which you ask in one sense is understood and answered by me in another, will that please you—if I answer what is not to the point?
That will please me very well; but will not please you equally well, as I imagine.
I certainly will not answer unless I understand you, I said.
You will not answer, he said, according to your view of the meaning, because you will be prating, and are an ancient.
Now I saw that he was getting angry with me for drawing distinctions, when he wanted to catch me in his springes of words. And I remembered that Connus was always angry with me when I opposed him, and then he neglected me, because he thought that I was stupid; and as I was intending to go to Euthydemus as a pupil, I reflected that I had better let him have his way, as he might think me a blockhead, and refuse to take me. So I said: You are a far better dialectician than myself, Euthydemus, for I have never made a profession of the art, and therefore do as you say; ask your questions once more, and I will answer.
Answer then, he said, again, whether you know what you know with something, or with nothing.
Yes, I said; I know with my soul.
The man will answer more than the question; for I did not ask you, he said, with what you know, but whether you know with something.
Again I replied, Through ignorance I have answered too much, but I hope that you will forgive me. And now I will answer simply that I always know what I know with something.
And is that something, he rejoined, always the same, or sometimes one thing, and sometimes another thing?
Always, I replied, when I know, I know with this.
Will you not cease adding to your answers?
My fear is that this word "always" may get us into trouble.

You, perhaps, but certainly not us. And now answer: Do you always know with this?
Always; since I am required to withdraw the words "when I know."
You always know with this, or, always knowing, do you know some things with this, and some things with something else, or do you know all things with this?
All that I know, I replied, I know with this.
There again, Socrates, he said, the addition is superfluous.
Well, then, I said, I will take away the words "that I know."
Nay, take nothing away; I desire no favours of you; but let me ask: Would you be able to know all things, if you did not know all things?
Quite impossible.
And now, he said, you may add on whatever you like, for you confess that you know all things.
I suppose that is true, I said, if my qualification implied in the words "that I know" is not allowed to stand; and so I do know all things.
And have you not admitted that you always know all things with that which you know, whether you make the addition of "when you know them" or not? for you have acknowledged that you have always and at once known all things, that is to say, when you were a child, and at your birth, and when you were growing up, and before you were born, and before the heaven and earth existed, you knew all things if you always know them; and I swear that you shall always continue to know all things, if I am of the mind to make you.
But I hope that you will be of that mind, reverend Euthydemus, I said, if you are really speaking the truth, and yet I a little doubt your power to make good your words unless you have the help of your brother Dionysodorus; then you may do it. Tell me now, both of you, for although in the main I cannot doubt that I really do know all things, when I am told so by men of your prodigious wisdom—how can I say that I know such things, Euthydemus, as that the good are unjust; come, do I know that or not?
Certainly, you know that.
What do I know?
That the good are not unjust.
Quite true, I said; and that I have always known; but the question is, where did I learn that the good are unjust?
Nowhere, said Dionysodorus.
Then, I said, I do not know this.
You are ruining the argument, said Euthydemus to Dionysodorus; he will be proved not to know, and then after all he will be knowing and not knowing at the same time.
Dionysodorus blushed.

I turned to the other, and said, What do you think, Euthydemus? Does not your omniscient brother appear to you to have made a mistake?
What, replied Dionysodorus in a moment; am I the brother of Euthydemus?
Thereupon I said, Please not to interrupt, my good friend, or prevent Euthydemus from proving to me that I know the good to be unjust; such a lesson you might at least allow me to learn.
You are running away, Socrates, said Dionysodorus, and refusing to answer.
No wonder, I said, for I am not a match for one of you, and a *fortiori* I must run away from two. I am no Heracles; and even Heracles could not fight against the Hydra, who was a she-Sophist, and had the wit to shoot up many new heads when one of them was cut off; especially when he saw a second monster of a sea-crab, who was also a Sophist, and appeared to have newly arrived from a sea-voyage, bearing down upon him from the left, opening his mouth and biting. When the monster was growing troublesome he called Iolaus, his nephew, to his help, who ably succoured him; but if my Iolaus, who is my brother Patrocles [the statuary], were to come, he would only make a bad business worse.
And now that you have delivered yourself of this strain, said Dionysodorus, will you inform me whether Iolaus was the nephew of Heracles any more than he is yours?
I suppose that I had best answer you, Dionysodorus, I said, for you will insist on asking—that I pretty well know—out of envy, in order to prevent me from learning the wisdom of Euthydemus.
Then answer me, he said.
Well then, I said, I can only reply that Iolaus was not my nephew at all, but the nephew of Heracles; and his father was not my brother Patrocles, but Iphicles, who has a name rather like his, and was the brother of Heracles.
And is Patrocles, he said, your brother?
Yes, I said, he is my half-brother, the son of my mother, but not of my father.
Then he is and is not your brother.
Not by the same father, my good man, I said, for Chaeredemus was his father, and mine was Sophroniscus.
And was Sophroniscus a father, and Chaeredemus also?
Yes, I said; the former was my father, and the latter his.
Then, he said, Chaeredemus is not a father.
He is not my father, I said.
But can a father be other than a father? or are you the same as a stone?
I certainly do not think that I am a stone, I said, though I am afraid that you may prove me to be one.
Are you not other than a stone?
I am.

And being other than a stone, you are not a stone; and being other than gold, you are not gold?
Very true.
And so Chaeredemus, he said, being other than a father, is not a father?
I suppose that he is not a father, I replied.
For if, said Euthydemus, taking up the argument, Chaeredemus is a father, then Sophroniscus, being other than a father, is not a father; and you, Socrates, are without a father.
Ctesippus, here taking up the argument, said: And is not your father in the same case, for he is other than my father?
Assuredly not, said Euthydemus.
Then he is the same?
He is the same.
I cannot say that I like the connection; but is he only my father, Euthydemus, or is he the father of all other men?
Of all other men, he replied. Do you suppose the same person to be a father and not a father?
Certainly, I did so imagine, said Ctesippus.
And do you suppose that gold is not gold, or that a man is not a man?
They are not *"in pari materia,"* Euthydemus, said Ctesippus, and you had better take care, for it is monstrous to suppose that your father is the father of all.
But he is, he replied.
What, of men only, said Ctesippus, or of horses and of all other animals?
Of all, he said.
And your mother, too, is the mother of all?
Yes, our mother too.
Yes; and your mother has a progeny of sea-urchins then?
Yes; and yours, he said.
And gudgeons and puppies and pigs are your brothers?
And yours too.
And your papa is a dog?
And so is yours, he said.
If you will answer my questions, said Dionysodorus, I will soon extract the same admissions from you, Ctesippus. You say that you have a dog.
Yes, a villain of a one, said Ctesippus.
And he has puppies?
Yes, and they are very like himself.
And the dog is the father of them?
Yes, he said, I certainly saw him and the mother of the puppies come together.
And is he not yours?
To be sure he is.

Then he is a father, and he is yours; ergo, he is your father, and the puppies are your brothers.
Let me ask you one little question more, said Dionysodorus, quickly interposing, in order that Ctesippus might not get in his word: You beat this dog?
Ctesippus said, laughing, Indeed I do; and I only wish that I could beat you instead of him.
Then you beat your father, he said.
I should have far more reason to beat yours, said Ctesippus; what could he have been thinking of when he begat such wise sons? much good has this father of you and your brethren the puppies got out of this wisdom of yours.
But neither he nor you, Ctesippus, have any need of much good.
And have you no need, Euthydemus? he said.
Neither I nor any other man; for tell me now, Ctesippus, if you think it good or evil for a man who is sick to drink medicine when he wants it; or to go to war armed rather than unarmed.
Good, I say. And yet I know that I am going to be caught in one of your charming puzzles.
That, he replied, you will discover, if you answer; since you admit medicine to be good for a man to drink, when wanted, must it not be good for him to drink as much as possible; when he takes his medicine, a cartload of hellebore will not be too much for him?
Ctesippus said: Quite so, Euthydemus, that is to say, if he who drinks is as big as the statue of Delphi.
And seeing that in war to have arms is a good thing, he ought to have as many spears and shields as possible?
Very true, said Ctesippus; and do you think, Euthydemus, that he ought to have one shield only, and one spear?
I do.
And would you arm Geryon and Briarcus in that way? Considering that you and your companion fight in armour, I thought that you would have known better.... Here Euthydemus held his peace, but Dionysodorus returned to the previous answer of Ctesippus and said:—
Do you not think that the possession of gold is a good thing?
Yes, said Ctesippus, and the more the better.
And to have money everywhere and always is a good?
Certain a great good, he said.
And you admit gold to be a good?
Certainly, he replied.
And ought not a man then to have gold everywhere and always, and as much as possible in himself, and may he not be deemed the happiest of

men who has three talents of gold in his belly, and a talent in his pate, and a stater of gold in either eye?
Yes, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus; and the Scythians reckon those who have gold in their own skulls to be the happiest and bravest of men (that is only another instance of your manner of speaking about the dog and father), and what is still more extraordinary, they drink out of their own skulls gilt and see the inside of them, and hold their own head in their hands.
And do the Scythians and others see that which has the quality of vision, or that which has not? said Euthydemus.
That which has the quality of vision clearly.
And[1] you also see that which has the quality Of vision? he said.
Yes, I do.
Then do you see our garments?
Yes.
Then our garments have the quality of vision.
They can see to any extent, said Ctesippus.
What can they see?
Nothing; but you, my sweet man, may perhaps imagine that they do not see; and certainly, Euthydemus, you do seem to me to have been caught napping when you were not asleep, and that if it be possible to speak and say nothing—you are doing so.
And may there not be a silence of the speaker? said Dionysodorus.
Impossible, said Ctesippus.
Or a speaking of the silent?
That is still more impossible, he said.
But when you speak of stones, wood, iron bars, do you not speak of the silent?
Not when I pass a smithy; for then the iron bars make a tremendous noise and outcry if they are touched: so that here your wisdom is strangely mistaken, please, however, to tell me how you can be silent when speaking (I thought that Ctesippus was put upon his mettle because Cleinias was present).
When you are silent, said Euthydemus, is there not a silence of all things?
Yes, he said.
But if speaking things are included in all things, then the speaking are silent.
What, said Ctesippus; then all things are not silent?
Certainly not, said Euthydemus.
Then, my good friend, do they all speak?

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[1] Note: the ambiguity of *δυνατά ὁρᾶν,* “things visible and able to see,” *σιγῶντα λέγειω,* “the speaking of the silent,” the silent denoting either the speaker or the subject of the speech, cannot be perfectly rendered in English. compare Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations,* iv. 166[a] 12-14.

Yes; those which speak.
Nay, said Ctesippus, but the question which I ask is whether all things are silent or speak?
Neither and both, said Dionysodorus, quickly interposing; I am sure that you will be "nonplussed" at that answer.
Here Ctesippus, as his manner was, burst into a roar of laughter; he said, That brother of yours, Euthydemus, has got into a dilemma; all is over with him. This delighted Cleinias, whose laughter made Ctesippus ten times as uproarious; but I cannot help thinking that the rogue must have picked up this answer from them; for there has been no wisdom like theirs in our time. Why do you laugh, Cleinias, I said, at such solemn and beautiful things?
Why, Socrates, said Dionysodorus, did you ever see a beautiful thing?
Yes, Dionysodorus, I replied, I have seen many.
Were they other than the beautiful, or the same as the beautiful?
Now I was in a great quandary at having to answer this question, and I thought that I was rightly served for having opened my mouth at all: I said however, They are not the same as absolute beauty, but they have beauty present with each of them.
And are you an ox because an ox is present with you, or are you Dionysodorus, because Dionysodorus is present with you?
God forbid, I replied.
But how, he said, by reason of one thing being present with another, will one thing be another?
Is that your difficulty? I said. For I was beginning to imitate their skill, on which my heart was set.
Of course, he replied, I and all the world are in a difficulty about the non-existent.
What do you mean, Dionysodorus? I said. Is not the honourable honourable and the base base?
That, he said, is as I please.
And do you please?
Yes, he said.
And you will admit that the same is the same, and the other other; for surely the other is not the same; I should imagine that even a child will hardly deny the other to be other. But I think, Dionysodorus, that you must have intentionally missed the last question; for in general you and your brother seem to me to be good workmen in your own department, and to do the dialectician's business excellently well.
What, said he, is the business of a good workman? tell me, in the first place, whose business is hammering?
The smith's.
And whose the making of pots?

The potter's.
And who has to kill and skin and mince and boil and roast?
The cook, I said.
And if a man does his business he does rightly?
Certainly.
And the business of the cook is to cut up and skin; you have admitted that?
Yes, I have admitted that, but you must not be too hard upon me.
Then if some one were to kill, mince, boil, roast the cook, he would do his business, and if he were to hammer the smith, and make a pot of the potter, he would do their business.
Poseidon, I said, this is the crown of wisdom; can I ever hope to have such wisdom of my own?
And would you be able, Socrates, to recognize this wisdom when it has become your own?
Certainly, I said, if you will allow me.
What, he said, do you think that you know what is your own?
Yes, I do, subject to your correction; for you are the bottom, and Euthydemus is the top, of all my wisdom.
Is not that which you would deem your own, he said, that which you have in your own power, and which you are able to use as you would desire, for example, an ox or a sheep—would you not think that which you could sell and give and sacrifice to any god whom you pleased, to be your own, and that which you could not give or sell or sacrifice you would think not to be in your own power?
Yes, I said (for I was certain that something good would come out of the questions, which I was impatient to hear); yes, such things, and such things only are mine.
Yes, he said, and you would mean by animals living beings?
Yes, I said.
You agree then, that those animals only are yours with which you have the power to do all these things which I was just naming?
I agree.
Then, after a pause, in which he seemed to be lost in the contemplation of something great, he said: Tell me, Socrates, have you an ancestral Zeus?
Here, anticipating the final move, like a person caught in a net, who gives a desperate twist that he may get away, I said: No, Dionysodorus, I have not.
What a miserable man you must be then, he said; you are not an Athenian at all if you have no ancestral gods or temples, or any other mark of gentility.
Nay, Dionysodorus, I said, do not be rough; good words, if you please; in the way of religion I have altars and temples, domestic and ancestral, and all that other Athenians have.
And have not other Athenians, he said, an ancestral Zeus?

That name, I said, is not to be found among the Ionians, whether colonists or citizens of Athens; an ancestral Apollo there is, who is the father of Ion, and a family Zeus, and a Zeus guardian of the phratry, and an Athene guardian of the phratry. But the name of ancestral Zeus is unknown to us.
No matter, said Dionysodorus, for you admit that you have Apollo, Zeus, and Athene.
Certainly, I said.
And they are your gods, he said.
Yes, I said, my lords and ancestors.
At any rate they are yours, he said, did you not admit that?
I did, I said; what is going to happen to me?
And are not these gods animals? for you admit that all things which have life are animals; and have not these gods life?
They have life, I said.
Then are they not animals?
They are animals, I said.
And you admitted that of animals those are yours which you could give away or sell or offer in sacrifice, as you pleased?
I did admit that, Euthydemus, and I have no way of escape.
Well then, said he, if you admit that Zeus and the other gods are yours, can you sell them or give them away or do what you will with them, as you would with other animals?
At this I was quite struck dumb, Crito, and lay prostrate. Ctesippus came to the rescue.
Bravo, Heracles, brave words, said he.
Bravo Heracles, or is Heracles a Bravo? said Dionysodorus.
Poseidon, said Ctesippus, what awful distinctions. I will have no more of them; the pair are invincible.
Then, my dear Crito, there was universal applause of the speakers and their words, and what with laughing and clapping of hands and rejoicings the two men were quite overpowered; for hitherto their partisans only had cheered at each successive hit, but now the whole company shouted with delight until the columns of the Lyceum returned the sound, seeming to sympathize in their joy. To such a pitch was I affected myself, that I made a speech, in which I acknowledged that I had never seen the like of their wisdom; I was their devoted servant, and fell to praising and admiring of them. What marvellous dexterity of wit, I said, enabled you to acquire this great perfection in such a short time? There is much, indeed, to admire in your words, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, but there is nothing that I admire more than your magnanimous disregard of any opinion—whether of the many, or of the grave and reverend seigniors—you regard only those who are like yourselves. And I do verily believe that there are few who are like you, and who would approve of such arguments; the majority of

mankind are so ignorant of their value, that they would be more ashamed of employing them in the refutation of others than of being refuted by them. I must further express my approval of your kind and public-spirited denial of all differences, whether of good and evil, white or black, or any other; the result of which is that, as you say, every mouth is sewn up, not excepting your own, which graciously follows the example of others; and thus all ground of offence is taken away. But what appears to me to be more than all is, that this art and invention of yours has been so admirably contrived by you, that in a very short time it can be imparted to any one. I observed that Ctesippus learned to imitate you in no time. Now this quickness of attainment is an excellent thing; but at the same time I would advise you not to have any more public entertainments; there is a danger that men may undervalue an art which they have so easy an opportunity of acquiring; the exhibition would be best of all, if the discussion were confined to your two selves; but if there must be an audience, let him only be present who is willing to pay a handsome fee;—you should be careful of this;—and if you are wise, you will also bid your disciples discourse with no man but you and themselves. For only what is rare is valuable; and "water," which, as Pindar says, is the "best of all things," is also the cheapest. And now I have only to request that you will receive Cleinias and me among your pupils.

Such was the discussion, Crito; and after a few more words had passed between us we went away. I hope that you will come to them with me, since they say that they are able to teach any one who will give them money; no age or want of capacity is an impediment. And I must repeat one thing which they said, for your especial benefit,—that the learning of their art did not at all interfere with the business of money-making.

Cri. Truly, Socrates, though I am curious and ready to learn, yet I fear that I am not like minded with Euthydemus, but one of the other sort, who, as you were saying, would rather be refuted by such arguments than use them in refutation of others. And though I may appear ridiculous in venturing to advise you, I think that you may as well hear what was said to me by a man of very considerable pretensions—he was a professor of legal oratory—who came away from you while I was walking up and down. "Crito," said he to me, "are you giving no attention to these wise men?" "No, indeed," I said to him; "I could not get within hearing of them—there was such a crowd." "You would have heard something worth hearing if you had." "What was that?" I said. "You would have heard the greatest masters of the art of rhetoric discoursing." "And what did you think of them?" I said. "What did I think of them?" he said:—"theirs was the sort of discourse which anybody might hear from men who were playing the fool, and making much ado about nothing. "That was the expression which he used. "Surely," I said, "philosophy is a charming thing." "Charming!" he said; "what simplicity!

philosophy is nought; and I think that if you had been present you would have been ashamed of your friend—his conduct was so very strange in placing himself at the mercy of men who care not what they say, and fasten upon every word. And these, as I was telling you, are supposed to be the most eminent professors of their time. But the truth is, Crito, that the study itself and the men themselves are utterly mean and ridiculous." Now censure of the pursuit, Socrates, whether coming from him or from others, appears to me to be undeserved; but as to the impropriety of holding a public discussion with such men, there, I confess that, in my opinion, he was in the right.

Soc. O Crito, they are marvellous men; but what was I going to say? First of all let me know;—What manner of man was he who came up to you and censured philosophy; was he an orator who himself practises in the courts, or an instructor of orators, who makes the speeches with which they do battle?

Cri. He was certainly not an orator, and I doubt whether he had ever been into court; but they say that he knows the business, and is a clever man, and composes wonderful speeches.

Soc. Now I understand, Crito; he is one of an amphibious class, whom I was on the point of mentioning—one of those whom Prodicus describes as on the border-ground between philosophers and statesmen—they think that they are the wisest of all men, and that they are generally esteemed the wisest; nothing but the rivalry of the philosophers stands in their way; and they are of the opinion that if they can prove the philosophers to be good for nothing, no one will dispute their title to the palm of wisdom, for that they are themselves really the wisest, although they are apt to be mauled by Euthydemus and his friends, when they get hold of them in conversation. This opinion which they entertain of their own wisdom is very natural; for they have a certain amount of philosophy, and a certain amount of political wisdom; there is reason in what they say, for they argue that they have just enough of both, and so they keep out-of the way all risks and conflicts and reap the fruits of their wisdom.

Cri. What do you say of them, Socrates? There is certainly something specious in that notion of theirs.

Soc. Yes, Crito, there is more speciousness than truth; they cannot be made to understand the nature of intermediates. For all persons or things, which are intermediate between two other things, and participate in both of them—if one of these two things is good and the other evil, are better than the one and worse than the other; but if they are in a mean between two good things which do not tend to the same end, they fall short of either of their component elements in the attainment of their ends. Only in the case when the two component elements which do not tend to the same end are evil is the participant better than either. Now, if philosophy and political

action are both good, but tend to different ends, and they participate in both, and are in a mean between them, then they are talking nonsense, for they are worse than either; or, if the one be good and the other evil, they are better than the one and worse than the other; only on the supposition that they are both evil could there be any truth in what they say. I do not think that they will admit that their two pursuits are either wholly or partly evil; but the truth is, that these philosopher-politicians who aim at both fall short of both in the attainment of their respective ends, and are really third, although they would like to stand first. There is no need, however, to be angry at this ambition of theirs—which may be forgiven; for every man ought to be loved who says and manfully pursues and works out anything which is at all like wisdom: at the same time we shall do well to see them as they really are.

Cri. I have often told you, Socrates, that I am in a constant difficulty about my two sons. What am I to do with them? There is no hurry about the younger one, who is only a child; but the other, Critobulus, is getting on, and needs some one who will improve him. I cannot help thinking, when I hear you talk, that there is a sort of madness in many of our anxieties about our children:—in the first place, about marrying a wife of good family to be the mother of them, and then about heaping up money for them—and yet taking no care about their education. But then again, when I contemplate any of those who pretend to educate others, I am amazed. To me, if I am to confess the truth, they all seem to be such outrageous beings: so that I do not know how I can advise the youth to study philosophy.

Soc. Dear Crito, do you not know that in every profession the inferior sort are numerous and good for nothing, and the good are few and beyond all price: for example, are not gymnastic and rhetoric and money-making and the art of the general, noble arts?

Cri. Certainly they are, in my judgment.

Soc. Well, and do you not see that in each of these arts the many are ridiculous performers?

Cri. Yes, indeed, that is very true.

Soc. And will you on this account shun all these pursuits yourself and refuse to allow them to your son?

Cri. That would not be reasonable, Socrates.

Soc. Do you then be reasonable, Crito, and do not mind whether the teachers of philosophy are good or bad, but think only of philosophy herself. Try and examine her well and truly, and if she be evil seek to turn away all men from her, and not your sons only; but if she be what I believe that she is, then follow her and serve her, you and your house, as the saying is, and be of good cheer.

Cratylus, 107d-109a

Soc. Excellent Cratylus, I have long been wondering at my own wisdom; I cannot trust myself. And I think that I ought to stop and ask myself What am I saying? for there is nothing worse than self–deception—when the deceiver is always at home and always with you—it is quite terrible, and therefore I ought often to retrace my steps and endeavour to "look fore and aft," in the words of the aforesaid Homer. And now let me see; where are we? Have we not been saying that the correct name indicates the nature of the thing:—has this proposition been sufficiently proven?

Crat. Yes, Socrates, what you say, as I am disposed to think, is quite true.

Soc. Names, then, are given in order to instruct?

Crat. Certainly.

Soc. And naming is an art, and has artificers?

Crat. Yes.

Soc. And who are they?

Crat. The legislators, of whom you spoke at first.

Soc. And does this art grow up among men like other arts? Let me explain what I mean: of painters, some are better and some worse?

Crat. Yes.

Soc. The better painters execute their works, I mean their figures, better, and the worse execute them worse; and of builders also, the better sort build fairer houses, and the worse build them worse.

Crat. True.

Soc. And among legislators, there are some who do their work better and some worse?

Crat. No; there I do not agree with you.

Soc. Then you do not think that some laws are better and others worse?

Crat. No, indeed.

Soc. Or that one name is better than another?

Crat. Certainly not.

Soc. Then all names are rightly imposed?

Crat. Yes, if they are names at all.

Soc. Well, what do you say to the name of our friend Hermogenes, which was mentioned before:—assuming that he has nothing of the nature of Hermes in him, shall we say that this is a wrong name, or not his name at all?

Crat. I should reply that Hermogenes is not his name at all, but only appears to be his, and is really the name of somebody else, who has the nature which corresponds to it.

Soc. And if a man were to call him Hermogenes, would he not be even speaking falsely? For there may be a doubt whether you can call him Hermogenes, if he is not.

Crat. What do you mean?

Soc. Are you maintaining that falsehood is impossible? For if this is your meaning I should answer, that there have been plenty of liars in all ages.
Crat. Why, Socrates, how can a man say that which is not?—say something and yet say nothing? For is not falsehood saying the thing which is not?
Soc. Your argument, friend, is too subtle for a man of my age. But I should like to know whether you are one of those philosophers who think that falsehood may be spoken but not said?
Crat. Neither spoken nor said.
Soc. Nor uttered nor addressed? For example: If a person, saluting you in a foreign country, were to take your hand and say: "Hail, Athenian stranger, Hermogenes, son of Smicrion"—these words, whether spoken, said, uttered, or addressed, would have no application to you but only to our friend Hermogenes, or perhaps to nobody at all?
Crat. In my opinion, Socrates, the speaker would only be talking nonsense.
Soc. Well, but that will be quite enough for me, if you will tell me whether the nonsense would be true or false, or partly true and partly false:—which is all that I want to know.
Crat. I should say that he would be putting himself in motion to no purpose; and that his words would be an unmeaning sound like the noise of hammering at a brazen pot.
Soc. But let us see, Cratylus, whether we cannot find a meeting–point, for you would admit that the name is not the same with the thing named?
Crat. I should.
Soc. And would you further acknowledge that the name is an imitation of the thing?
Crat. Certainly.
Soc. And you would say that pictures are also imitations of things, but in another way?
Crat. Yes.
Soc. I believe you may be right, but I do not rightly understand you. Please to say, then, whether both sorts of imitation (I mean both pictures or words) are not equally attributable and applicable to the things of which they are the imitation.
Crat. They are.
Soc. First look at the matter thus: you may attribute the likeness of the man to the man, and of the woman to the woman; and so on?
Crat. Certainly.
Soc. And conversely you may attribute the likeness of the man to the woman, and of the woman to the man?
Crat. Very true.
Soc. And are both modes of assigning them right, or only the first?
Crat. Only the first.

Soc. That is to say, the mode of assignment which attributes to each that which belongs to them and is like them?
Crat. That is my view.
Soc. Now then, as I am desirous that we being friends should have a good understanding about the argument, let me state my view to you: the first mode of assignment, whether applied to figures or to names, I call right, and when applied to names only, true as well as right; and the other mode of giving and assigning the name which is unlike, I call wrong, and in the case of names, false as well as wrong.
Crat. That may be true, Socrates, in the case of pictures; they may be wrongly assigned; but not in the case of names—they must be always right.
Soc. Why, what is the difference? May I not go to a man and say to him, "This is your picture," showing him his own likeness, or perhaps the likeness of a woman; and when I say "show," I mean bring before the sense of sight.
Crat. Certainly.
Soc. And may I not go to him again, and say, "This is your name"?—for the name, like the picture, is an imitation. May I not say to him—"This is your name"? and may I not then bring to his sense of hearing the imitation of himself, when I say, "This is a man"; or of a female of the human species, when I say, "This is a woman," as the case may be? Is not all that quite possible?
Crat. I would fain agree with you, Socrates; and therefore I say, Granted.
Soc. That is very good of you, if I am right, which need hardly be disputed at present. But if I can assign names as well as pictures to objects, the right assignment of them we may call truth, and the wrong assignment of them falsehood. Now if there be such a wrong assignment of names, there may also be a wrong or inappropriate assignment of verbs; and if of names and verbs then of the sentences, which are made up of them. What do you say, Cratylus?
Crat. I agree; and think that what you say is very true.

Phaedrus, 132c-133a

Soc. He, then, who would deceive others, and not be deceived, must exactly know the real likenesses and differences of things?
Phaedr. He must.
Soc. And, if he is ignorant of the true nature of any subject, now can he detect the greater or less degree of likeness in other things to that of which by the hypothesis he is ignorant?
Phaedr. He cannot.
Soc. And when men are deceived and their notions are at variance with realities, it is clear that the error slips in through resemblances?
Phaedr. Yes, that is the way.

Soc. Then he who would be a master of the art must understand the real nature of everything; or he will never know either how to make the gradual departure from truth into the opposite of truth which is effected by the help of resemblances, or how to avoid it?
Phaedr. He will not.
Soc. He then, who being ignorant of the truth aims at appearances, will only attain an art of rhetoric which is ridiculous and is not an art at all?
Phaedr. That may be expected.
Soc. Shall I propose that we look for examples of art and want of art, according to our notion of them, in the speech of Lysias which you have in your hand, and in my own speech?
Phaedr. Nothing could be better; and indeed I think that our previous argument has been too abstract and wanting in illustrations.
Soc. Yes; and the two speeches happen to afford a very good example of the way in which the speaker who knows the truth may, without any serious purpose, steal away the hearts of his hearers. This piece of good-fortune I attribute to the local deities; and perhaps, the prophets of the Muses who are singing over our heads may have imparted their inspiration to me. For I do not imagine that I have any rhetorical art of my own.
Phaedr. Granted; if you will only please to get on.
Soc. Suppose that you read me the first words of Lysias' speech.
Phaedr. "You know how matters stand with me, and how, as I conceive, they might be arranged for our common interest; and I maintain that I ought not to fail in my suot, because I am not your lover. For lovers repent——"
Soc. Enough:—Now, shall I point out the rhetorical error of those words?
Phaedr. Yes.
Soc. Every one is aware that about some things we are agreed, whereas about other things we differ.
Phaedr. I think that I understand you; but will you explain yourself?
Soc. When any one speaks of iron and silver, is not the same thing present in the minds of all?
Phaedr. Certainly.
Soc. But when any one speaks of justice and goodness we part company and are at odds with one another and with ourselves?
Phaedr. Precisely.
Soc. Then in some Things we agree, but not in others?
Phaedr. That is true.
Soc. In which are we more likely to be deceived, and in which has rhetoric the greater power?
Phaedr. Clearly, in the uncertain class.

Soc. Then the rhetorician ought to make a regular division, and acquire a distinct notion of both classes, as well of that in which the many err, as of that in which they do not err?
Phaedr. He who made such a distinction would have an excellent principle.
Soc. Yes; and in the next place he must have a keen eye for the observation of particulars in speaking, and not make a mistake about the class to which they are to be referred.
Phaedr. Certainly.

Phaedrus, 138c-141a,c
Phaedr. I think, Socrates, that this is admirable, if only practicable.
Soc. But even to fail in an honourable object is honourable.
Phaedr. True.
Soc. Enough appears to have been said by us of a true and false art of speaking.
Phaedr. Certainly.
Soc. But there is something yet to be said of propriety and impropriety of writing.
Phaedr. Yes.
Soc. Do you know how you can speak or act about rhetoric in a manner which will be acceptable to God?
Phaedr. No, indeed. Do you?
Soc. I have heard a tradition of the ancients, whether true or not they only know; although if we had found the truth ourselves, do you think that we should care much about the opinions of men?
Phaedr. Your question needs no answer; but I wish that you would tell me what you say that you have heard.
Soc. At the Egyptian city of Naucratis, there was a famous old god, whose name was Theuth; the bird which is called the Ibis is sacred to him, and he was the inventor of many arts, such as arithmetic and calculation and geometry and astronomy and draughts and dice, but his great discovery was the use of letters. Now in those days the god Thamus was the king of the whole country of Egypt; and he dwelt in that great city of Upper Egypt which the Hellenes call Egyptian Thebes, and the god himself is called by them Ammon. To him came Theuth and showed his inventions, desiring that the other Egyptians might be allowed to have the benefit of them; he enumerated them, and Thamus enquired about their several uses, and praised some of them and censured others, as he approved or disapproved of them. It would take a long time to repeat all that Thamus said to Theuth in praise or blame of the various arts. But when they came to letters, This, said Theuth, will make the Egyptians wiser and give them better memories; it is a specific both for the memory and for the wit. Thamus replied: O most ingenious Theuth, the parent or inventor of an art is not always the best

judge of the utility or inutility of his own inventions to the users of them. And in this instance, you who are the father of letters, from a paternal love of your own children have been led to attribute to them a quality which they cannot have; for this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality.

Phaedr. Yes, Socrates, you can easily invent tales of Egypt, or of any other country.

Soc. There was a tradition in the temple of Dodona that oaks first gave prophetic utterances. The men of old, unlike in their simplicity to young philosophy, deemed that if they heard the truth even from 'oak or rock,' it was enough for them; whereas you seem to consider not whether a thing is or is not true, but who the speaker is and from what country the tale comes.

Phaedr. I acknowledge the justice of your rebuke; and I think that the Theban is right in his view about letters.

Soc. He would be a very simple person, and quite a stranger to the oracles of Thamus or Ammon, who should leave in writing or receive in writing any art under the idea that the written word would be intelligible or certain; or who deemed that writing was at all better than knowledge and recollection of the same matters?

Phaedr. That is most true.

Soc. I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence. And the same may be said of speeches. You would imagine that they had intelligence, but if you want to know anything and put a question to one of them, the speaker always gives one unvarying answer. And when they have been once written down they are tumbled about anywhere among those who may or may not understand them, and know not to whom they should reply, to whom not: and, if they are maltreated or abused, they have no parent to protect them; and they cannot protect or defend themselves.

Phaedr. That again is most true.

Soc. Is there not another kind of word or speech far better than this, and having far greater power—a son of the same family, but lawfully begotten?

Phaedr. Whom do you mean, and what is his origin?

Soc. I mean an intelligent word graven in the soul of the learner, which can defend itself, and knows when to speak and when to be silent.

Phaedr. You mean the living word of knowledge which has a soul, and of which the written word is properly no more than an image?
Soc. Yes, of course that is what I mean. And now may I be allowed to ask you a question: Would a husbandman, who is a man of sense, take the seeds, which he values and which he wishes to bear fruit, and in sober seriousness plant them during the heat of summer, in some garden of Adonis, that he may rejoice when he sees them in eight days appearing in beauty? at least he would do so, if at all, only for the sake of amusement and pastime. But when he is in earnest he sows in fitting soil, and practises husbandry, and is satisfied if in eight months the seeds which he has sown arrive at perfection?
Phaedr. Yes, Socrates, that will be his way when he is in earnest; he will do the other, as you say, only in play.
Soc. And can we suppose that he who knows the just and good and honourable has less understanding, that the husbandman, about his own seeds?
Phaedr. Certainly not.
Soc. Then he will not seriously incline to "write" his thoughts "in water" with pen and ink, sowing words which can neither speak for themselves nor teach the truth adequately to others?
Phaedr. No, that is not likely.
Soc. No, that is not likely—in the garden of letters he will sow and plant, but only for the sake of recreation and amusement; he will write them down as memorials to be treasured against the forgetfulness of old age, by himself, or by any other old man who is treading the same path. He will rejoice in beholding their tender growth; and while others are refreshing their souls with banqueting and the like, this will be the pastime in which his days are spent.
Phaedr. A pastime, Socrates, as noble as the other is ignoble, the pastime of a man who can be amused by serious talk, and can discourse merrily about justice and the like.
Soc. True, Phaedrus. But nobler far is the serious pursuit of the dialectician, who, finding a congenial soul, by the help of science sows and plants therein words which are able to help themselves and him who planted them, and are not unfruitful, but have in them a seed which others brought up in different soils render immortal, making the possessors of it happy to the utmost extent of human happiness.
Phaedr. Far nobler, certainly.
Soc. And now, Phaedrus, having agreed upon the premises we decide about the conclusion.
Phaedr. About what conclusion?
Soc. About Lysias, whom we censured, and his art of writing, and his discourses, and the rhetorical skill or want of skill which was shown in

them—these are the questions which we sought to determine, and they brought us to this point. And I think that we are now pretty well informed about the nature of art and its opposite.

Phaedr. Yes, I think with you; but I wish that you would repeat what was said.

Soc. Until a man knows the truth of the several particulars of which he is writing or speaking, and is able to define them as they are, and having defined them again to divide them until they can be no longer divided, and until in like manner he is able to discern the nature of the soul, and discover the different modes of discourse which are adapted to different natures, and to arrange and dispose them in such a way that the simple form of speech may be addressed to the simpler nature, and the complex and composite to the more complex nature—until he has accomplished all this, he will be unable to handle arguments according to rules of art, as far as their nature allows them to be subjected to art, either for the purpose of teaching or persuading;—such is the view which is implied in the whole preceding argument.

Phaedr. Yes, that was our view, certainly.

Soc. Secondly, as to the censure which was passed on the speaking or writing of discourses, and how they might be rightly or wrongly censured—did not our previous argument show—?

Phaedr. Show what?

Soc. That whether Lysias or any other writer that ever was or will be, whether private man or statesman, proposes laws and so becomes the author of a political treatise, fancying that there is any great certainty and clearness in his performance, the fact of his so writing is only a disgrace to him, whatever men may say. For not to know the nature of justice and injustice, and good and evil, and not to be able to distinguish the dream from the reality, cannot in truth be otherwise than disgraceful to him, even though he have the applause of the whole world.

Phaedr. Certainly.

Soc. But he who thinks that in the written word there is necessarily much which is not serious, and that neither poetry nor prose, spoken or written, is of any great value, if, like the compositions of the rhapsodes, they are only recited in order to be believed, and not with any view to criticism or instruction; and who thinks that even the best of writings are but a reminiscence of what we know, and that only in principles of justice and goodness and nobility taught and communicated orally for the sake of instruction and graven in the soul, which is the true way of writing, is there clearness and perfection and seriousness, and that such principles are a man's own and his legitimate offspring;—being, in the first place, the word which he finds in his own bosom; secondly, the brethren and descendants and relations of his others;—and who cares for them and no others—this is

the right sort of man; and you and I, Phaedrus, would pray that we may become like him.

Phaedr. That is most assuredly my desire and prayer.

Soc. And now the play is played out; and of rhetoric enough. Go and tell Lysias that to the fountain and school of the Nymphs we went down, and were bidden by them to convey a message to him and to other composers of speeches—to Homer and other writers of poems, whether set to music or not; and to Solon and others who have composed writings in the form of political discourses which they would term laws—to all of them we are to say that if their compositions are based on knowledge of the truth, and they can defend or prove them, when they are put to the test, by spoken arguments, which leave their writings poor in comparison of them, then they are to be called, not only poets, orators, legislators, but are worthy of a higher name, befitting the serious pursuit of their life.

Phaedr. What name would you assign to them?

Soc. Wise, I may not call them; for that is a great name which belongs to God alone,—lovers of wisdom or philosophers is their modest and befitting title.

Phaedr. Very suitable.

Soc. And he who cannot rise above his own compilations and compositions, which he has been long patching, and piecing, adding some and taking away some, may be justly called poet or speech-maker or law-maker.

Phaedr. Certainly.

Soc. Now go and tell this to your companion.

Phaedr. But there is also a friend of yours who ought not to be forgotten.

Soc. Who is he?

Phaedr. Isocrates the fair:—What message will you send to him, and how shall we describe him?

Soc. Isocrates is still young, Phaedrus; but I am willing to hazard a prophecy concerning him.

Phaedr. What would you prophesy?

Soc. I think that he has a genius which soars above the orations of Lysias, and that his character is cast in a finer mould. My impression of him is that he will marvelously improve as he grows older, and that all former rhetoricians will be as children in comparison of him. And I believe that he will not be satisfied with rhetoric, but that there is in him a divine inspiration which will lead him to things higher still. For he has an element of philosophy in his nature. This is the message of the gods dwelling in this place, and which I will myself deliver to Isocrates, who is my delight; and do you give the other to Lysias, who is yours.

Phaedr. I will; and now as the heat is abated let us depart.

Soc. Should we not offer up a prayer first of all to the local deities?

Phaedr. By all means.

Soc. Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be the wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as a temperate man and he only can bear and carry.—Anything more? The prayer, I think, is enough for me.
Phaedr. Ask the same for me, for friends should have all things in common.
Soc. Let us go.

Republic, BK I, 297b-300b

Hope [he says] cherishes the soul of him who lives in justice and holiness and is the nurse of his age and the companion of his journey;—hope which is mightiest to sway the restless soul of man.

How admirable are his words! And the great blessing of riches, I do not say to every man, but to a good man, is, that he has had no occasion to deceive or to defraud others, either intentionally or unintentionally; and when he departs to the world below he is not in any apprehension about offerings due to the gods or debts which he owes to men. Now to this peace of mind the possession of wealth greatly contributes; and therefore I say, that, setting one thing against another, of the many advantages which wealth has to give, to a man of sense this is in my opinion the greatest.
Well said, Cephalus, I replied; but as concerning justice, what is it?—to speak the truth and to pay your debts—no more than this? And even to this are there not exceptions? Suppose that a friend when in his right mind has deposited arms with me and he asks for them when he is not in his right mind, ought I to give them back to him? No one would say that I ought or that I should be right in doing so, any more than they would say that I ought always to speak the truth to one who is in his condition.
You are quite right, he replied.
But then, I said, speaking the truth and paying your debts is not a correct definition of justice.
Quite correct, Socrates, if Simonides is to be believed, said Polemarchus interposing.
I fear, said Cephalus, that I must go now, for I have to look after the sacrifices, and I hand over the argument to Polemarchus and the company.
Is not Polemarchus your heir? I said.
To be sure, he answered, and went away laughing to the sacrifices.
Tell me then, O thou heir of the argument, what did Simonides say, and according to you truly say, about justice?
He said that the repayment of a debt is just, and in saying so he appears to me to be right.
I should be sorry to doubt the word of such a wise and inspired man, but his meaning, though probably clear to you, is the reverse of clear to me. For he certainly does not mean, as we were now saying that I ought to return a

return a deposit of arms or of anything else to one who asks for it when he is not in his right senses; and yet a deposit cannot be denied to be a debt.
True.
Then when the person who asks me is not in his right mind I am by no means to make the return?
Certainly not.
When Simonides said that the repayment of a debt was justice, he did not mean to include that case?
Certainly not; for he thinks that a friend ought always to do good to a friend and never evil.
You mean that the return of a deposit of gold which is to the injury of the receiver, if the two parties are friends, is not the repayment of a debt—that is what you would imagine him to say?
Yes.
And are enemies also to receive what we owe to them?
To be sure, he said, they are to receive what we owe them, and an enemy, as I take it, owes to an enemy that which is due or proper to him—that is to say, evil.
Simonides, then, after the manner of poets, would seem to have spoken darkly of the nature of justice; for he really meant to say that justice is the giving to each man what is proper to him, and this he termed a debt.
That must have been his meaning, he said.
By heaven! I replied; and if we asked him what due or proper thing is given by medicine, and to whom, what answer do you think that he would make to us?
He would surely reply that medicine gives drugs and meat and drink to human bodies. And what due or proper thing is given by cookery, and to what?
Seasoning to food.
And what is that which justice gives, and to whom?
If, Socrates, we are to be guided at all by the analogy of the preceding instances, then justice is the art which gives good to friends and evil to enemies.
That is his meaning then?
I think so.
And who is best able to do good to his friends and evil to his enemies in time of sickness?
The physician.
Or when they are on a voyage, amid the perils of the sea?
The pilot.
And in what sort of actions or with a view to what result is the just man most able to do harm to his enemy and good to his friend?
In going to war against the one and in making alliances with the other.

But when a man is well, my dear Polemarchus, there is no need of a physician?
No.
And he who is not on a voyage has no need of a pilot?
No.
Then in time of peace justice will be of no use?
I am very far from thinking so.
You think that justice may be of use in peace as well as in war?
Yes.
Like husbandry for the acquisition of corn?
Yes.
Or like shoemaking for the acquisition of shoes—that is what you mean?
Yes.
And what similar use or power of acquisition has justice in time of peace?
In contracts, Socrates, justice is of use.
And by contracts you mean partnerships?
Exactly.
But is the just man or the skilful player a more useful and better partner at a game of draughts?
The skilful player.
And in the laying of bricks and stones is the just man a more useful or better partner than the builder?
Quite the reverse.
Then in what sort of partnership is the just man a better partner than the harp-player, as in playing the harp the harp-player is certainly a better partner than the just man?
In a money partnership.
Yes, Polemarchus, but surely not in the use of money; for you do not want a just man to be your counsellor the purchase or sale of a horse; a man who is knowing about horses would be better for that, would he not?
Certainly.
And when you want to buy a ship, the shipwright or the pilot would be better?
True.
Then what is that joint use of silver or gold in which the just man is to be preferred?
When you want a deposit to be kept safely.
You mean when money is not wanted, but allowed to lie?
Precisely.
That is to say, justice is useful when money is useless?
That is the inference.

And when you want to keep a pruning-hook safe, then justice is useful to the individual and to the state; but when you want to use it, then the art of the vine-dresser?
Clearly.
And when you want to keep a shield or a lyre, and not to use them, you would say that justice is useful; but when you want to use them, then the art of the soldier or of the musician?
Certainly.
And so of all the other things—justice is useful when they are useless, and useless when they are useful?
That is the inference.
Then justice is not good for much. But let us consider this further point: Is not he who can best strike a blow in a boxing match or in any kind of fighting best able to ward off a blow?
Certainly.
And he who is most skilful in preventing or escaping from a disease is best able to create one?
True.
And he is the best guard of a camp who is best able to steal a march upon the enemy?
Certainly.
Then he who is a good keeper of anything is also a good thief?
That, I suppose, is to be inferred.
Then if the just man is good at keeping money, he is good at stealing it.
That is implied in the argument.
Then after all the just man has turned out to be a thief. And this is a lesson which I suspect you must have learnt out of Homer; for he, speaking of Autolycus, the maternal grandfather of Odysseus, who is a favourite of his, affirms that

> *He was excellent above all men in theft and perjury.*

And so, you and Homer and Simonides are agreed that justice is an art of theft; to be practised however "for the good of friends and for the harm of enemies"—that was what you were saying?
No, certainly not that, though I do not now know what I did say; but I still stand by the latter words.
Well, there is another question: By friends and enemies do we mean those who are so really, or only in seeming?
Surely, he said, a man may be expected to love those whom he thinks good, and to hate those whom he thinks evil.
Yes, but do not persons often err about good and evil: many who are not good seem to be so, and conversely?
That is true.
Then to them the good will be enemies and the evil will be their friends?

True.
And in that case they will be right in doing good to the evil and evil to the good?
Clearly.
But the good are just and would not do an injustice?
True.
Then according to your argument it is just to injure those who do no wrong?
Nay, Socrates; the doctrine is immoral.
Then I suppose that we ought to do good to the just and harm to the unjust?
I like that better.
But see the consequence:—Many a man who is ignorant of human nature has friends who are bad friends, and in that case he ought to do harm to them; and he has good enemies whom he ought to benefit; but, if so, we shall be saying the very opposite of that which we affirmed to be the meaning of Simonides.
Very true, he said: and I think that we had better correct an error into which we seem to have fallen in the use of the words "friend" and "enemy."
What was the error, Polemarchus? I asked.
We assumed that he is a friend who seems to be or who is thought good.
And how is the error to be corrected? We should rather say that he is a friend who is, as well as seems, good; and that he who seems only, and is not good, only seems to be and is not a friend; and of an enemy the same may be said.
You would argue that the good are our friends and the bad our enemies?
Yes.
And instead of saying simply as we did at first, that it is just to do good to our friends and harm to our enemies, we should further say: It is just to do good to our friends when they are good and harm to our enemies when they are evil?
Yes, that appears to me to be the truth.
But ought the just to injure any one at all?
Undoubtedly he ought to injure those who are both wicked and his enemies.
When horses are injured, are they improved or deteriorated?
The latter.
Deteriorated, that is to say, in the good qualities of horses, not of dogs?
Yes, of horses.
And dogs are deteriorated in the good qualities of dogs, and not of horses?
Of course.
And will not men who are injured be deteriorated in that which is the proper virtue of man?
Certainly.

And that human virtue is justice?
To be sure.
Then men who are injured are of necessity made unjust?
That is the result.
But can the musician by his art make men unmusical?
Certainly not.
Or the horseman by his art make them bad horsemen?
Impossible.
And can the just by justice make men unjust, or speaking general can the good by virtue make them bad?
Assuredly not.
Any more than heat can produce cold?
It cannot.
Or drought moisture?
Clearly not.
Nor can the good harm any one?
Impossible.
And the just is the good?
Certainly.
Then to injure a friend or any one else is not the act of a just man, but of the opposite, who is the unjust?
I think that what you say is quite true, Socrates.
Then if a man says that justice consists in the repayment of debts, and that good is the debt which a man owes to his friends, and evil the debt which he owes to his enemies—to say this is not wise; for it is not true, if, as has been clearly shown, the injuring of another can be in no case just.
I agree with you, said Polemarchus.
Then you and I are prepared to take up arms against any one who attributes such a saying to Simonides or Bias or Pittacus, or any other wise man or seer?
I am quite ready to do battle at your side, he said.
Shall I tell you whose I believe the saying to be?
Whose?
I believe that Periander or Perdiccas or Xerxes or Ismenias the Theban, or some other rich and mighty man, who had a great opinion of his own power, was the first to say that justice is "doing good to your friends and harm to your enemies."
Most true, he said.
Yes, I said; but if this definition of justice also breaks down, what other can be offered?
Several times in the course of the discussion Thrasymachus had made an attempt to get the argument into his own hands, and had been put down by the rest of the company, who wanted to hear the end. But when

Polemarchus and I had done speaking and there was a pause, he could no longer hold his peace; and, gathering himself up, he came at us like a wild beast, seeking to devour us. We were quite panic-stricken at the sight of him.

Critias, 478c-d

Critias. All that is said by any of us can only be imitation and representation. For if we consider the likenesses which painters make of bodies divine and heavenly, and the different degrees of gratification with which the eye of the spectator receives them, we shall see that we are satisfied with the artist who is able in any degree to imitate the earth and its mountains, and the rivers, and the woods, and the universe, and the things that are and move therein, and further, that knowing nothing precise about such matters, we do not examine or analyze the painting; all that is required is a sort of indistinct and deceptive mode of shadowing them forth. But when a person endeavours to paint the human form we are quick at finding out defects, and our familiar knowledge makes us severe judges of any one who does not render every point of similarity. And we may observe the same thing to happen in discourse; we are satisfied with a picture of divine and heavenly things which has very little likeness to them; but we are more precise in our criticism of mortal and human things. Wherefore if at the moment of speaking I cannot suitably express my meaning, you must excuse me, considering that to form approved likenesses of human things is the reverse of easy. This is what I want to suggest to you, and at the same time to beg, Socrates, that I may have not less, but more indulgence conceded to me in what I am about to say. Which favour, if I am right in asking, I hope that you will be ready to grant.

Theaetetus, 520b

Soc. And from all these considerations, as I said at first, there arises a general reflection, that there is no one self-existent thing, but everything is becoming and in relation; and being must be altogether abolished, although from habit and ignorance we are compelled even in this discussion to retain the use of the term. But great philosophers tell us that we are not to allow either the word "something," or "belonging to something," or "to me," or "this" or "that," or any other detaining name to be used; in the language of nature all things are being created and destroyed, coming into being and passing into new forms; nor can any name fix or detain them; he who attempts to fix them is easily refuted. And this should be the way of speaking, not only of particulars but of aggregates; such aggregates as are expressed in the word "man," or "stone," or any name of an animal or of a class. O Theaetetus, are not these speculations sweet as honey? And do you not like the taste of them in the mouth?

Sophist, 552b-c

Theaet. I do not think that I shall tire, and if I do, I shall get my friend here, young Socrates, the namesake of the elder Socrates, to help; he is about my own age, and my partner at the gymnasium, and is constantly accustomed to work with me.

Str. Very good; you can decide about that for yourself as we proceed. Meanwhile you and I will begin together and enquire into the nature of the Sophist, first of the three: I should like you to make out what he is and bring him to light in a discussion; for at present we are only agreed about the name, but of the thing to which we both apply the name possibly you have one notion and I another; whereas we ought always to come to an understanding about the thing itself in terms of a definition, and not merely about the name minus the definition. Now the tribe of Sophists which we are investigating is not easily caught or defined; and the world has long ago agreed, that if great subjects are to be adequately treated, they must be studied in the lesser and easier instances of them before we proceed to the greatest of all. And as I know that the tribe of Sophists is troublesome and hard to be caught, I should recommend that we practise beforehand the method which is to be applied to him on some simple and smaller thing, unless you can suggest a better way.

Theaet. Indeed I cannot.

Str. Then suppose that we work out some lesser example which will be a pattern of the greater?

Theaet. Good.

Str. What is there which is well known and not great, and is yet as susceptible of definition as any larger thing? Shall I say an angler? He is familiar to all of us, and not a very interesting or important person.

Theaet. He is not.

Str. Yet I suspect that he will furnish us with the sort of definition and line of enquiry which we want.

Theaet. Very good.

Str. Let us begin by asking whether he is a man having art or not having art, but some other power.

Theaet. He is clearly a man of art.

Str. And of arts there are two kinds?

Theaet. What are they?

Str. There is agriculture, and the tending of mortal creatures, and the art of constructing or moulding vessels, and there is the art of imitation—all these may be appropriately called by a single name.

Philebus, 609d-610a

Phi. I say, and shall always say, that pleasure is easily the conqueror; but you must decide for yourself, Protarchus.

Pro. You, Philebus, have handed over the argument to me, and have no longer a voice in the matter?
Phi. True enough. Nevertheless I would dear myself and deliver my soul of you; and I call the goddess herself to witness that I now do so.
Pro. You may appeal to us; we too be the witnesses of your words. And now, Socrates, whether Philebus is pleased or displeased, we will proceed with the argument.
Soc. Then let us begin with the goddess herself, of whom Philebus says that she is called Aphrodite, but that her real name is Pleasure.
Pro. Very good.
Soc. The awe which I always feel, Protarchus, about the names of the gods is more than human—it exceeds all other fears. And now I would not sin against Aphrodite by naming her amiss; let her be called what she pleases. But Pleasure I know to be manifold, and with her, as I was just now saying, we must begin, and consider what her nature is. She has one name, and therefore you would imagine that she is one; and yet surely she takes the most varied and even unlike forms. For do we not say that the intemperate has pleasure, and that the temperate has pleasure in his very temperance—that the fool is pleased when he is full of foolish fancies and hopes, and that the wise man has pleasure in his wisdom? and how foolish would any one be who affirmed that all these opposite pleasures are severally alike!
Pro. Why, Socrates, they are opposed in so far as they spring from opposite sources, but they are not in themselves opposite. For must not pleasure be of all things most absolutely like pleasure—that is, like himself?
Soc. Yes, my good friend, just as colour is like colour;—in so far as colours are colours, there is no difference between them; and yet we all know that black is not only unlike, but even absolutely opposed to white: or again, as figure is like figure, for all figures are comprehended under one class; and yet particular figures may be absolutely opposed to one another, and there is an infinite diversity of them. And we might find similar examples in many other things; therefore do not rely upon this argument, which would go to prove the unity of the most extreme opposites. And I suspect that we shall find a similar opposition among pleasures.

Seventh Letter, 809c-810b

On this point I intend to speak a little more at length; for perhaps, when I have done so, things will be clearer with regard to my present subject. There is an argument which holds good against the man ventures to put anything whatever into writing on questions of this nature; it has often before been stated by me, and it seems suitable to the present occasion. For everything that exists there are three instruments by which the knowledge of it is necessarily imparted; fourth, there is the knowledge

itself, and, as fifth, we must count the thing itself which is known and truly exists. The first is the name, the, second the definition, the third. the image, and the fourth the knowledge. If you wish to learn what I mean, take these in the case of one instance, and so understand them in the case of all. A circle is a thing spoken of, and its name is that very word which we have just uttered. The second thing belonging to it is its definition, made up names and verbal forms. For that which has the name “round,” “annular,” or, “circle,” might be defined as that which has the distance from its circumference to its centre everywhere equal. Third, comes that which is drawn and rubbed out again, or turned on a lathe and broken up—none of which things can happen to the circle itself—to which the other things, mentioned have reference; for it is something of a different order from them. Fourth, comes knowledge, intelligence and right opinion about these things. Under this one head we must group everything which has its existence, not in words nor in bodily shapes, but in souls—from which it is dear that it is something different from the nature of the circle itself and from the three things mentioned before. Of these things intelligence comes closest in kinship and likeness to the fifth, and the others are farther distant.

The same applies to straight as well as to circular form, to colours, to the good, the, beautiful, the just, to all bodies whether manufactured or coming into being in the course of nature, to fire, water, and all such things, to every living being, to character in souls, and to all things done and suffered. For in the case of all these, no one, if he has not some how or other got hold of the four things first mentioned, can ever be completely a partaker of knowledge of the fifth. Further, on account of the weakness of language, these (i.e., the four) attempt to show what each thing is like not less than what each thing is. For this reason no man of intelligence will venture to express his philosophical views in language, especially not in language that is unchangeable, which is true of that which is set down in written characters.

Again you must learn the point which comes next. Every circle, of those which are by the act of man drawn or even turned on a lathe, is full of that which is opposite to the fifth thing. For everywhere it has contact with the straight. But the circle itself, we say, has nothing in either smaller or greater, of that which is its opposite. We say also that the name is not a thing of permanence for any of them, and that nothing prevents the things now called round from being called straight, and the straight things round; for those who make changes and call things by opposite names, nothing will be less permanent (than a name). Again with regard to the definition, if it is made up of names and verbal forms, the same remark holds that there is no sufficiently durable permanence in it. And there is no end to the instances of the ambiguity from which each of the four suffers; but the

greatest of them is that which we mentioned a little earlier, that, whereas there are two things, that which has real being, and that which is only a quality, when the soul is seeking to know, not the quality, but the essence, each of the four, presenting to the soul by word and in act that which it is not seeking (i.e., the quality), a thing open to refutation by the senses, being merely the thing presented to the soul in each particular case whether by statement or the act of showing, fills, one may say, every man with puzzlement and perplexity.

8 ARISTOTLE: *Topics*, BK I, CH 15 149d-152a; CH 18 [108^{a}18-36] 152b-d; BK II, CH 3 154d-155d; BK VIII, CH 3 [158^{b}8-24] 215b; CH 7 217c-d / *Sophistical Refutations*, CH 1 [165^{a}5-13] 227b-c; CH 33 [182^{b}13-31] 251d / *Heavens*, BK I, CH 11 [280^{b}1-7] 371d-372a / *Metaphysics*, BK I, CH 9 [992^{a}1-9] 510b; BK IV, CH 4 [1006^{a}29-^{b}18] 525c-d; BK VII, CH 11 [1037^{a}5-9] 560c; BK VIII, CH 3 [1043^{a}29-^{b}4] 567d / *Soul*, BK III, CH 2 [425^{b}26-426^{a}26] 658a-c

Topics, BK I, CH 15 149d-152a

15

106^{a} On the formation, then, of propositions, the above remarks are enough. As regards the number of senses a term bears, we must not only treat of those terms which bear different senses, but we must also try to render their definitions; e. g. we must not merely say that justice and courage are called 'good' in one sense, and that what conduces to vigour and what conduces to health are called so in another, but also that the former are so called because of a certain intrinsic quality they themselves have, the latter because they are productive of a certain result and not because of any intrinsic quality in themselves. Similarly also in other cases.
Whether a term bears a number of specific meanings or one only, may be considered by the following means. First, look and see if its contrary bears a number of meanings, whether the discrepancy between them be one of kind or one of manes. For in some cases a difference is at once displayed even in the names; e. g. the contrary of 'sharp' in the case of a mote is 'flat', while in the case of a solid edge it is 'dull'. Clearly, then, the contrary of 'sharp' bears several meanings, and if so, so also does 'sharp'; for corresponding to each of the former terns the meaning of its contrary will be different. For 'sharp' will not be the same when contrary to 'dull' and to 'flat', though 'sharp' is the contrary of each. Again *βαρύ* ('flat', 'heavy') in the case of a note has 'sharp' as its contrary, but in the case of a solid mass 'light', so that *βαρύ* is used with a number of meanings, inasmuch as its contrary also is so used. Likewise, also, 'fine' as applied to a picture has

‘ugly’ as its contrary, but, as applied to a house, ‘ramshackle’; so that ‘fine’ is an ambiguous term.
In some cases there is no discrepancy of any sort in the names used, but a difference of kind between the meanings is at once obvious: e. g. in the case of ‘clear’ and ‘obscure’: for sound is called ‘clear’ and ‘obscure’, just as ‘colour’ is too. As regards the names, then, there is no discrepancy, but the difference in kind between the meanings is at once obvious: for colour is not called ‘clear’ in a like sense to sound. This is plain also through sensation: for of things that are the same in kind we have the same sensation, whereas we do not judge clearness by the same sensation in the case of sound and of colour, but in the latter case we judge by sight, in the former by hearing. Likewise also with ‘sharp’ and ‘dull’ in regard to flavours and solid edges: here in the latter case we judge by touch, but in the former by taste. For here again there is no discrepancy in the names used, in the case either of the original terms or of their contraries: for the contrary also of sharp in either sense is ‘dull’.
Moreover, see if one sense of a term has a contrary, while another has absolutely none; e. g. the pleasure of drinking has a contrary in the pain of thirst, whereas the pleasure of seeing that the diagonal is incommensurate with **106**[b] the side has none, so that ‘pleasure’ is used in more than one sense. To ‘love’ also, used of the frame of mind, has to ‘hate’ as its contrary, while as used of the physical activity (kissing) it has none: clearly, therefore, to ‘love’ is an ambiguous term. Further, see in regard to their intermediates, if some meanings and their contraries have an intermediate, while others have none, or if both have one but not the same one, as e. g. ‘clear’ and ‘obscure’ in the case of colours have ‘grey’ as an intermediate, whereas in the case of sound they have none, or, if they have, it is ‘harsh’, as some people say that a harsh sound is intermediate. ‘Clear’, then, is an ambiguous term, and likewise also ‘obscure’. See, moreover, if some of them have more than one intermediate, while others have but one, as is the case with ‘clear’ and ‘obscure’, for in the case of colours there are numbers of intermediates, whereas in regard to sound there is but one, viz. ‘harsh’.
Again, in the case of the contradictory opposite, look and see if it bears more than one meaning. For if this bears more than one meaning, then the opposite of it also will be used in more than one meaning; e. g. ‘to fail to see’ is a phrase with more than one meaning, viz. (1) to fail to possess the power of sight, (2) to fail to put that power to active use. But if this has more than one meaning, it follows necessarily that ‘to see’ also has more than one meaning: for there will be an opposite to each sense of ‘to fail to see’; e. g. the opposite of ‘not to possess the power of sight’ is to possess it, while of ‘not to put the power of sight to active use’, the opposite is to put it to active use.

Moreover, examine the case of terms that denote the privation or presence of a certain state: for if the one term bears more than one meaning, then so will the remaining term: e. g. if ‘to have sense’ be used with more than one meaning, as applied to the soul and to the body, then ‘to be wanting in sense’ too will be used with more than one meaning, as applied to the soul and to the body. that the opposition between the terms now in question depends upon the privation or presence of a certain state is clear, since animals naturally possess each kind of ‘sense’, both as applied to the soul and as applied to the body.
Moreover, examine the inflected forms. For if ‘justly’ has more than one meaning, then ‘just’, also, will be used with more than one meaning; for there will be a meaning of 'just' corresponding to each of the meanings of 'justly'; e.g. if the word 'justly' be used of judging according to one's own opinion, and also of judging as one ought, then 'just' also will be used in like manner. In the same way also, if 'healthy' has more than one meaning, then 'healthily' also will be used with more than one meaning: e.g. if 'healthy' describes both what produces health and what preserves health and what betokens health, then 'healthily' also will be used to mean 'in such a way as to produce' or 'preserve' or 'betoken' health. Likewise also in other cases, whenever the original term bears more than one meaning, 107[a] the inflexion also that is formed from it will be used with more than one meaning, and vice versa.
Look also at the classes of the predicates signified by the term, and see if they are the same in all cases. For if they are not the same, then clearly the term is ambiguous: e.g. ‘good’ in the case of food means ‘productive of pleasure’, and in the case of medicine ‘productive of health’, whereas as applied to the soul it means to be of a certain quality, e.g. temperate or courageous or just: and likewise also, as applied to ‘man’. Sometimes it signifies what happens at a certain time, as (e.g.) the good that happens at the right time: for what happens at the right time is called good. Often it signifies what is of certain quantity, e.g. as applied to the proper amount: for the proper amount too is called good. So then the term ‘good’ is ambiguous. In the same way also ‘clear’, as applied to a body, signifies a colour, but in regard to a note it denotes what is ‘easy to hear’. ‘Sharp’, too, is in a closely similar case: for the same term does not bear the same meaning in all its applications: for a sharp note is a swift note, as the mathematical theorists of harmony tell us, whereas a sharp (acute) angle is one that is less than a right angle, while a sharp dagger is one containing a sharp angle (point).
Look also at the genera of the objects denoted by the same term, and see if they are different without being subaltern, as (e.g.) ‘donkey’, which denotes both the animal and the engine. For the definition of them that corresponds to the name is different: for the one will be declared to be an

animal of a certain kind, and the other to be an engine of a certain kind. If, however, the genera be subaltern, there is no necessity for the definitions to be different. Thus (e.g.) 'animal' is the genus of 'raven', and so is 'bird'. Whenever therefore we say that the raven is a bird, we also say that it is a certain kind of animal, so that both the genera are predicated of it. Likewise also whenever we call the raven a 'flying biped animal', we declare it to be a bird: in this way, then, as well, both the genera are predicated of raven, and also their definition. But in the case of genera that are not subaltern this does not happen, for whenever we call a thing an 'engine', we do not call it an animal, nor vice versa.

Look also and see not only if the genera of the term before you are different without being subaltern, but also in the case of its contrary: for if its contrary bears several senses, clearly the term before you does so as well.

It is useful also to look at the definition that arises from the use of the term in combination, e.g. of a 'clear (*lit*. white) body' of a 'clear note'. For then if what is peculiar in each case be abstracted, the same expression ought to remain over. This does not happen in the case of **107**[b] ambiguous terms, e.g. in the cases just mentioned. For the former will be 'body possessing such and such a colour', while the latter will be 'a note easy to hear'. Abstract, then, 'a body' and 'a note', and the remainder in each case is not the same. It should, however, have been had the meaning of 'clear' in each case been synonymous.

Often in the actual definitions as well ambiguity creeps in unawares, and for this reason the definitions also should be examined. If (e.g.) any one describes what betokens and what produces health as 'related commensurably to health', we must not desist but go on to examine in what sense he has used the term 'commensurably' in each case, e.g. if in the latter case it means that 'it is of the right amount to produce health', whereas in the former it means that 'it is such as to betoken what kind of state prevails'.

Moreover, see if the terms cannot be compared as 'more or less' or as 'in like manner', as is the case (e.g.) with a 'clear' (*lit*. white) sound and a 'clear' garment, and a 'sharp' flavour and a 'sharp' note. For neither are these things said to be clear or sharp 'in a like degree', nor yet is the one said to be clearer or sharper than the other. 'Clear', then, and 'sharp' are ambiguous. For synonyms are always comparable; for they will always be used either in like manner, or else in a greater degree in one case.

Now since of genera that are different without being subaltern the differentiae also are different in kind, e.g. those of 'animal' and 'knowledge' (for the differentiae of these are different), look and see if the meanings comprised under the same term are differentiae of genera that are different without being subaltern, as e.g. 'sharp' is of a 'note' and a 'solid'. For being

‘sharp’ differentiates note from note, and likewise also one solid from another. ‘Sharp’, then, is an ambiguous term: for it forms differentiae of genera that are different without being subaltern.
Again, see if the actual meanings included under the same term themselves have different differentiae, e.g. ‘colour’ in bodies and ‘colour’ in tunes: for the differentiae of ‘colour’ in bodies are ‘sight-piercing’ and ‘sight-compressing’, whereas ‘colour’ in melodies has not the same differentiae. Colour, then, is an ambiguous term; for things that are the same have the same differentiae.
Moreover, since the species is never the differentia of anything, look and see if one of the meanings included under the same term be a species and another a differentia, as (e.g.) clear’ (*lit*. white) as applied to a body is a species of colour, whereas in the case of a note it is a differentia; for one note is differentiated from another by being ‘clear’.

Topics, BK I, CH 18 [108a18-36] 152b-d

18

It is useful to have examined the number of meanings of a term both for clearness’ sake (for a man is more likely to know what it is he asserts, if it has been made clear to him how many meanings it may have), and also with a view to ensuring that our reasonings shall be in accordance with the actual facts and not addressed merely to the term used. For as long as it is not clear in how many senses a term is used, it is possible that the answerer and the questioner are not directing their minds upon the same thing: whereas when once it has been made clear how many meanings there are, and also upon which of them the former directs his mind when he makes his assertion, the questioner would then look ridiculous if he failed to address his argument to this. It helps us also both to avoid being misled and to mislead by false reasoning: for if we know the number of meanings of a term, we shall certainly never be misled by false reasoning, but shall know if the questioner fails to address his argument to the same point; and when we ourselves put the questions we shall be able to mislead him, if our answerer happens not to know the number of meanings of our terms. This, however, is not possible in all cases, but only when of the many senses some are true and others are false. This manner of argument, however, does not belong properly to dialectic; dialecticians should therefore by all means beware of this kind of verbal discussion, unless any one is absolutely unable to discuss the subject before him in any other way.

Topics, BK II, CH 3 154d-155d

3

Moreover, if a term be used in several senses, and it has been laid down that it is or that it is not an attribute of S, you should show your case of one of its several senses, if you cannot show it of both. This rule is to be observed in cases where the difference of meaning is undetected; for supposing this to be obvious, then the other man will object that the point which he himself questioned has not been discussed, but only the other point. This commonplace rule is convertible for purposes both of establishing and of overthrowing a view. For if we want to establish a statement, we shall show that in one sense the attribute belongs, if we cannot show it of both senses: whereas if we are overthrowing a statement, we shall show that in one sense the attribute does not belong, if we cannot show it of both senses. Of course, in overthrowing a statement there is no need to start the discussion by securing any admission, either when the statement asserts or when it denies the attribute universally: for if we show that in any case whatever the attribute does not belong, we shall have demolished the universal assertion of it, and likewise also if we show that it belongs in a single case, we shall demolish the universal denial of it. Whereas in establishing a statement we ought to secure a preliminary admission that if it belongs in any case whatever, it belongs universally, supposing this claim to be a plausible one. For it is not **110**[b] enough to discuss a single instance in order to show that an attribute belongs universally; e.g. to argue that if the soul of man be immortal, then every soul is immortal, so that a previous admission must be secured that if any soul whatever be immortal, then every soul is immortal. This is not to be done in every case, but only whenever we are not easily able to quote any single argument applying to all cases in common, as (e.g.) the geometrician can argue that the triangle has its angles equal to two right angles.

If, again, the variety of meanings of a term be obvious, distinguish how many meanings it has before proceeding either to demolish or to establish it: e.g. supposing 'the right' to mean 'the expedient' or 'the honourable', you should try either to establish or to demolish both descriptions of the subject in question; e.g. by showing that it is honourable and expedient, or that it is neither honourable nor expedient. Supposing, however, that it is impossible to show both, you should show the one, adding an indication that it is true in the one sense and not in the other. The same rule applies also when the number of senses into which it is divided is more than two.

Again, consider those expressions whose meanings are many, but differ not by way of ambiguity of a term, but in some other way: e.g. 'The science of many things is one': here 'many things' may mean the end and the means to that end, as (e.g.) medicine is the science both of producing health and of dieting; or they may be both of them ends, as the science of contraries is said to be the same (for of contraries the one is no more an end than the other); or again they may be an essential and an accidental attribute, as

(e.g.) the essential fact that the triangle has its angles equal to two right angles, and the accidental fact that the equilateral figure has them so: for it is because of the accident of the equilateral triangle happening to be a triangle that we know that it has its angles equal to two right angles. If, then, it is not possible in any sense of the term that the science of many things should be the same, it clearly is altogether impossible that it should be so; or, if it is possible in some sense, then clearly it is possible.
Distinguish as many meanings as are required: e.g. if we want to establish a view, we should bring forward all such meanings as admit that view and should divide them only into those meanings which also are required for the establishment of our case: whereas if we want to overthrow a view, we should bring forward all that do not admit that view, and leave the rest aside. We must deal also in these cases as well with any uncertainty about the number of meanings involved. Further, that one thing is, or is not, 'of' another should be established by means of the same commonplace rules; e.g. that a particular science is of a particular thing, treated either as an end or as a means to its end, or as accidentally connected with it; or again that it is not 'of' it in any of the aforesaid ways. The same rule holds true also of desire and all other terms that have more than one object. For the 'desire of X' may mean the **111**[a] desire of it as an end (e.g. the desire of health) or as a means to an end (e.g. the desire of being doctored), or as a thing desired accidentally, as, in the case of wine, the sweet-toothed person desires it not because it is wine but because it is sweet. For essentially he desires the sweet, and only accidentally the wine: for if it be dry, he no longer desires it. His desire for it is therefore accidental. This rule is useful in dealing with relative terms: for cases of this kind are generally cases of relative terms.

Topics, BK VIII, CH 3 [158b8-24] 215b

The hardest, however, of all definitions to treat in argument are those that employ terms about which, in the first place, it is uncertain whether they are used in one sense or several, and, further, whether they are used literally or metaphorically by the definer. For because of their obscurity, it is impossible to argue upon such terms; and because of the impossibility of saying whether this obscurity is due to their being used metaphorically, it is impossible to refute them.
In general, it is safe to suppose that, whenever any problem proves intractable, it either needs definition or else bears either several senses, or a metaphorical sense, or it is not far removed from the first principles; or else the reason is that we have yet to discover in the first place just this—in which of the aforesaid directions the source of our difficulty lies: when we have made this clear, then obviously our business must be either

to define or to distinguish, or to supply the intermediate premisses: for it is through these that the final conclusions are shown.

Topics, BK VIII, CH 7 217c-d

7

The questioner should be met in a like manner also in the case of terms used obscurely, i.e. in several senses. For the answerer, if he does not understand, is always permitted to say 'I do not understand': he is not compelled to reply 'Yes' or 'No' to a question which may mean different things. Clearly, then, in the first place, if what is said be not clear, he ought not to hesitate to say that he does not understand it; for often people encounter some difficulty from assenting to questions that are not clearly put. If he understands the question and yet it covers many senses, then supposing what it says to be universally true or false, he should give it an unqualified assent or denial: if, on the other hand, it be partly true and partly false, he should add a comment that it bears different senses, and also that in one it is true, in the other false: for if he leave this distinction till later, it becomes uncertain whether originally as well he perceived the ambiguity or not. If he does not foresee the ambiguity, but assents to the question having in view the one sense of the words, then, if the questioner takes it in the other sense, he should say, 'That was not what I had in view when I admitted it; I meant the other sense': for if a term or expression covers more than one thing, it is easy to disagree. If, however, the question is both clear and simple, he should answer either 'Yes' or 'No'.

Sophistical Refutations, CH I [165a5-13] 227b-c

It is impossible in a discussion to bring in the actual things discussed: we use their names as symbols instead of them; and therefore we suppose that what follows in the names, follows in the things as well, just as people who calculate suppose in regard to their counters. But the two cases (names and things) are not alike. For names are finite and so is the sum-total of formulae, while things are infinite in number. Inevitably, then, the same formulae, and a single name, have a number of meanings.

Sophistical Refutations, CH 33 [182b13-31] 251d

Accordingly, just as in fallacies that depend on ambiguity, which are generally thought to be the silliest form of fallacy, some are clear even to the man in the street (for humorous phrases nearly all depend on diction; e.g. 'The man got the cart down from the stand'; and 'Where are you bound?' 'To the yard arm'; and 'Which cow will calve afore?' 'Neither, but both behind;' and 'Is the North wind clear?' 'No, indeed; for it has murdered the beggar and the merchant.' 'Is he a Goodenough-King?' 'No, indeed; a

Rob-son': and so with the great majority of the rest as well), while others appear to elude the most expert (and it is a symptom of this that they often fight about their terms, e.g. whether the meaning of being and one is the same in all their applications or different; for some think that being and one mean the same; while others solve the argument of Zeno and Parmenides by asserting that one and being are used in a number of senses), likewise also as regards fallacies of accident and each of the other types, some of the arguments will be easier to see while others are more difficult; also to grasp to which class a fallacy belongs, and whether it is a refutation or not a refutation, is not equally easy in all cases.

Heavens, BK I, CH 11 [280b1-7] 371d-372a

11

280[b] We must first distinguish the senses in which we use the words 'ungenerated' and 'generated', 'destructible' and 'indestructible'. These have many meanings, and though it may make no difference to the argument, yet some confusion of mind must result from treating as uniform in its use a word which has several distinct applications. The character which is the ground of the predication will always remain obscure.

Metaphysics, BK I, CH 9 [992a1-9] 510b

992[a] Further, why is a number, when taken all together, one?
Again, besides what has been said, if the units are *diverse* the Platonists should have spoken like those who say there are four, or two, elements; for each of these thinkers gives the name of element not to that which is common, e.g. to body, but to fire and earth, whether there is something common to them, viz. body, or not. But in fact the Platonists speak as if the One were *homogeneous* like fire or water; and if this is so, the numbers will not be substances. Evidently, if there is a One itself and this is a first principle, 'one' is being used in more than one sense; for otherwise the theory is impossible.

Metaphysics, BK IV, CH 4 [1006a29-b18] 525c-d

First then this at least is obviously true, that the word 'be' or 'not be' has a definite meaning, so that not everything will be 'so and not so'.[2]—Again, if 'man' has one meaning, let this be 'two-footed animal'; by having one meaning I understand this:—if 'man' means *'X'*, then if *A* is a man *'X'* will be what 'being a man' means for him. (It makes no difference even if one were to say a word has several meanings, if only they are limited in number; for to **1006**[b] each definition there might be assigned a different word. For instance, we might say that 'man' has not one meaning but several, one of

[2] Cf. Plato, *Theaetetus,* 183.

which would have one definition, viz. 'two-footed animal', while there might be also several other definitions if only they were limited in number; for a peculiar name might be assigned to each of the definitions. If, however, they were not limited but one were to say that the word has an infinite number of meanings, obviously reasoning would be impossible; for not to have one meaning is to have no meaning, and if words have no meaning our reasoning with one another, and indeed with ourselves, has been annihilated; for it is impossible to think of anything if we do not think of one thing; but if this *is* possible, one name might be assigned to this thing.) Let it be assumed then, as was said at the beginning,[3] that the name has a meaning and has one meaning; it is impossible, then, that 'being a man' should mean precisely 'not being a man', if 'man' not only signifies something about one subject but also has one significance (for we do not identify 'having one significance' with 'signifying something about one subject', since on *that* assumption even 'musical' and 'white' and 'man' would have had one significance, so that all things would have been one; for they would all have had the same significance).

Metaphysics, BK VII, CH 11 [1037a5-9] 560c

It is clear also that the soul is the primary substance and the body is matter, and man or animal is the compound of both taken universally; and ‘Socrates’ or ‘Coriscus’, if even the soul of Socrates may be called Socrates, has two meaning (for some mean by such a term the soul, and others mean the concrete thing), but if ‘Socrates’ or ‘Coriscus’ means simply this particular soul and this particular body, the individual is analogous to the universal in its composition.

Metaphysics, BK VIII, CH 3 [1043a29-b4] 567d

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We must not fail to notice that sometimes it is not clear whether a name means the composite substance, or the actuality or form, e.g. whether 'house' is a sign for the composite thing, 'a covering consisting of bricks and stones laid thus and thus', or for the actuality or form, 'a covering', and whether a line is 'twoness in length' or 'twoness', and whether an animal is soul in a body' or 'a soul'; for soul is the substance or actuality of some body. 'Animal' might even be applied to both, not as something definable by one formula, but as related to a single thing. But this question, while important for another purpose, is of no importance for the inquiry into sensible **1043**[b] substance; for the essence certainly attaches to the form and the actuality. For 'soul' and 'to be soul' are the same, but 'to be man' and 'man' are not the same, unless even the bare soul is to be called man;

[3] [a]21, 31.

and thus on one interpretation the thing is the same as its essence, and on another it is not.

Soul, BK III, CH 2 [425b26-426a26] 658a-c

The activity of the sensible object and that of the percipient sense is one and the same activity, and yet the distinction between their being remains. Take as illustration actual sound and actual hearing: a man may have hearing and yet not be hearing, and that which has a sound is not always sounding. But when that which can hear is actively hearing and which can sound is sounding, then the actual hearing and the actual sound are merged in one (these one might call **426**[a] respectively hearkening and sounding).

If it is true that the movement, both the acting and the being acted upon, is to be found in that which is acted upon, both the sound and the hearing so far as it is actual must be found in that which has the faculty of hearing; for it is in the passive factor that the actuality of the active or motive factor is realized; that is why that which causes movement may be at rest. Now the actuality of that which can sound is just sound or sounding, and the actuality of that which can hear is hearing or hearkening; 'sound' and 'hearing' are both ambiguous. The same account applies to the other senses and their objects. For as the-acting-and-being-acted-upon is to be found in the passive, not in the active factor, so also the actuality of the sensible object and that of the sensitive subject are both realized in the latter. But while in some cases each aspect of the total actuality has a distinct name, e.g. sounding and hearkening, in some one or other is nameless, e.g. the actuality of sight is called seeing, but the actuality of colour has no name: the actuality of the faculty of taste is called tasting, but the actuality of flavour has no name. Since the actualities of the sensible object and of the sensitive faculty are *one* actuality in spite of the difference between their modes of being, actual hearing and actual sounding appear and disappear from existence at one and the same moment, and so actual savour and actual tasting, &c., while as potentialities one of them may exist without the other. The earlier students of nature were mistaken in their view that without sight there was no white or black, without taste no savour. This statement of theirs is partly true, partly false: 'sense' and 'the sensible object' are ambiguous terms, i.e. may denote either potentialities or actualities: the statement is true of the latter, false of the former. This ambiguity they wholly failed to notice.

9 ARISTOTLE: *Parts of Animals*, BK II, CH 2 [648[a]37]-CH 3 [649[b]22] 172d-174b / *Ethics*, BK V, CH 1 [1129[a]18-31] 376b-d / *Politics*, BK II, CH 3 456c-457a; BK III, CH 3 [1276[a]8-24] 473a / *Rhetoric*, BK III, CH 2 [1404[b]38-39] 655b; CH 5 657d-658c

Parts of Animals, BK II, CH 2 [648a37]-CH 3 [649b22] 172d-174b

The explanation of the difficulty appears to 648[b] be that the term 'hotter' is used in several senses; so that different statements, though in verbal contradiction with each other, may yet all be more or less true. There ought, then, to be some clear understanding as to the sense in which natural substances are to be termed hot or cold, solid or fluid. For it appears manifest that these are properties on which even life and death are largely dependent, and that they are moreover the causes of sleep and waking, of maturity and old age, of health and disease; while no similar influence belongs to roughness and smoothness, to heaviness and lightness, nor, in short, to any other such properties of matter. That this should be so is but in accordance with rational expectation. For hot and cold, solid and fluid, as was stated in a former treatise,[4] are the foundations of the physical elements.

Is then the term hot used in one sense or in many? To answer this we must ascertain what special effect is attributed to a hotter substance, and if there be several such, how many these may be. A body then is in one sense said to be hotter than another, if it impart a greater amount of heat to an object in contact with it. In a second sense, that is said to be hotter which causes the keener sensation when touched, and especially if the sensation be attended with pain. This criterion, however, would seem sometimes to be a false one; for occasionally it is the idiosyncrasy of the individual that causes the sensation to be painful. Again, of two things, that is the hotter which the more readily melts a fusible substance, or sets on fire an inflammable one. Again, of two masses of one and the same substance, the larger is said to have more heat than the smaller. Again, of two bodies, that is said to be the hotter which takes the longer time in cooling, as also we call that which is rapidly heated hotter than that which is long about it; as though the rapidity implied proximity and this again similarity of nature, while the want of rapidity implied distance and this again dissimilarity of nature. The term hotter is used then in all the various senses that have been mentioned, and perhaps in still more. Now it is impossible for one body to be hotter than another in all these different fashions. Boiling water for instance, though it is more scalding than flame, yet has no power of burning or melting combustible or fusible matter, while flame has. So again this boiling water is hotter than a small fire, and yet gets cold more rapidly

[4] *On Generation and Corruption,* II. 2-3.

and completely. For in fact fire never becomes cold; whereas water invariably does so. Boiling water, again, is hotter to the touch than oil; yet it gets cold and solid more rapidly than this other fluid. Blood, again, is hotter to the touch than either water or oil, and yet coagulates before them. Iron, again, and stones and other similar bodies are longer in getting heated than water, but when once heated burn other substances with a much greater intensity. Another distinction is this. In some of the bodies which are called hot the heat is derived from without, **649**[a] while in others it belongs to the bodies themselves; and it makes a most important difference whether the heat has the former or the latter origin. For to call that one of two bodies the hotter, which is possessed of heat, we may almost say, accidentally and not of its own essence, is very much the same thing as if, finding that some man in a fever was a musician, one were to say that musicians are hotter than healthy men. Of that which is hot *per se* and that which is hot *per accidens*, the former is the slower to cool, while not rarely the latter is the hotter to the touch. The former again is the more burning of the two—flame, for instance, as compared with boiling water—while the latter, as the boiling water, which is hot *per accidens*, is the more heating to the touch. From all this it is clear that it is no simple matter to decide which of two bodies is the hotter. For the first may be the hotter in one sense, the second the hotter in another. Indeed in some of these cases it is impossible to say simply even whether a thing is hot or not. For the actual substratum may not itself be hot, but may be hot when coupled with heat as an attribute, as would be the case if one attached a single name to hot water or hot iron. It is after this manner that blood is hot. In such cases, in those, that is, in which the substratum owes its heat to an external influence, it is plain that cold is not a mere privation, but an actual existence.

There is no knowing but that even fire may be another of these cases. For the substratum of fire may be smoke or charcoal, and though the former of these is always hot, smoke being an uprising vapour, yet the latter becomes cold when its flame is extinguished, as also would oil and pinewood under similar circumstances. But even substances that have been burnt nearly all possess some heat, cinders, for example, and ashes, the dejections also of animals, and, among the excretions, bile; because some residue of heat has been left in them after their combustion. It is in another sense that pinewood and fat substances are hot; namely, because they rapidly assume the actuality of fire.

Heat appears to cause both coagulation and melting. Now such things as are formed merely of water are solidified by cold, while such as are formed of nothing but earth are solidified by fire. Hot substances again are solidified by cold, and, when they consist chiefly of earth, the process of solidification is rapid, and the resulting substance is insoluble; but, when their main constituent is water, the solid matter is again soluble. What

kinds of substances, however, admit of being solidified, and what are the causes of solidification, are questions that have already been dealt with more precisely in another treatise.[5]
In conclusion, then, seeing that the terms hot **649**[b] and hotter are used in many different senses, and that no one substance can be hotter than others in all these senses, we must, when we attribute this character to an object, add such further statements as that this substance is hotter *per se*, though that other is often hotter *per accidens*; or again, that this substance is potentially hot, that other actually so; or again, that this substance is hotter in the sense of causing a greater feeling of heat when touched, while that other is hotter in the sense of producing flame and burning. The term hot being used in all these various senses, it plainly follows that the term cold will also be used with like ambiguity.
So much then as to the signification of the terms hot and cold, hotter and colder.

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In natural sequence we have next to treat of solid and fluid. These terms are used in various senses. Sometimes, for instance, they denote things that are potentially, at other times things that are actually, solid or fluid. Ice for example, or any other solidified fluid, is spoken of as being actually and accidentally solid, while potentially and essentially it is fluid. Similarly earth and ashes and the like, when mixed with water, are actually and accidentally fluid, but potentially and essentially are solid. Now separate the constituents in such a mixture and you have on the one hand the watery components to which its fluidity was due, and these are both actually and potentially fluid, and on the other hand the earthy components, and these are in every way solid; and it is to bodies that are solid in this complete manner that the term 'solid' is most properly and absolutely applicable. So also the opposite term 'fluid' is strictly and absolutely applicable to that only which is both potentially and actually fluid. The same remark applies also to hot bodies and to cold.

Ethics, BK V, CH 1 [1129a18-31] 376b-d

Now often one contrary state is recognized from its contrary, and often states are recognized from the subjects that exhibit them; for (A) if good condition is known, bad condition also becomes known, and (B) good condition is known from the things that are in good condition, and they from it. If good condition is firmness of flesh, it is necessary both that bad condition should be flabbiness of flesh and that the wholesome should be that which causes firmness in flesh. And it follows for the most part that if

[5] Cf. *Meteorology,* IV. 6-8, 10.

one contrary is ambiguous the other also will be ambiguous; e.g. if 'just' is so, that 'unjust' will be so too.
Now 'justice' and 'injustice' seem to be ambiguous, but because their different meanings approach near to one another the ambiguity escapes notice and is not obvious as it is, comparatively, when the meanings are far apart, e.g. (for here the difference in outward form is great) as the ambiguity in the use of *κλείς* for the collar-bone of an animal and for that with which we lock a door. Let us take as a starting-point, then, the various meanings of 'an unjust man'.

Politics, BK II, CH 3 456c-457a

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But, even supposing that it were best for the community to have the greatest degree of unity, this unity is by no means proved to follow from the fact 'of all men saying "mine" and "not mine" at the same instant of time,' which, according to Socrates,[6] is the sign of perfect unity in a state. For the word 'all' is ambiguous. If the meaning be that every individual says 'mine' and 'not mine' at the same time, then perhaps the result at which Socrates aims may be in some degree accomplished; each man will call the same person his own son and the same person his wife, and so of his property and of all that falls to his lot. This, however, is not the way in which people would speak who had their had their wives and children in common; they would say 'all' but not 'each.' In like manner their property would be described as belonging to them, not severally but collectively. There is an obvious fallacy in the term 'all': like some other words, 'both,' 'odd,' 'even,' it is ambiguous, and even in abstract argument becomes a source of logical puzzles. That all persons call the same thing mine in the sense in which each does so may be a fine thing, but it is impracticable; or if the words are taken in the other sense, such a unity in no way conduces to harmony. And there is another objection to the proposal. For that which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Every one thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest; and only when he is himself concerned as an individual. For besides other considerations, everybody is more inclined to neglect the duty which he expects another to fulfill; as in families many attendants are often less useful than a few. Each citizen will have a thousand sons who will not be his sons individually but anybody will be equally **1262**[a] the son of anybody, and will therefore be neglected by all alike. Further, upon this principle, every one will use the word 'mine' of one who is prospering or the reverse, however small a fraction he may himself be of the whole number; the same boy will be 'so and so's son,' the son of each of the thousand, or whatever

[6] Plato, *Republic,* V. 462.

be the number of the citizens; and even about this he will not be positive; for it is impossible to know who chanced to have a child, or whether, if one came into existence, it has survived. But which is better—for each to say 'mine' in this way, making a man the same relation to two thousand or ten thousand citizens, or to use the word 'mine' in the ordinary and more restricted sense? For usually the same person is called by one man his own son whom another calls his own brother or cousin or kinsman—blood relation or connection by marriage either of himself or of some relation of his, and yet another his clansman or tribesman; and how much better is it to be the real cousin of somebody than to be a son after Plato's fashion! Nor is there any way of preventing brothers and children and fathers and mothers from sometimes recognizing one another; for children are born like their parents, and they will necessarily be finding indications of their relationship to one another. Geographers declare such to be the fact; they say that in part of Upper Libya, where the women are common, nevertheless the children who are born are assigned to their respective fathers on the ground of their likeness. And some women, like the females of other animals—for example, mares and cows—have a strong tendency to produce offspring resembling their parents, as was the case with the Pharsalian mare called Honest.

Politics, BK III, CH 3 [1276a8-24] 473a

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Whether they ought to be so or not is a question which is bound up with the previous inquiry.[7] For a parallel question is raised respecting the state, whether a certain act is or is not an act of the state; for example, in the transition from an oligarchy or a tyranny to a democracy. In such cases persons refuse to fulfill their contracts or any other obligations, on the ground that the tyrant, and not the state, contracted them; they argue that some constitutions are established by force, and not for the sake of the common good. But this would apply equally to democracies, for they too may be founded on violence, and then the acts of the democracy will be neither more nor less acts of the state in question than those of an oligarchy or of a tyranny. This question runs up into another:—on what principle shall we ever say that the state is the same, or different? It would be a very superficial view which considered only the place and the inhabitants (for the soil and the population may be separated, and some of the inhabitants may live in one place and some in another). This, however, is not a very serious difficulty; we need only remark that the word 'state' is ambiguous.

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[7] Cf. 1274^{b}34.

Rhetoric, BK III, CH 2 [1404b38-39] 655b

We can now see that a good writer can produce a style that is distinguished without being obtrusive, and is at the same time clear, thus satisfying our definition of good oratorical prose. Words of ambiguous meaning are chiefly useful to enable the sophist to mislead his hearers.

Rhetoric, BK III, CH 5 657d-658c

5

Such, then, are the ingredients of which speech is composed. The foundation of good style is correctness of language, which falls under five heads. (1) First, the proper use of connecting words, and the arrangement of them in the natural sequence which some of them require. For instance, the connective *μέν* (e.g. *ἐγώ μέν*) requires the correlative *δέ* (e.g. *δ δέ*). The answering word must be brought in before the first has been forgotten, and not be widely separated from it; nor, except in the few cases where this is appropriate, is another connective to be introduced before the one required. Consider the sentence, 'But as soon as he told me (for Cleon had come begging and praying), took them along and set out.' In this sentence many connecting words are inserted in front of the one required to complete the sense; and if there is a long interval before 'set out', the result is obscurity. One merit, then, of good style lies in the right use of connecting words. (2) The second lies in calling things by their own special names and not by vague general ones. (3) The third is to avoid ambiguities; unless, indeed, you definitely desire to be ambiguous, as those do who have nothing to say but are pretending to mean something. Such people are apt to put that sort of thing into verse. Empedocles, for instance, by his long circumlocutions imposes on his hearers; these are affected in the same way as most people are when they listen to diviners, whose ambiguous utterances are received with nods of acquiescence—

Croesus by crossing the Halys will ruin a mighty realm.[8]

1407[b] Diviners use these vague generalities about the matter in hand because their predictions are thus, as a rule, less likely to be falsified. We are more likely to be right, in the game of 'odd and even', if we simply guess 'even' or 'odd' than if we guess at the actual number; and the oracle-monger is more likely to be right if he simply says that a thing will happen than if he says *when* it will happen, and therefore he refuses to add a definite date. All these ambiguities have the same sort of effect, and are to be avoided unless we have some such object as that mentioned. (4) A fourth rule is to observe Protagoras' classification of nouns into male, female, and inanimate; for these distinctions also must be correctly given. 'Upon her arrival she said her say and departed (*ἡ δ' ἐλθοῦσα καὶ διαλεχθεῖσα*

[8] Cp. Herodotus, I. 53, 91.

ᾠχετο).' (5) A fifth rule is to express plurality, fewness, and unity by the correct wording, e.g. 'Having come, they struck me (*οί δ' έλθόντες ἔτυπτόν με*).' It is a general rule that a written composition should be easy to read and therefore easy to deliver. This cannot be so where there are many connecting words or clauses, or where punctuation is hard, as in the writings of Heracleitus. To punctuate Heracleitus is no easy task, because we often cannot tell whether a particular word belongs to what precedes or what follows it. Thus, at the outset of his treatise he says, 'Though this truth is always men understand it not',[9] where it is not clear with which of the two clauses the word 'always' should be joined by the punctuation. Further, the following fact leads to solecism, viz. that the sentence does not work out properly if you annex to two terms a third which does not suit them both. Thus either 'sound' or 'colour' will fail to work out properly with some verbs: 'perceive' will apply to both, 'see' will not. Obscurity is also caused if, when you intend to insert a number of details, you do not first make your meaning clear; for instance, if you say, 'I meant, after telling him this, that and the other thing, to set out', rather than something of this kind 'I meant to set out after telling him; then this, that, and the other thing occurred.'

10 GALEN: *Natural Faculties*, BK I, CH 2, 168c

The discussion which follows we shall devote entirely, as we originally proposed, to an enquiry into the number and character of the faculties of Nature, and what is the effect which each naturally produces. Now, of course, I mean by an effect that which has already come into existence and has been completed by the activity of these faculties—for example, blood, flesh, or nerve. And activity is the name I give to the active change or motion, and the cause of this I call a faculty. Thus, when food turns into blood, the motion of the food is passive, and that of the vein active. Similarly, when the limbs have their position their position altered, it is the muscle which produces, and the bones which undergo the motion. In these cases I call the motion of the vein and of the muscle an activity, and that of the food and the bones a symptom or affection, since the first group undergoes alteration and the second group is merely transported. One might, therefore, also speak of the activity as an effect of Nature—for example, digestion, absorption, blood-production; one could not, however, in every case call the effect an activity; thus flesh is an effect of Nature, but it is, of course, not an activity. It is, therefore, clear that one of these terms is used in two senses, but not the other.

[9] Heracleitus, fr. I, Diels.

18 AUGUSTINE: *Christian Doctrine*, BK II, CH 6 638a-d; CH 10 640d-641a; BK III 657a-674d

Christian Doctrine, BK II, CH 6 638a-d

Chap. 6. *Use of the obscurities in Scripture which arise from its figurative language*

7. But hasty and careless readers are led astray by many and manifold obscurities and ambiguities, substituting one meaning for another; and in some places they cannot hit upon even a fair interpretation. Some of the expressions are so obscure as to shroud the meaning in the thickest darkness. And I do not doubt that all this was divinely arranged for the purpose of subduing pride by toil, and of preventing a feeling of satiety in the intellect, which generally holds in small esteem what is discovered without difficulty. For why is it, I ask, that if any one says that there are holy and just men whose life and conversation the Church of Christ uses as a means of redeeming those who come to it from all kinds of superstitions, and making them through their imitation of good men members of its own body; men who, as good and true servants of God, have come to the baptismal font laying down the burdens of the world, and who rising thence do, through the implanting of the Holy Spirit, yield the fruit of a twofold love, a love, that is, of God and their neighbor; how is it, I say, that if a man says this, he does not please his hearer so much as when he draws the same meaning from that passage in Canticles, where it is said of the Church, when it is being praised under the figure of a beautiful woman, "Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are shorn which came up from the washing, whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren among them"?[10] Does the hearer learn anything more than when he listens to the same thought expressed in the plainest language, without the help of this figure? And yet, I don't know why, I feel greater pleasure in contemplating holy men, when I view them as the teeth of the Church, tearing men away from their errors, and bringing them into the Church's body, with all their harshness softened down, just as if they had been torn off and masticated by the teeth. It is with the greatest pleasure, too, that I recognize them under the figure of sheep that have been shorn, laying down the burthens of the world like fleeces, and coming up from the washing, i.e., from baptism, and all bearing twins, i.e., the twin commandments of love, and none among them barren in that holy fruit.

8. But why I view them with greater delight under that aspect than if no such figure were drawn from the sacred books, though the fact would remain the same and the knowledge the same, is another question, and one very difficult to answer. Nobody, however, has any doubt about the facts, both that it is pleasanter in some cases to have knowledge communicated

[10] Song of Sol. 4. 2.

through figures, and that what is attended with difficulty in the seeking gives greater pleasure in the finding. For those who seek but do not find suffer from hunger. Those, again, who do not seek at all because they have what they require just beside them often grow languid from satiety. Now weakness from either of these causes is to be avoided. Accordingly the Holy Spirit has, with admirable wisdom and care for our welfare, so arranged the Holy Scriptures as by the plainer passages to satisfy our hunger, and by the more obscure to stimulate our appetite. For almost nothing is dug out of those obscure passages which may not be found set forth in the plainest language elsewhere.

Christian Doctrine, BK II, CH 10 640d-641a

Chap. 10. *Unknown or ambiguous sings prevent Scripture from being understood*

15. Now there are two causes which prevent what is written from being understood: its being vailed either under unknown, or under ambiguous signs. Signs are either proper or figurative. They are called proper when they are used to point out the objects they were designed to point out, as we say *bos* when we mean an ox, because all men who with us use the Latin tongue call it by this name. Signs are figurative when the things themselves which we indicate by the proper names are used to signify something else, as we say *bos*, and understand by that syllable the ox, which is ordinarily called by that name; but then further by that ox understand a preacher of the gospel, as Scripture signifies, according to the apostle's explanation, when it says: “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.”[11]

Christian Doctrine, BK III 657a-674d

BOOK III

ARGUMENT. THE AUTHOR, HAVING DISCUSSED IN THE PRECEDING BOOK THE METHOD OF DEALING WITH UNKNOWN SIGNS, GOES ON IN THIS THIRD BOOK TO TREAT OF AMBIGUOUS SIGNS. SUCH SIGNS MAY BEE EITHER DIRECT OR FIGURATIVE. IN THE CASE OF DIRECT SIGNS AMBIGUITY MAY ARISE FROM THE PUNCTUATION, THE PRONUNCIATION, OR THE DOUBTFUL SIGNIFICATION OF THE WORDS, AND IS TO BE RESOLVED BY ATTENTION TO THE CONTEXT, A COMPARISON OF TRANSLATIONS, OR A REFERENCE TO THE ORIGINAL TONGUE. IN THE CASE OF FIGURATIVE SIGNS WE NEED TO GUARD AGAINST TWO MISTAKES:—1. THE INTERPRETING LITERAL EXPRESSIONS FIGURATIVELY; 2. THE INTERPRETING FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS LITERALLY. THE AUTHOR LAYS DOWN RULES BY WHICH WE MAY DECIDE WHETHER AN EXPRESSION IS LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE; THE GENERAL RULE BEING, THAT WHATEVER CAN BE SHOWN TO BE IN ITS LITERAL SENSE INCONSISTENT EITHER WITH PURITY OF LIFE OR CORRECTNESS OF DOCTRINE MUST BE TAKEN FIGURATIVELY. HE THEN GOES ON TO LAY DOWN RULES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF EXPRESSIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN PROVED TO BE FIGURATIVE; THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE BEING, THAT NO INTERPRETATION CAN BE TRUE WHICH DOES NOT PROMOTE THE LOVE OF

[11] I Cor. 9. 9.

GOD AND THE LOVE OF MAN. THE AUTHOR THEN PROCEEDS TO EXPOUND AND ILLUSTRATE THE SEVEN RULES OF TICHONIUS THE DONATIST, WHICH HE COMMENDS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE STUDENT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Chap. 1. *Summary of the foregoing books, and scope of that which follows*

1. The man who fears God seeks diligently in Holy Scripture for a knowledge of His will. And when he has become meek through piety, so as to have no love of strife; when furnished also with a knowledge of languages, so as not to be stopped by unknown words and forms of speech, and with the knowledge of certain necessary objects, so as not to be ignorant of the force and nature of those which are used figuratively; and assisted, besides, by accuracy in the texts, which has been secured by skill and care in the matter of correction; when thus prepared, let him proceed to the examination and solution of the ambiguities of Scripture. And that he may not be led astray by ambiguous signs, so far as I can give him instruction (it may happen, however, that either from the greatness of his intellect, or the greater clearness of the light he enjoys, he shall laugh at the methods I am going to point out as childish), but yet, as I was going to say, so far as I can give instruction, let him who is in such a state of mind that he can be instructed by me know, that the ambiguity of Scripture lies either in proper words or in metaphorical, classes which I have already described in the second book.[12]

Chap. 2. *Rule for removing ambiguity by attending to punctuation*

2. But when proper words make Scripture ambiguous, we must see in the first place that there is nothing wrong in our punctuation or pronunciation. Accordingly, if, when attention is given to the passage, it shall appear to be uncertain in what way it ought to be punctuated or pronounced, let the reader consult the rule of faith which he has gathered from the plainer passages of Scripture, and from the authority of the Church, and of which I treated at sufficient length when I was speaking in the first book about things. But if both readings, or all of them (if there are more than two), give a meaning in harmony with the faith, it remains to consult the context, both what goes before and what comes after, to see which interpretation, out of many that offer themselves, it pronounces for and permits to be dovetailed into itself.

3. Now look at some examples. The heretical pointing,[13] *"In principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat,"* [14] so as to make the next sentence run, *"Verbum hoc erat in principio apud Deum,"* [15] arises out of unwillingness to confess that the Word was God. But this must be rejected by the rule of faith, which, in reference to the equality of the Trinity, directs

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[12] See BK. II. Chap. 10.

[13] John. I. 1, 2.

[14] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and god was.

[15] This Word was in the beginning with God.

us to say: *“et Deus erat verbum,”* [16] and then to add: *“hoc erat in principio apud Deum.”* [17]

4. But the following ambiguity of punctuation does not go against the faith in either way you take it, and therefore must be decided from the context. It is where the apostle says: “What I shall choose I wot not: for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” [18] Now it is uncertain whether we should read, *“ex duobus concupiscentiam habens”* [having a desire for two things], or *“compellor autem ex duobus”* [I am in a strait betwixt two]; and so to add: *“concupiscentiam habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo”* [having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ]. But since there follows *“multo enim magis optimum”* [for it is far better], it is evident that he says he has a desire for that which is better; so that, while he is in a strait betwixt two, yet he has a desire for one and sees a necessity for the other; a desire, viz., to be with Christ, and a necessity to remain in the flesh. Now this ambiguity is resolved by one word that follows, which is translated *enim* [for]; and the translators who have omitted this particle have preferred the interpretation which makes the apostle seem not only in a strait betwixt two, but also to have a desire for two. We must therefore punctuate the sentence thus: *“et quid eligam ignoro: compellor autem ex duobus”* [what I shall choose I wot not: for I am in a strait betwixt two]; and after this point follows: *“concupiscentiam habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo”* [having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ]. And, as if he were asked why he has a desire for this in preference to the other, he adds: *“multo enim magis optimum”* [for it is far better]. Why, then, is he in a strait betwixt the two? Because there is a need for his remaining, which he adds in these terms: *“manere in carne necessarium propter vos”* [nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you].

5. Where, however, the ambiguity cannot be cleared up, either by the rule of faith or by the context, there is nothing to hinder us to point the sentence according to any method we choose of those that suggest themselves. As is the case in that passage to the Corinthians: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Receive us; we have wronged no man.” [19] It is doubtful whether we should read, *“mundemus nos ab omni coinquinatione carnis et spiritus”* [let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit], in accordance with the passage, “that she

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[16] And the Word was God.
[17] The same was in the beginning with God.
[18] Phil. 1. 22-24.
[19] II Cor. 7. 1, 2.

may be holy both in body and in spirit," [20] or, *"mundemus nos ab omni coinquinatione carnis"* [let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh], so as to make the next sentence, *"et spiritus perficientes sanctificationem in timore Dei capite nos"* [and perfecting holiness of spirit in the fear of God, receive us]. Such ambiguities of punctuation, therefore, are left to the reader's discretion.

Chap. 3. *How pronunciation serves to remove ambiguity. Different kinds of interrogation*

6. And all the directions that I have given about ambiguous punctuations are to be observed likewise in the case of doubtful pronunciations. For these too, unless the fault lies in the carelessness of the reader, are corrected either by the rule of faith, or by a reference to the preceding or succeeding context; or if neither of these methods is applied with success, they will remain doubtful, but so that the reader will not be in fault in whatever way he may pronounce them. For example, if our faith that God will not bring any charges against His elect, and that Christ will not condemn His elect, did not stand in the way, this passage, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" might be pronounced in such a way as to make what follows an answer to this question, "God who justifieth," and to make a second question, "Who is he that condemneth?" with the answer, "Christ Jesus who died." [21] But as it would be the height of madness to believe this, the passage will be pronounced in such a way as to make the first part a question of inquiry[22] and the second a rhetorical interrogative.[23] Now the ancients said that the difference between an inquiry and an interrogative was this, that an inquiry admits of many answers, but to an interrogative the answer must be either "No" or "Yes." The passage will be pronounced, then, in such a way that after the inquiry, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" what follows will be put as an interrogative: "Shall God who justifieth?"—the answer "No" being understood. And in the same way we shall have the inquiry, "Who is he that condemneth?" and the answer here again in the form of an interrogative, "Is it Christ who died? yea, rather, who is risen again? who is even at the right hand of God? who also maketh intercession for us?"—the answer "No" being understood to every one of these questions. On the other hand, in that passage where the apostle says, "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness";[24] unless after the inquiry, "What shall we say then?" what follows were given as the answer to this question: "That the Gentiles, which

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[20] I Cor. 7. 34.
[21] Rom. 8. 33, 34.
[22] *Percontatio.*
[23] *Interrogatio.*
[24] Rom. 9. 30.

followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness"; it would not be in harmony with the succeeding context. But with whatever tone of voice one may choose to pronounce that saying of Nathanael's, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"[25]—whether with that of a man who gives an affirmative answer, so that "out of Nazareth" is the only part that belongs to the interrogation, or with that of a man who asks the whole question with doubt and hesitation—I do not see how a difference can be made. But neither sense is opposed to faith.

7. There is, again, an ambiguity arising out of the doubtful sound of syllables; and this of course has relation to pronunciation. For example, in the passage, "My bone [*os meum*] was not hid from Thee, which Thou didst make in secret," [26] it is not clear to the reader whether he should take the word *os* as short or long. If he make it short, it is the singular of *ossa* [bones]; if he make it long, it is the singular of *ora* [mouths]. Now difficulties such as this are cleared up by looking into the original tongue, for in the Greek we find not *στόμα* [mouth], but *ὀστέον* [bone]. And for this reason the vulgar idiom is frequently more useful in conveying the sense than the pure speech of the educated. For I would rather have the barbarism, *non est absconditum a te ossum meum,*[27] than have the passage in better Latin, but the sense less clear. But sometimes when the sound of a syllable is doubtful, it is decided by a word near it belonging to the same sentence. As, for example, that saying of the apostle, "Of the which I tell you before [*prædico*], as I have also told you in time past [*prædixi*], that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." [28] Now if he had only said, "Of the which I tell you before [*quæ prædico vobis*]," and had not added, "as I have also told you in time past [*sicut prædixi*]," we could not know without going back to the original whether in the word *prædico* the middle syllable should be pronounced long or short. But as it is, it is clear that it should be pronounced long; for he does not say, *sicut prædicavi*, but *sicut prædixi*.

Chap. 4. *How ambiguities may be solved*

8. And not only these, but also those ambiguities that do not relate either to punctuation or pronunciation, are to be examined in the same way. For example, that one in the Epistle to the Thessalonians: *Propterea consolati sumus fratres in vobis.*[29] Now it is doubtful whether *fratres* [brethren] is in the vocative or accusative case, and it is not contrary to faith to take it either way. But in the Greek language the two cases are not the same in form; and accordingly, when we look into the original, the case is shown to

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[25] John, 1. 47.
[26] Ps. 139. 16.
[27] My bone was not hid from Thee.
[28] Gal. 5. 21.
[29] I Thess. 3. 7. "Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you."

be vocative. Now if the translator had chosen to say, *propterea consolationem habuimus fratres in vobis,* he would have followed the words less literally, but there would have been less doubt about the meaning; or, indeed, if he had added *nostri*, hardly any one would have doubted that the vocative case was meant when he heard *propterea consolati sumus fratres nostri in vobis*. But this is a rather dangerous liberty to take. It has been taken, however, in that passage to the Corinthians, where the apostle says, "I protest by your rejoicing [*per vestram gloriam*] which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." [30] For one translator has it, *per vestram* juro *gloriam*, the form of adjuration appearing in the Greek without any ambiguity. It is therefore very rare and very difficult to find any ambiguity in the case of proper words, as far at least as Holy Scripture is concerned, which neither the context, showing the design of the writer, nor a comparison of translations, nor a reference to the original tongue, will suffice to explain.

Chap. 5. *It is a wretched slavery which takes the figurative expressions of Scripture in a literal sense*

9. But the ambiguities of metaphorical words, about which I am next to speak, demand no ordinary care and diligence. In the first place, we must beware of taking a figurative expression literally. For the saying of the apostle applies in this case too: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." [31] For when what is said figuratively is taken as if it were said literally, it is understood in a carnal manner. And nothing is more fittingly called the death of the soul than when that in it which raises it above the brutes, the intelligence namely, is put in subjection to the flesh by a blind adherence to the letter. For he who follows the letter takes figurative words as if they were proper, and does not carry out what is indicated by a proper word into its secondary signification; but, if he hears of the Sabbath, for example, thinks of nothing but the one day out of seven which recurs in constant succession; and when he hears of a sacrifice, does not carry his thoughts beyond the customary offerings of victims from the flock, and of the fruits of the earth. Now it is surely a miserable slavery of the soul to take signs for things, and to be unable to lift the eye of the mind above what is corporeal and created, that it may drink in eternal light.

Chap. 6. *Utility of the bondage of the Jews*

10. This bondage, however, in the case of the Jewish people, differed widely from what it was in the case of the other nations; because, though the former were in bondage to temporal things, it was in such a way that in all these the One God was put before their minds. And although they paid attention to the signs of spiritual realities in place of the realities themselves, not knowing to what the signs referred, still they had this

[30] I Cor. 15. 31.
[31] II Cor. 3. 6.

conviction rooted in their minds, that in subjecting themselves to such a bondage they were doing the pleasure of the one invisible God of all. And the apostle describes this bondage as being like to that of boys under the guidance of a schoolmaster.[32] And those who clung obstinately to such signs could not endure our Lord's neglect of them when the time for their revelation had come; and hence their leaders brought it as a charge against Him that He healed on the Sabbath, and the people, clinging to these signs as if they were realities, could not believe that one who refused to observe them in the way the Jews did was God, or came from God. But those who did believe, from among whom the first Church at Jerusalem was formed, showed clearly how great an advantage it had been to be so guided by the schoolmaster that signs, which had been for a season imposed on the obedient, fixed the thoughts of those who observed them on the worship of the One God who made heaven and earth. These men, because they had been very near to spiritual things (for even in the temporal and carnal offerings and types, though they did not clearly apprehend their spiritual meaning, they had learnt to adore the One Eternal God), were filled with such a measure of the Holy Spirit that they sold all their goods, and laid their price at the apostles' feet to be distributed among the needy,[33] and consecrated themselves wholly to God as a new temple, of which the old temple they were serving was but the earthly type.

11. Now it is not recorded that any of the Gentile churches did this, because men who had for their gods idols made with hands had not been so near to spiritual things.

Chap. 7. *The useless bondage of the Gentiles*

And if ever any of them endeavored to make it out that their idols were only signs, yet still they used them in reference to the worship and adoration of the creature. What difference does it make to me, for instance, that the image of Neptune is not itself to be considered a god, but only as representing the wide ocean, and all the other waters besides that spring out of fountains? As it is described by a poet of theirs,[34] who says, if I recollect aright, “Thou, Father Neptune, whose hoary temples are wreathed with the resounding sea, whose beard is the mighty ocean flowing forth unceasingly, and whose hair is the winding rivers.” This husk shakes its rattling stones within a sweet covering, and yet it is not food for men, but for swine. He who knows the gospel knows what I mean.[35] What profit is it to me, then, that the image of Neptune is used with a reference to this explanation of it, unless indeed the result be that I worship neither? For any statue you like to take is as much god to me as the wide ocean. I grant,

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[32] Gal. 3. 24.
[33] Acts, 4. 34, 35.
[34] Claudian.
[35] Luke, 15. 16.

however, that they who make gods of the works of man have sunk lower than they who make gods of the works of God. But the command is that we should love and serve the One God, who is the Maker of all those things, the images of which are worshipped by the heathen either as gods, or as signs and representations of gods. If, then, to take a sign which has been established for a useful end instead of the thing itself which it was designed to signify, is bondage to the flesh, how much more so is it to take signs intended to represent useless things for the things themselves! For even if you go back to the very things signified by such signs, and engage your mind in the worship of these, you will not be anything the more free from the burden and the livery of bondage to the flesh.

Chap. 8. *The Jews liberated from their bondage in one way, the Gentiles in another*

12. Accordingly the liberty that comes by Christ took those whom it found under bondage to useful signs, and who were (so to speak) near to it, and, interpreting the signs to which they were in bondage, set them free by raising them to the realities of which these were signs. And out of such were formed the churches of the saints of Israel. Those, on the other hand, whom it found in bondage to useless signs, it not only freed from their slavery to such signs, but brought to nothing and cleared out of the way all these signs themselves, so that the Gentiles were turned from the corruption of a multitude of false gods, which Scripture frequently and justly speaks of as fornication, to the worship of the One God: not that they might now fall into bondage to signs of a useful kind, but rather that they might exercise their minds in the spiritual understanding of such.

Chap. 9. *Who is in bondage to signs, and who not*

13. Now he is in bondage to a sign who uses, or pays homage to, any significant object without knowing what it signifies: he, on the other hand, who either uses or honors a useful sign divinely appointed, whose force and significance he understands, does not honor the sign which is seen and temporal, but that to which all such signs refer. Now such a man is spiritual and free even at the time of his bondage, when it is not yet expedient to reveal to carnal minds those signs by subjection to which their carnality is to be overcome. To this class of spiritual persons belonged the patriarchs and the prophets, and all those among the people of Israel through whose instrumentality the Holy Spirit ministered unto us the aids and consolations of the Scriptures. But at the present time, after that the proof of our liberty has shone forth so clearly in the resurrection of our Lord, we are not oppressed with the heavy burden of attending even to those signs which we now understand, but our Lord Himself, and apostolic practice, have handed down to us a few rites in place of many, and these at once very easy to perform, most majestic in their significance, and most sacred in the observance; such, for example, as the sacrament of baptism, and the

celebration of the body and blood of the Lord. And as soon as any one looks upon these observances he knows to what they refer, and so reveres them not in carnal bondage, but in spiritual freedom. Now, as to follow the letter, and to take signs for the things that are signified by them, is a mark of weakness and bondage; so to interpret signs wrongly is the result of being misled by error. He, however, who does not understand what a sign signifies, but yet knows that it is a sign, is not in bondage. And it is better even to be in bondage to unknown but useful signs than, by interpreting them wrongly, to draw the neck from under the yoke of bondage only to insert it in the coils of error.

Chap. 10. *How we are to discern whether a phrase is figurative*

14. But in addition to the foregoing rule, which guards us against taking a metaphorical form of speech as if it were literal, we must also pay heed to that which tells us not to take a literal form of speech as if it were figurative. In the first place, then, we must show the way to find out whether a phrase is literal or figurative. And the way is certainly as follows: Whatever there is in the word of God that cannot, when taken literally, be referred either to purity of life or soundness of doctrine, you may set down as figurative. Purity of life has reference to the love of God and one's neighbor; soundness of doctrine to the knowledge of God and one's neighbor. Every man, moreover, has hope in his own conscience, so far as he perceives that he has attained to the love and knowledge of God and his neighbor. Now all these matters have been spoken of in the first book.

15. But as men are prone to estimate sins, not by reference to their inherent sinfulness, but rather by reference to their own customs, it frequently happens that a man will think nothing blameable except what the men of his own country and time are accustomed to condemn, and nothing worthy of praise or approval except what is sanctioned by the custom of his companions; and thus it comes to pass, that if Scripture either enjoins what is opposed to the customs of the hearers, or condemns what is not so opposed, and if at the same time the authority of the word has a hold upon their minds, they think that the expression is figurative. Now Scripture enjoins nothing except charity, and condemns nothing except lust, and in that way fashions the lives of men. In the same way, if an erroneous opinion has taken possession of the mind, men think that whatever Scripture asserts contrary to this must be figurative. Now Scripture asserts nothing but the catholic faith, in regard to things past, future, and present. It is a narrative of the past, a prophecy of the future, and a description of the present. But all these tend to nourish and strengthen charity, and to overcome and root out lust.

16. I mean by charity that affection of the mind which aims at the enjoyment of God for His own sake, and the enjoyment of one's self and one's neighbor in subordination to God; by lust I mean that affection of the

mind which aims at enjoying one's self and one's neighbor, and other corporeal things, without reference to God. Again, what lust, when unsubdued, does towards corrupting one's own soul and body, is called *vice*; but what it does to injure another is called *crime*. And these are the two classes into which all sins may be divided. But the vices come first; for when these have exhausted the soul, and reduced it to a kind of poverty, it easily slides into crimes, in order to remove hindrances to, or to find assistance in, its vices. In the same way, what charity does with a view to one's own advantage is *prudence*; but what it does with a view to a neighbor's advantage is called *benevolence*. And here prudence comes first; because no one can confer an advantage on another which he does not himself possess. Now in proportion as the dominion of lust is pulled down, in the same proportion is that of charity built up.

Chap. 11. *Rule for interpreting phrases which seem to ascribe severity to God and the saints*

17. Every severity, therefore, and apparent cruelty, either in word or deed, that is ascribed in Holy Scripture to God or His saints, avails to the pulling down of the dominion of lust. And if its meaning be clear, we are not to give it some secondary reference, as if it were spoken figuratively. Take, for example, that saying of the apostle: “But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.” [36] But this is addressed to those who, being unwilling to subdue their lust, are themselves involved in the destruction of their lust. When, however, the dominion of lust is overturned in a man over whom it had held sway, this plain expression is used: “They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” [37] Only that, even in these instances, some words are used figuratively, as for example, “the wrath of God” and “crucified.” But these are not so numerous, nor placed in such a way as to obscure the sense, and make it allegorical or enigmatical, which is the kind of expression properly called *figurative*. But in the saying addressed to Jeremiah, “See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down,” [38] there is no doubt the whole of the language is figurative, and to be referred to the end I have spoken of.

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[36] Rom. 2. 5-9.
[37] Gal. 5. 24.
[38] Jer. 1. 10.

Chap. 12. *Rule for interpreting those sayings and actions which are ascribed to God and the saints, and which yet seem to the unskilful to be wicked*

18. Those things, again, whether only sayings or whether actual deeds, which appear to the inexperienced to be sinful, and which are ascribed to God, or to men whose holiness is put before us as an example, are wholly figurative, and the hidden kernel of meaning they contain is to be picked out as food for the nourishment of charity. Now, whoever uses transitory objects less freely than is the custom of those among whom he lives, is either temperate or superstitious; whoever, on the other hand, uses them so as to transgress the bounds of the custom of the good men about him, either has a further meaning in what he does, or is sinful. In all such matters it is not the use of the objects, but the lust of the user, that is to blame. Nobody in his sober senses would believe, for example, that when our Lord's feet were anointed by the woman with precious ointment,[39] it was for the same purpose for which luxurious and profligate men are accustomed to have theirs anointed in those banquets which we abhor. For the sweet odor means the good report which is earned by a life of good works; and the man who wins this, while following in the footsteps of Christ, anoints His feet (so to speak) with the most precious ointment. And so that which in the case of other persons is often a sin, becomes, when ascribed to God or a prophet, the sign of some great truth. Keeping company with a harlot, for example, is one thing when it is the result of abandoned manners, another thing when done in the course of his prophecy by the prophet Hosea.[40] Because it is a shamefully wicked thing to strip the body naked at a banquet among the drunken and licentious, it does not follow that it is a sin to be naked in the baths.

19. We must, therefore, consider carefully what is suitable to times and places and persons, and not rashly charge men with sins. For it is possible that a wise man may use the daintiest food without any sin of epicurism or gluttony, while a fool will crave for the vilest food with a most disgusting eagerness of appetite. And any sane man would prefer eating fish after the manner of our Lord, to eating lentils after the manner of Esau, or barley after the manner of oxen. For there are several beasts that feed on commoner kinds of food, but it does not follow that they are more temperate than we are. For in all matters of this kind it is not the nature of the things we use, but our reason for using them, and our manner of seeking them, that make what we do either praiseworthy or blameable.

20. Now the saints of ancient times were, under the form of an earthly kingdom, foreshadowing and foretelling the kingdom of heaven. And on account of the necessity for a numerous offspring, the custom of one man having several wives was at that time blameless: and for the same reason it

[39] John, 12. 3.
[40] Hos. 1. 2.

was not proper for one woman to have several husbands, because a woman does not in that way become more fruitful, but, on the contrary, it is base harlotry to seek either gain or offspring by promiscuous intercourse. In regard to matters of this sort, whatever the holy men of those times did without lust, Scripture passes over without blame, although they did things which could not be done at the present time, except through lust. And everything of this nature that is there narrated we are to take not only in its historical and literal, but also in its figurative and prophetical sense, and to interpret as bearing ultimately upon the end of love towards God or our neighbor, or both. For as it was disgraceful among the ancient Romans to wear tunics reaching to the heels, and furnished with sleeves, but now it is disgraceful for men honorably born not to wear tunics of that description: so we must take heed in regard to other things also, that lust do not mix with our use of them; for lust not only abuses to wicked ends the customs of those among whom we live, but frequently also transgressing the bounds of custom, betrays, in a disgraceful outbreak, its own hideousness, which was concealed under the cover of prevailing fashions.

Chap. 13. *Same subject, continued*

21. Whatever, then, is in accordance with the habits of those with whom we are either compelled by necessity, or undertake as a matter of duty, to spend this life, is to be turned by good and great men to some prudent or benevolent end, either directly, as is our duty, or figuratively, as is allowable to prophets.

Chap. 14. *Error of those who think that there is no absolute right and wrong*

22. But when men unacquainted with other modes of life than their own meet with the record of such actions, unless they are restrained by authority, they look upon them as sins, and do not consider that their own customs either in regard to marriage, or feasts, or dress, or the other necessities and adornments of human life, appear sinful to the people of other nations and other times. And, distracted by this endless variety of customs, some who were half asleep (as I may say)—that is, who were neither sunk in the deep sleep of folly, nor were able to awake into the light of wisdom—have thought that there was no such thing as absolute right, but that every nation took its own custom for right; and that, since every nation has a different custom, and right must remain unchangeable, it becomes manifest that there is no such thing as right at all. Such men did not perceive, to take only one example, that the precept, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,” [41] cannot be altered by any diversity of national customs. And this precept, when it is referred to the love of God, destroys all vices when to the love of one's neighbor, puts an end to all crimes. For no one is willing to defile his own

[41] Matt. 7. 12. Cf. Tobit, 4. 15.

dwelling; he ought not, therefore, to defile the dwelling of God, that is, himself. And no one wishes an injury to be done him by another; he himself, therefore, ought not to do injury to another.

Chap. 15. *Rule for interpreting figurative expressions*

23. The tyranny of lust being thus overthrown, charity reigns through its supremely just laws of love to God for His own sake, and love to one's self and one's neighbor for God's sake. Accordingly, in regard to figurative expressions, a rule such as the following will be observed, to carefully turn over in our minds and meditate upon what we read till an interpretation be found that tends to establish the reign of love. Now, if when taken literally it at once gives a meaning of this kind, the expression is not to be considered figurative.

Chap. 16. *Rule for interpreting commands and prohibitions*

24. If the sentence is one of command, either forbidding a crime or vice, or enjoining an act of prudence or benevolence, it is not figurative. If, however, it seems to enjoin a crime or vice, or to forbid an act of prudence or benevolence, it is figurative. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man,” says Christ, “and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” [42] This seems to enjoin a crime or a vice; it is therefore a figure, enjoining that we should have a share in the sufferings of our Lord, and that we should retain a sweet and profitable memory of the fact that His flesh was wounded and crucified for us. Scripture says: “If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink”; and this is beyond doubt a command to do a kindness. But in what follows, “for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head,” [43] one would think a deed of malevolence was enjoined. Do not doubt, then, that the expression is figurative; and, while it is possible to interpret it in two ways, one pointing to the doing of an injury, the other to a display of superiority, let charity on the contrary call you back to benevolence, and interpret the coals of fire as the burning groans of penitence by which a man's pride is cured who bewails that he has been the enemy of one who came to his assistance in distress. In the same way, when our Lord says, “He who loveth his life shall lose it,” [44] we are not to think that He forbids the prudence with which it is a man's duty to care for his life, but that He says in a figurative sense, “Let him lose his life”—that is, let him destroy and lose that perverted and unnatural use which he now makes of his life, and through which his desires are fixed on temporal things so that he gives no heed to eternal. It is written: “Give to the godly man, and help not a sinner.” [45] The latter clause of this sentence seems to forbid benevolence; for it says, “help not a sinner.” Understand, therefore,

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[42] John, 6. 53.
[43] Rom. 12. 20; Prov. 25. 21, 22.
[44] John, 12. 25. Cf. Matt. 10. 39.
[45] Ecclus. 12. 4. Cf. Tobit, 4. 17.

that “sinner” is put figuratively for sin, so that it is his sin you are not to help.

Chap. 17. *Some commands are given to all in common, others to particular classes*

25. Again, it often happens that a man who has attained, or thinks he has attained, to a higher grade of spiritual life, thinks that the commands given to those who are still in the lower grades are figurative; for example, if he has embraced a life of celibacy and made himself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, he contends that the commands given in Scripture about loving and ruling a wife are not to be taken literally, but figuratively; and if he has determined to keep his virgin unmarried, he tries to put a figurative interpretation on the passage where it is said, “Marry thy daughter, and so shall thou have performed a weighty matter.” [46] Accordingly, another of our rules for understanding the Scriptures will be as follows—to recognize that some commands are given to all in common, others to particular classes of persons, that the medicine may act not only upon the state of health as a whole, but also upon the special weakness of each member. For that which cannot be raised to a higher state must be cared for in its own state.

Chap. 18. *We must take into consideration the time at which anything was enjoyed or allowed*

26. We must also be on our guard against supposing that what in the Old Testament, making allowance for the condition of those times, is not a crime or a vice even if we take it literally and not figuratively, can be transferred to the present time as a habit of life. For no one will do this except lust has dominion over him, and endeavors to find support for itself in the very Scriptures which were intended to overthrow it. And the wretched man does not perceive that such matters are recorded with this useful design, that men of good hope may learn the salutary lesson, both that the custom they spurn can be turned to a good use, and that which they embrace can be used to condemnation, if the use of the former be accompanied with charity, and the use of the latter with lust.

27. For, if it was possible for one man to use many wives with chastity, it is possible for another to use one wife with lust. And I look with greater approval on the man who uses the fruitfulness of many wives for the sake of an ulterior object, than on the man who enjoys the body of one wife for its own sake. For in the former case the man aims at a useful object suited to the circumstances of the times; in the latter case he gratifies a lust which is engrossed in temporal enjoyments. And those men to whom the apostle permitted as a matter of indulgence to have one wife because of their incontinence,[47] were less near to God than those who, though they had each of them numerous wives, yet just as a wise man uses food and

[46] Ecclus. 7. 27.

[47] I Cor. 7. 1, 2, 9.

drink only for the sake of bodily health, used marriage only for the sake of offspring. And, accordingly, if these last had been still alive at the advent of our Lord, when the time not of casting stones away but of gathering them together had come,[48] they would have immediately made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. For there is no difficulty in abstaining unless when there is lust in enjoying. And assuredly those men of whom I speak knew that wantonness even in regard to wives is abuse and intemperance, as is proved by Tobit's prayer when he was married to his wife. For he says: “Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers, and blessed is Thy holy and glorious name for ever; let the heavens bless Thee, and all Thy creatures. Thou madest Adam, and gavest him Eve his wife for an helper and stay.... And now, O Lord, Thou knowest that I take not this my sister for lust, but uprightly: therefore have pity on us, O Lord.”[49]

Chap. 19. *Wicked men judge others by themselves*

28. But those who, giving the rein to lust, either wander about steeping themselves in a multitude of debaucheries, or even in regard to one wife not only exceed the measure necessary for the procreation of children, but with the shameless licence of a sort of slavish freedom heap up the filth of a still more beastly excess, such men do not believe it possible that the men of ancient times used a number of wives with temperance, looking to nothing but the duty, necessary in the circumstances of the time, of propagating the race; and what they themselves, who are entangled in the meshes of lust, do not accomplish in the case of a single wife, they think utterly impossible in the case of a number of wives.

29. But these same men might say that it is not right even to honor and praise good and holy men, because they themselves when they are honored and praised, swell with pride, becoming the more eager for the emptiest sort of distinction the more frequently and the more widely they are blown about on the tongue of flattery, and so become so light that a breath of rumor, whether it appear prosperous or adverse, will carry them into the whirlpool of vice or dash them on the rocks of crime. Let them, then, learn how trying and difficult it is for themselves to escape either being caught by the bait of praise, or pierced by the stings of insult; but let them not measure others by their own standard.

Chap. 20. *Consistency of good men in all outward circumstances*

Let them believe, on the contrary, that the apostles of our faith were neither puffed up when they were honored by men, nor cast down when they were despised. And certainly neither sort of temptation was wanting to those great men. For they were both cried up by the loud praises of believers, and cried down by the slanderous reports of their persecutors. But the apostles used all these things, as occasion served, and were not

[48] Eccles. 3. 5.
[49] Tobit, 8. 5-7.

corrupted; and in the same way the saints of old used their wives with reference to the necessities of their own times, and were not in bondage to lust as they are who refuse to believe these things.

30. For if they had been under the influence of any such passion, they could never have restrained themselves from implacable hatred towards their sons, by whom they knew that their wives and concubines were solicited and debauched.

Chap. 21. *David not lustful, though he fell into adultery*

But when King David had suffered this injury at the hands of his impious and unnatural son, he not only bore with him in his mad passion, but mourned over him in his death. He certainly was not caught in the meshes of carnal jealousy, seeing that it was not his own injuries but the sins of his son that moved him. For it was on this account he had given orders that his son should not be slain if he were conquered in battle, that he might have a place of repentance after he was subdued; and when he was baffled in this design, he mourned over his son's death, not because of his own loss, but because he knew to what punishment so impious an adulterer and parricide had been hurried.[50] For prior to this, in the case of another son who had been guilty of no crime, though he was dreadfully afflicted for him while he was sick, yet he comforted himself after his death.[51]

31. And with what moderation and self-restraint those men used their wives appears chiefly in this, that when this same king, carried away by the heat of passion and by temporal prosperity, had taken unlawful possession of one woman, whose husband also he ordered to be put to death, he was accused of his crime by a prophet, who, when he had come to show him his sin, set before him the parable of the poor man who had but one ewe-lamb, and whose neighbor, though he had many, yet when a guest came to him spared to take of his own flock, but set his poor neighbor's one lamb before his guest to eat. And David's anger being kindled against the man, he commanded that he should be put to death, and the lamb restored fourfold to the poor man; thus unwittingly condemning the sin he had wittingly committed.[52] And when he had been shown this, and God's punishment had been denounced against him, he wiped out his sin in deep penitence. But yet in this parable it was the adultery only that was indicated by the poor man's ewe-lamb; about the killing of the woman's husband—that is, about the murder of the poor man himself who had the one ewe-lamb—nothing is said in the parable, so that the sentence of condemnation is pronounced against the adultery alone. And hence we may understand with what temperance he possessed a number of wives when he was forced to punish himself for transgressing in regard to one woman.

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[50] Cf. II Sam. 16. 22; 18. 5; 19. 1.
[51] II Sam. 12. 19-23.
[52] II Sam. 12. 1-6.

But in his case the immoderate desire did not take up its abode with him, but was only a passing guest. On this account the unlawful appetite is called even by the accusing prophet, a guest. For he did not say that he took the poor man's ewe-lamb to make a feast for his king, but for his guest. In the case of his son Solomon, however, this lust did not come and pass away like a guest, but reigned as a king. And about him Scripture is not silent, but accuses him of being a lover of strange women; for in the beginning of his reign he was inflamed with a desire for wisdom, but after he had attained it through spiritual love, he lost it through carnal lust.[53]

Chap. 22. *Rule regarding passages of Scripture in which approval is expressed of actions which are new condemned by good men*

32. Therefore, although all, or nearly all, the transactions recorded in the Old Testament are to be taken not literally only, but figuratively as well, nevertheless even in the case of those which the reader has taken literally, and which, though the authors of them are praised, are repugnant to the habits of the good men who since our Lord's advent are the custodians of the divine commands, let him refer the figure to its interpretation, but let him not transfer the act to his habits of life. For many things which were done as duties at that time, cannot now be done except through lust.

Chap. 23. *Rule regarding the narrative of sins of great men*

33. And when he reads of the sins of great men, although he may be able to see and to trace out in them a figure of things to come, let him yet put the literal fact to this use also, to teach him not to dare to vaunt himself in his own good deeds, and in comparison with his own righteousness, to despise others as sinners, when he sees in the case of men so eminent both the storms that are to be avoided and the shipwrecks that are to be wept over. For the sins of these men were recorded to this end, that men might everywhere and always tremble at that saying of the apostle: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” [54] For there is hardly a page of Scripture on which it is not clearly written that God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.[55]

Chap. 24. *The character of the expressions used is above all to have weight*

34. The chief thing to be inquired into, therefore, in regard to any expression that we are trying to understand is, whether it is literal or figurative. For when it is ascertained to be figurative, it is easy, by an application of the laws of things which we discussed in the first book, to turn it in every way until we arrive at a true interpretation, especially when we bring to our aid experience strengthened by the exercise of piety. Now we find out whether an expression is literal or figurative by attending to the considerations indicated above.

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[53] II Chron. 1. 10-12; I Kings 11. 1-3.
[54] I Cor. 10. 12.
[55] Cf. Jas. 4. 6 and I Pet. 5. 6.

Chap. 25. *The same word does not always signify the same thing*

And when it is shown to be figurative, the words in which it is expressed will be found to be drawn either from like objects or from objects having some affinity.

35. But as there are many ways in which things show a likeness to each other, we are not to suppose there is any rule that what a thing signifies by similitude in one place it is to be taken to signify in all other places. For our Lord used leaven both in a bad sense, as when He said, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees,” [56] and in a good sense, as when He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” [57]

36. Now the rule in regard to this variation has two forms. For things that signify now one thing and now another, signify either things that are contrary, or things that are only different. They signify contraries, for example, when they are used metaphorically at one time in a good sense, at another in a bad, as in the case of the leaven mentioned above. Another example of the same is that a lion stands for Christ in the place where it is said, “The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed”;[58] and again, stands for the devil where it is written, “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.” [59] In the same way the serpent is used in a good sense, “Be wise as serpents”;[60] and again, in a bad sense, “The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety.” [61] Bread is used in a good sense, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven”;[62] in a bad, “Bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” [63] And so in a great many other cases. The examples I have adduced are indeed by no means doubtful in their signification, because only plain instances ought to be used as examples. There are passages, however, in regard to which it is uncertain in what sense they ought to be taken, as for example, “In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red: it is full of mixture.” [64] Now it is uncertain whether this denotes the wrath of God, but not to the last extremity of punishment, that is, “to the very dregs”; or whether it denotes the grace of the Scriptures passing away from the Jews and coming to the Gentiles, because “He has put down one and set up another”—certain observances, however, which they understand in a carnal manner, still remaining among the Jews, for “the dregs hereof is not yet wrung out.” The following is an example of the same object being taken, not in opposite, but

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[56] Matt. 16. 6; Luke 12. 1.
[57] Luke, 13. 21.
[58] Rev. 5. 5.
[59] I Pet. 5. 8.
[60] Matt. 10. 16.
[61] II Cor. 11. 3.
[62] John, 6. 51.
[63] Prov. 9. 17.
[64] Ps. 75. 8.

only in different significations: water denotes people, as we read in the Apocalypse,[65] and also the Holy Spirit, as for example, “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”;[66] and many other things besides water must be interpreted according to the place in which they are found.

37. And in the same way other objects are not single in their signification, but each one of them denotes not two only but sometimes even several different things, according to the connection in which it is found.

Chap. 26. *Obscure passages are to be interpreted by those which are clearer*

Now from the places where the sense in which they are used is more manifest we must gather the sense in which they are to be understood in obscure passages. For example, there is no better way of understanding the words addressed to God, “Take hold of shield and buckler and stand up for mine help,” [67] than by referring to the passage where we read, “Thou, Lord, hast crowned us with Thy favor as with a shield.” [68] And yet we are not so to understand it, as that wherever we meet with a shield put to indicate a protection of any kind, we must take it as signifying nothing but the favor of God. For we hear also of the shield of faith, “wherewith,” says the apostle, “ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” [69] Nor ought we, on the other hand, in regard to spiritual armor of this kind to assign faith to the shield only; for we read in another place of the *breastplate* of faith: “putting on,” says the apostle, “the breastplate of faith and love.” [70]

Chap. 27. *One passage susceptible of various interpretations*

38. When, again, not some one interpretation, but two or more interpretations are put upon the same words of Scripture, even though the meaning the writer intended remain undiscovered, there is no danger if it can be shown from other passages of Scripture that any of the interpretations put on the words is in harmony with the truth. And if a man in searching the Scriptures endeavors to get at the intention of the author through whom the Holy Spirit spoke, whether he succeeds in this endeavor, or whether he draws a different meaning from the words, but one that is not opposed to sound doctrine, he is free from blame so long as he is supported by the testimony of some other passage of Scripture. For the author perhaps saw that this very meaning lay in the words which we are trying to interpret; and assuredly the Holy Spirit, who through him spoke these words, foresaw that this interpretation would occur to the reader, nay, made provision that it should occur to him, seeing that it too is founded on truth. For what more liberal and more fruitful provision could God have made in regard to the Sacred Scriptures than that the same

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[65] Rev. 17. 15.
[66] John, 7. 38.
[67] Ps. 35. 2.
[68] Ps. 5. 12.
[69] Eph. 6. 16.
[70] I Thess. 5. 8.

words might be understood in several senses, all of which are sanctioned by the concurring testimony of other passages equally divine?

Chap. 28. *It is safer to explain a doubtful passage by other passages of Scripture than by reason*

39. When, however, a meaning is evolved of such a kind that what is doubtful in it cannot be cleared up by indubitable evidence from Scripture, it remains for us to make it clear by the evidence of reason. But this is a dangerous practice. For it is far safer to walk by the light of Holy Scripture; so that when we wish to examine the passages that are obscured by metaphorical expressions, we may either obtain a meaning about which there is no controversy, or if a controversy arises, may settle it by the application of testimonies sought out in every portion of the same Scripture.

Chap. 29. *The knowledge of tropes is necessary*

40. Moreover, I would have learned men to know that the authors of our Scriptures use all those forms of expression which grammarians call by the Greek name *tropes*, and use them more freely and in greater variety than people who are unacquainted with the Scriptures, and have learnt these figures of speech from other writings, can imagine or believe. Nevertheless those who know these tropes recognize them in Scripture, and are very much assisted by their knowledge of them in understanding Scripture. But this is not the place to teach them to the illiterate, lest it might seem that I was teaching grammar. I certainly advise, however, that they be learnt elsewhere, although indeed I have already given that advice above, in the second book—namely, where I treated of the necessary knowledge of languages. For the written characters from which grammar itself gets its name (the Greek name for letters being *γράμματα*) are the signs of sounds made by the articulate voice with which we speak. Now of some of these figures of speech we find in Scripture not only examples (which we have of them all), but the very names as well: for instance, *allegory*, *enigma*, and *parable*. However, nearly all these tropes which are said to be learnt as a matter of liberal education are found even in the ordinary speech of men who have learnt no grammar, but are content to use the vulgar idiom. For who does not say, “So may you flourish?” And this is the figure of speech called *metaphor*. Who does not speak of a fish-pond in which there is no fish, which was not made for fish, and yet gets its name from fish? And this is the figure called *catachresis*.

41. It would be tedious to go over all the rest in this way; for the speech of the vulgar makes use of them all, even of those more curious figures which mean the very opposite of what they say, as for example, those called *irony* and *antiphrasis*. Now in irony we indicate by the tone of voice the meaning we desire to convey; as when we say to a man who is behaving badly, “You are doing well.” But it is not by the tone of voice that we make an

antiphrasis to indicate the opposite of what the words convey; but either the words in which it is expressed are used in the opposite of their etymological sense, as a grove is called *lucus* from its want of light; or it is customary to use a certain form of expression, although it puts *yes* for *no* by a law of contraries, as when we ask in a place for what is not there, and get the answer, “There is plenty”; or we add words that make it plain we mean the opposite of what we say, as in the expression, “Beware of him, for he is a good man.” And what illiterate man is there that does not use such expressions, although he knows nothing at all about either the nature or the names of these figures of speech? And yet the knowledge of these is necessary for clearing up the difficulties of Scripture; because when the words taken literally give an absurd meaning, we ought forthwith to inquire whether they may not be used in this or that figurative sense which we are unacquainted with; and in this way many obscure passages have had light thrown upon them.

Chap. 30. *The rules of Tichonius the Donatist examined*

42. One Tichonius, who, although a Donatist himself, has written most triumphantly against the Donatists (and herein showed himself of a most inconsistent disposition, that he was unwilling to give them up altogether), wrote a book which he called the *Book of Rules*, because in it he laid down seven rules, which are, as it were, keys to open the secrets of Scripture. And of these rules, the first relates to the Lord and His body, the second to the twofold division of the Lord's body, the third to the promises and the law, the fourth to *species* and *genus*, the fifth to times, the sixth to recapitulation, the seventh to the devil and his body. Now these rules, as expounded by their author, do indeed, when carefully considered, afford considerable assistance in penetrating the secrets of the sacred writings; but still they do not explain all the difficult passages, for there are several other methods required, which are so far from being embraced in this number of seven, that the author himself explains many obscure passages without using any of his rules; finding, indeed, that there was no need for them, as there was no difficulty in the passage of the kind to which his rules apply. As, for example, he inquires what we are to understand in the Apocalypse by the seven angels of the churches to whom John is commanded to write; and after much and various reasoning, arrives at the conclusion that the angels are the churches themselves. And throughout this long and full discussion, although the matter inquired into is certainly very obscure, no use whatever is made of the rules. This is enough for an example, for it would be too tedious and troublesome to collect all the passages in the canonical Scriptures which present obscurities of such a kind as require none of these seven rules for their elucidation.

43. The author himself, however, when commending these rules, attributes so much value to them that it would appear as if, when they were

thoroughly known and duly applied, we should be able to interpret all the obscure passages in the law—that is, in the sacred books. For he thus commences this very book: “Of all the things that occur to me, I consider none so necessary as to write a little book of rules, and, as it were, to make keys for, and put windows in, the secret places of the law. For there are certain mystical rules which hold the key to the secret recesses of the whole law, and render visible the treasures of truth that are to many invisible. And if this system of rules be received as I communicate it, without jealousy, what is shut shall be laid open, and what is obscure shall be elucidated, so that a man travelling through the vast forest of prophecy shall, if he follow these rules as pathways of light, be preserved from going astray.” Now, if he had said, “There are certain mystical rules which hold the key to some of the secrets of the law,” or even “which hold the key to the great secrets of the law,” and not what he does say, “the secret recesses of the whole law”; and if he had not said “What is shut shall be laid open,” but, “Many things that are shut shall be laid open,” he would have said what was true, and he would not, by attributing more than is warranted by the facts to his very elaborate and useful work, have led the reader into false expectations. And I have thought it right to say thus much, in order both that the book may be read by the studious (for it is of very great assistance in understanding Scripture), and that no more may be expected from it than it really contains. Certainly it must be read with caution, not only on account of the errors into which the author falls as a man, but chiefly on account of the heresies which he advances as a Donatist. And now I shall briefly indicate what these seven rules teach or advise.

Chap. 31. *The first rule of Tichonius*

44. The first is about *the Lord and His body*, and it is this, that, knowing as we do that the head and the body—that is, Christ and His Church—are sometimes indicated to us under one person (for it is not in vain that it is said to believers, “Ye then are Abraham's seed,” [71] when there is but one seed of Abraham, and that is Christ), we need not be in a difficulty when a transition is made from the head to the body or from the body to the head, and yet no change made in the person spoken of. For a single person is represented as saying, “He hath decked me as a bridegroom with ornaments, and adorned me as a bride with jewels”;[72] and yet it is, of course, a matter for interpretation which of these two refers to the head and which to the body, that is, which to Christ and which to the Church.

Chap. 32. *The second rule of Tichonius*

45. The second rule is about *the twofold division of the body of the Lord;* but this indeed is not a suitable name, for that is really no part of the body of Christ which will not be with Him in eternity. We ought, therefore, to say

[71] Gal. 3. 29.

[72] Isa. 61. 10 (Septuagint).

that the rule is about the true and the mixed body of the Lord, or the true and the counterfeit, or some such name; because, not to speak of eternity, hypocrites cannot even now be said to be in Him, although they seem to be in His Church. And hence this rule might be designated thus: *Concerning the mixed Church.* Now this rule requires the reader to be on his guard when Scripture, although it has now come to address or speak of a different set of persons, seems to be addressing or speaking of the same persons as before, just as if both sets constituted one body in consequence of their being for the time united in a common participation of the sacraments. An example of this is that passage in the Song of Solomon, "I am black, but comely, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon." [73] For it is not said, I *was* black as the tents of Kedar, but am *now* comely as the curtains of Solomon. The Church declares itself to be at present both; and this because the good fish and the bad are for the time mixed up in the one net.[74] For the tents of Kedar pertain to Ishmael, who "shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." [75] And in the same way, when God says of the good part of the Church, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: these things will I do unto them, and not forsake them";[76] He immediately adds in regard to the other part, the bad that is mixed with the good, "They shall be turned back." Now these words refer to a set of persons altogether different from the former; but as the two sets are for the present united in one body, He speaks as if there were no change in the subject of the sentence. They will not, however, always be in one body; for one of them is that wicked servant of whom we are told in the gospel, whose lord, when he comes, "shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites." [77]

Chap. 33. *The third rule of Tichonius*

46. The third rule relates to the *promises and the law*, and may be designated in other terms as relating to the spirit and the letter, which is the name I made use of when writing a book on this subject. It may be also named, of grace and the law. This, however, seems to me to be a great question in itself, rather than a rule to be applied to the solution of other questions. It was the want of clear views on this question that originated, or at least greatly aggravated, the Pelagian heresy. And the efforts of Tichonius to clear up this point were good, but not complete. For, in discussing the question about faith and works, he said that works were given us by God as the reward of faith, but that faith itself was so far our

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[73] Song of Sol. 1. 5.
[74] Matt. 13. 47, 48.
[75] Gal. 4. 30.
[76] Isa. 42. 16.
[77] Matt. 24. 50, 51.

own that it did not come to us from God; not keeping in mind the saying of the apostle: “Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” [78] But he had not come into contact with this heresy, which has arisen in our time, and has given us much labor and trouble in defending against it the grace of God which is through our Lord Jesus Christ, and which (according to the saying of the apostle, “There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” [79]) has made us much more watchful and diligent to discover in Scripture what escaped Tichonius, who, having no enemy to guard against, was less attentive and anxious on this point, namely, that even faith itself is the gift of Him Who “hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” [80] Whence it is said to certain believers: “Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” [81] Who, then, can doubt that each of these is the gift of God, when he learns from this passage, and believes, that each of them is given? There are many other testimonies besides which prove this. But I am not now treating of this doctrine. I have, however, dealt with it, one place or another, very frequently.

Chap. 34. *The fourth rule of Tichonius*

47. The fourth rule of Tichonius is about *species and genus*. For so he calls it, intending that by species should be understood a part, by genus the whole of which that which he calls species is a part: as, for example, every single city is a part of the great society of nations: the city he calls a species, all nations constitute the genus. There is no necessity for here applying that subtilty of distinction which is in use among logicians, who discuss with great acuteness the difference between a part and a species. The rule is of course the same, if anything of the kind referred to is found in Scripture, not in regard to a single city, but in regard to a single province, or tribe, or kingdom. Not only, for example, about Jerusalem, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, such as Tyre or Babylon, are things said in Scripture whose significance oversteps the limits of the city, and which are more suitable when applied to all nations; but in regard to Judea also, and Egypt, and Assyria, or any other nation you choose to take which contains numerous cities, but still is not the whole world, but only a part of it, things are said which pass over the limits of that particular country, and apply more fitly to the whole of which this is a part; or, as our author terms it, to the genus of which this is a species. And hence these words have come to be commonly known, so that even uneducated people understand what is laid down specially, and what generally, in any given Imperial command. The

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[78] Eph. 6. 23.
[79] I Cor. 11. 19.
[80] Rom. 12. 3.
[81] Phil. 1. 29.

same thing occurs in the case of men: things are said of Solomon, for example, the scope of which reaches far beyond him, and which are only properly understood when applied to Christ and His Church, of which Solomon is a part.[82]

48. Now the species is not always overstepped, for things are often said of such a kind as evidently apply to it also, or perhaps even to it exclusively. But when Scripture, having up to a certain point been speaking about the species, makes a transition at that point from the species to the genus, the reader must then be carefully on his guard against seeking in the species what he can find much better and more surely in the genus. Take, for example, what the prophet Ezekiel says: "When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way, and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way, and according to their doings, I judged them." [83] Now it is easy to understand that this applies to that house of Israel of which the apostle says, "Behold Israel after the flesh";[84] because the people of Israel after the flesh did both perform and endure all that is here referred to. What immediately follows, too, may be understood as applying to the same people. But when the prophet begins to say, "And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord," [85] the reader ought now carefully to observe the way in which the species is overstepped and the genus taken in. For he goes on to say: "And I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses." [86] Now that this is a prophecy of the New Testament, to which pertain not only the remnant of that one nation of which it is elsewhere said, "For though the

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[82] II Sam. 7. 14-16.
[83] Ezek. 36. 17-19.
[84] I Cor. 10. 18.
[85] Ezek. 36. 23.
[86] Ezek. 36. 23-29.

number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall be saved," [87] but also the other nations which were promised to their fathers and our fathers; and that there is here a promise of that washing of regeneration which, as we see, is now imparted to all nations, no one who looks into the matter can doubt. And that saying of the apostle, when he is commending the grace of the New Testament and its excellence in comparison with the Old, "Ye are our epistle... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," [88] has an evident reference to this place where the prophet says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." [89] Now the heart of flesh from which the apostle's expression, "the fleshy tables of the heart," is drawn, the prophet intended to point out as distinguished from the stony heart by the possession of sentient life; and by sentient he understood intelligent life. And thus the spiritual Israel is made up, not of one nation, but of all the nations which were promised to the fathers in their seed, that is, in Christ.

49. This spiritual Israel, therefore, is distinguished from the carnal Israel which is of one nation, by newness of grace, not by nobility of descent, in feeling, not in race; but the prophet, in his depth of meaning, while speaking of the carnal Israel, passes on, without indicating the transition, to speak of the spiritual, and although now speaking of the latter, seems to be still speaking of the former; not that he grudges us the clear apprehension of Scripture, as if we were enemies, but that he deals with us as a physician, giving us a wholesome exercise for our spirit. And therefore we ought to take this saying, "And I will bring you into your own land," and what he says shortly afterwards, as if repeating himself, "And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers," not literally, as if they referred to Israel after the flesh, but spiritually, as referring to the spiritual Israel. For the Church, without spot or wrinkle, gathered out of all nations, and destined to reign for ever with Christ, is itself the land of the blessed, the land of the living; and we are to understand that this was given to the fathers when it was promised to them for what the fathers believed would be given in its own time was to them, on account of the unchangeableness of the promise and purpose, the same as if it were already given; just as the apostle, writing to Timothy, speaks of the grace which is given to the saints: "Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour." [90] He speaks of the grace as given

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[87] Isa. 10. 22.
[88] II Cor. 3. 2, 3.
[89] Ezek. 38, 26.
[90] II Tim. 1. 9, 10.

at a time when those to whom it was to be given were not yet in existence; because he looks upon that as having been already done in the arrangement and purpose of God, which was to take place in its own time, and he himself speaks of it as now made manifest. It is possible, however, that these words may refer to the land of the age to come, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein the unrighteous shall be unable to dwell. And so it is truly said to the righteous, that the land itself is theirs, no part of which will belong to the unrighteous; because it is the same as if it were itself given, when it is firmly settled that it shall be given.

Chap. 35. *The fifth rule of Tichonius*

50. The fifth rule Tichonius lays down is one he designates *of times*—a rule by which we can frequently discover or conjecture quantities of time which are not expressly mentioned in Scripture. And he says that this rule applies in two ways: either to the figure of speech called *synecdoche*, or to legitimate numbers. The figure synecdoche either puts the part for the whole, or the whole for the part. As, for example, in reference to the time when, in the presence of only three of His disciples, our Lord was transfigured on the mount, so that His face shone as the sun, and His raiment was white as snow, one evangelist says that this event occurred "after eight days," [91] while another says that it occurred "after six days." [92] Now both of these statements about the number of days cannot be true, unless we suppose that the writer who says "after eight days," counted the latter part of the day on which Christ uttered the prediction and the first part of the day on which he showed its fulfillment as two whole days; while the writer who says "after six days," counted only the whole unbroken days between these two. This figure of speech, which puts the part for the whole, explains also the great question about the resurrection of Christ. For unless to the latter part of the day on which He suffered we join the previous night, and count it as a whole day, and to the latter part of the night in which He arose we join the Lord's day which was just dawning, and count it also a whole day, we cannot make out the three days and three nights during which He foretold that He would be in the heart of the earth. [93]

51. In the next place, our author calls those numbers *legitimate* which Holy Scripture more highly favors such as seven, or ten, or twelve, or any of the other numbers which the diligent reader of Scripture soon comes to know. Now numbers of this sort are often put for time universal; as for example, "Seven times in the day do I praise Thee," means just the same as "His praise shall continually be in my mouth." [94] And their force is exactly the same, either when multiplied by ten, as seventy and seven hundred

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[91] Luke, 9. 28.
[92] Matt. 17. 1; Mark, 9, 2.
[93] Matt. 12. 40.
[94] Cf. Ps. 119. 164. with 34. 2.

(whence the seventy years mentioned in Jeremiah may be taken in a spiritual sense for the whole time during which the Church is a sojourner among aliens);[95] or when multiplied into themselves, as ten into ten gives one hundred, and twelve into twelve gives one hundred and forty-four, which last number is used in the Apocalypse to signify the whole body of the saints.[96] Hence it appears that it is not merely questions about times that are to be settled by these numbers, but that their significance is of much wider application, and extends to many subjects. That number in the Apocalypse, for example, mentioned above, has not reference to times, but to men.

Chap. 36. *The sixth rule of Tichonius*

52. The sixth rule Tichonius calls the *recapitulation*, which, with sufficient watchfulness, is discovered in difficult parts of Scripture. For certain occurrences are so related, that the narrative appears to be following the order of time, or the continuity of events, when it really goes back without mentioning it to previous occurrences, which had been passed over in their proper place. And we make mistakes if we do not understand this, from applying the rule here spoken of. For example, in the book of Genesis we read, "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." [97] Now here it seems to be indicated that the events last mentioned took place after God had formed man and put him in the garden; whereas the fact is, that the two events having been briefly mentioned, viz., that God planted a garden, and there put the man whom He had formed, the narrative goes back, by way of recapitulation, to tell what had before been omitted, the way in which the garden was planted: that out of the ground God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. Here there follows, "The tree of life also was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Next the river is mentioned which watered the garden, and which was parted into four heads, the sources of four streams; and all this has reference to the arrangements of the garden. And when this is finished, there is a repetition of the fact which had been already told, but which in the strict order of events came after all this: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden." [98] For it was after all these other things were done that man was put in the garden, as now appears from the order of the narrative itself: it was not after man was put there that the other things were done, as the previous statement might be thought to imply, did we not

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[95] Jer. 25. 11.
[96] Rev. 7. 4.
[97] Gen. 2. 8, 9.
[98] Gen. 2. 15.

accurately mark and understand the recapitulation by which the narrative reverts to what had previously been passed over.

53. In the same book, again, when the generations of the sons of Noah are recounted, it is said: “These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.” [99] And, again, when the sons of Shem are enumerated: “These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.” [100] And it is added in reference to them all: “These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations; and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood. And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech.” [101] Now the addition of this sentence, “And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech,” seems to indicate that at the time when the nations were scattered over the earth they had all one language in common; but this is evidently inconsistent with the previous words, “after their families, after their tongues.” For each family or nation could not be said to have its own language if all had one language in common. And so it is by way of recapitulation it is added, “And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech,” the narrative here going back, without indicating the change, to tell how it was, that from having one language in common, the nations were divided into a multitude of tongues. And, accordingly, we are forthwith told of the building of the tower, and of this punishment being there laid upon them as the judgment of God upon their arrogance; and it was after this that they were scattered over the earth according to their tongues.

54. This recapitulation is found in a still more obscure form; as, for example, our Lord says in the gospel: “The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.” [102] Is it when our Lord shall have been revealed that men are to give heed to these sayings, and not to look behind them, that is, not to long after the past life which they have renounced? Is not the present rather the time to give heed to them, that when the Lord shall have been revealed every man may receive his reward according to the things he has given heed to or despised? And yet because Scripture says, “In that day,” the time of the revelation of the Lord will be thought the time for giving heed to these sayings, unless the reader be watchful and intelligent so as to understand the recapitulation, in which he will be assisted by that

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[99] Gen. 10. 20.
[100] Gen. 10. 31.
[101] Gen. 10, 32; 11. 1.
[102] Luke, 17. 29-32.

other passage of Scripture which even in the time of the apostles proclaimed: “Little children, it is the last time.” [103] The very time then when the gospel is preached, up to the time that the Lord shall be revealed, is the day in which men ought to give heed to these sayings: for to the same day, which shall be brought to a close by a day of judgment, belongs that very revelation of the Lord here spoken of.[104]

Chap. 37. *The seventh rule of Tichonius*

55. The seventh rule of Tichonius and the last, is about *the devil and his body.* For he is the head of the wicked, who are in a sense his body, and destined to go with him into the punishment of everlasting fire, just as Christ is the head of the Church, which is His body, destined to be with Him in His eternal kingdom and glory. Accordingly, as the first rule, which is called *of the Lord and His body*, directs us, when Scripture speaks of one and the same person, to take pains to understand which part of the statement applies to the head and which to the body; so this last rule shows us that statements are sometimes made about the devil, whose truth is not so evident in regard to himself as in regard to his body; and his body is made up not only of those who are manifestly out of the way, but of those also who, though they really belong to him, are for a time mixed up with the Church, until they depart from this life, or until the chaff is separated from the wheat at the last great winnowing. For example, what is said in Isaiah, “How he is fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning!” [105] and the other statements of the context which, under the figure of the king of Babylon, are made about the same person, are of course to be understood of the devil; and yet the statement which is made in the same place, “He is ground down on the earth, who sendeth to all nations,” [106] does not altogether fitly apply to the head himself. For, although the devil sends his angels to all nations, yet it is his body, not himself, that is ground down on the each, except that he himself is in his body, which is beaten small like the dust which the wind blows from the face of the earth.

56. Now all these rules, except the one about the promises and the law, make one meaning to be understood where another is expressed, which is the peculiarity of figurative diction; and this kind of diction, it seems to me, is too widely spread to be comprehended in its full extent by any one. For, wherever one thing is said with the intention that another should be understood we have a figurative expression, even though the name of the trope is not to be found in the art of rhetoric. And when an expression of this sort occurs where it is customary to find it, there is no trouble in understanding it; when it occurs, however, where it is not customary, it

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[103] I John, 2. 18.
[104] Cf. Rom. 2. 5.
[105] Isa. 14. 12 (Septuagint).
[106] *Ibid.*

costs labor to understand it, from some more, from some less, just as men have got more or less from God of the gifts of intellect, or as they have access to more or fewer external helps. And, as in the case of proper words which I discussed above, and in which things are to be understood just as they are expressed, so in the case of figurative words, in which one thing is expressed and another is to be understood, and which I have just finished speaking of as much as I thought enough, students of these venerable documents ought to be counselled not only to make themselves acquainted with the forms of expression ordinarily used in Scripture, to observe them carefully, and to remember them accurately, but also, what is especially and before all things necessary, to pray that they may understand them. For in these very books on the study of which they are intent, they read, "The Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding";[107] and it is from Him they have received their very desire for knowledge, if it is wedded to piety. But about signs, so far as relates to words, I have now said enough. It remains to discuss, in the following book, so far as God has given me light, the means of communicating our thoughts to others.

20 AQUINAS: *Summa Theologica*, PART III, Q 60, A 3, REP 1 848d-849c

Article 3. *Whether a Sacrament Is a Sign of One Thing Only?*
We proceed thus to the Third Article: It seems that a sacrament is a sign of one thing only.
Objection 1. For that which signifies many things is an ambiguous sign, and consequently occasions deception; this is clearly seen in equivocal words. But all deception should be removed from the Christian religion, according to Col. 2. 8: *Beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy and vain deceit.* Therefore it seems that a sacrament is not a sign of several things.
Obj. 2. Further, as stated above (A. 2), a sacrament signifies a holy thing in so far as it is a cause of man's holiness. But there is only one cause of man's holiness, namely, the blood of Christ, according to Heb. 13. 12: *Jesus, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate.* Therefore it seems that a sacrament does not signify several things.
Obj. 3. Further, it has been said above (A. 2, REPLY 3) that a sacrament signifies properly the very end of sanctification. Now the end of sanctification is eternal life, according to Rom. 6. 22: *You have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting.* Therefore it seems that the sacraments signify one thing only—namely, eternal life.

[107] Prov. 2. 6.

On the contrary, In the Sacrament of the Altar, two things are signified, namely, Christ's true body, and Christ's mystical body, as Augustine says (*Liber Sent. Prosper.*).[108]

I answer that, As stated above (A. 2) a sacrament properly speaking is that which is ordained to signify our sanctification. In which three things may be considered; namely, the very cause of our sanctification, which is Christ's passion, the form of our sanctification, which is grace and the virtues, and the ultimate end of our sanctification, which is eternal life. And all these are signified by the sacraments. Consequently a sacrament is a sign that is both a reminder of the past, that is, the passion of Christ; and an indication of that which is effected in us by Christ's passion, that is, grace; and a prognostic, that is, a foretelling of future glory.

Reply Obj. 1. A sign is ambiguous and the occasion of deception when it signifies many things not ordered to one another. But when it signifies many things according as through being mutually ordered they form one thing, then the sign is not ambiguous but certain; thus this word "man" signifies the soul and body according as together they form the human nature. In this way a sacrament signifies the three things aforesaid, according as by being in a certain order they are one thing.

Reply Obj. 2. Since a sacrament signifies that which sanctifies, it must signify the effect, which is understood in the sanctifying cause itself according as it is sanctifying.

Reply Obj. 3. It is enough for the nature of a sacrament that it signify that perfection which consists in the form, nor is it necessary that it should signify only that perfection which is the end.

23 HOBBES: *Leviathan*, PART I, 55b; 57d-58a; 60c; PART II, 100b; 127a; 135c; 157c; PART III, 172a

Leviathan, PART I, 55b

To these uses, there are also four correspondent abuses. First, when men register their thoughts wrong by the inconstancy of the signification of their words; by which they register for their conceptions that which they never conceived, and so deceive themselves. Secondly, when they use words metaphorically; that is, in other sense than that they are ordained for, and thereby deceive others. Thirdly, when by words they declare that to be their will which is not. Fourthly, when they use them to grieve one another: for seeing nature hath armed living creatures, some with teeth, some with horns, and some with hands, to grieve an enemy, it is but an abuse of speech to grieve him with the tongue, unless it be one whom we are obliged to govern; and then it is not to grieve, but to correct and amend.

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[108] Cf. Lanfranc, *De Corp. et Sang. Dom.,* XIV (PL 150, 424); Gratian, *Decretum,* III, d. 2, can. 48 (RF 1, 1331).

The manner how speech serveth to the remembrance of the consequence of causes and effects consisteth in the imposing of *names*, and the connexion of them.

Leviathan, PART I, 57d-58a

When a man, upon the hearing of any speech, hath those thoughts which the words of that speech, and their connexion, were ordained and constituted to signify, then he is said to understand it: *understanding* being nothing else but conception caused by speech. And therefore if speech be peculiar to man, as for ought I know it is, then is understanding peculiar to him also. And therefore of absurd and false affirmations, in case they be universal, there can be no understanding; though many think they understand then, when they do but repeat the words softly, or con them in their mind.

What kinds of speeches signify the appetites, aversions, and passions of man's mind, and of their use and abuse, I shall speak when I have spoken of the passions.

The names of such things as affect us, that is, which please and displease us, because all men be not alike affected with the same thing, nor the same man at all times, are in the common discourses of men of *inconstant* signification. For seeing all names are imposed to signify our conceptions, and all our affections are but conceptions; when we conceive the same things differently, we can hardly avoid different naming of them. For though the nature of that we conceive be the same; yet the diversity of our reception of it, in respect of different constitutions of body and prejudices of opinion, gives everything a tincture of our different passions. And therefore in reasoning, a man must take heed of words; which besides the signification of what we imagine of their nature, have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker; such as are the names of virtues and vices: for one man calleth *wisdom* what another calleth *fear;* and one *cruelty* what another *justice;* one *prodigality* what another *magnanimity;* and one *gravity* what another *stupidity,* etc. And therefore such names can never be true grounds of any ratiocination. No more can metaphors and tropes of speech: but these are less dangerous because they profess their inconstancy, which the other do not.

Leviathan, PART I, 60c

But yet they that have no science are in better and nobler condition with their natural prudence than men that, by misreasoning, or by trusting them that reason wrong, fall upon false and absurd general rules. For ignorance of causes, and of rules, does not set men so far out of their way as relying on false rules, and taking for causes of what they aspire to, those that are not so, but rather causes of the contrary.

To conclude, the light of humane minds is perspicuous words, but by exact definitions first snuffed, and purged from ambiguity; reason is the *pace;* increase of science, the *way;* and the benefit of mankind, the *end.* And, on the contrary, metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words are like *ignes fatui;* and reasoning upon them is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention and sedition, or contempt.
As much experience is *prudence,* so is much science *sapience.* For though we usually have one name of *wisdom* for them both; yet the Latins did always distinguish between *prudentia* and *sapientia;* ascribing the former to experience, the latter to science.

Leviathan, PART II, 100b
Secondly, that amongst these creatures the common good differeth not from the private; and being by nature inclined to their private, they procure thereby the common benefit. But man, whose joy consisteth in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent.
Thirdly, that these creatures, having not, as man, the use of reason, do not see, nor think they see, any fault in the administration of their common business: whereas amongst men there are very many that think themselves wiser and abler to govern the public better than the rest, and these strive to reform and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into distraction and civil war.
Fourthly, that these creatures, though they have some use of voice in making known to one another their desires and other affections, yet they want that art of words by which some men can represent to others that which is good in the likeness of evil; and evil, in the likeness of good; and augment or diminish the apparent greatness of good and evil, discontenting men and troubling their peace at their pleasure.

Leviathan, PART II, 127a
Of Counsel
How fallacious it is to judge of the nature of things by the ordinary and inconstant use of words appeareth in nothing more than in the confusion of counsels and commands, arising from the imperative manner of speaking in them both, and in many other occasions besides. For the words *do this* are the words not only of him that commandeth; but also of him that giveth counsel; and of him that exhorteth; and yet there are but few that see not that these are very different things; or that cannot distinguish between them when they perceive who it is that speaketh, and to whom the speech is directed, and upon what occasion. But finding those phrases in men's writings, and being not able or not willing to enter into a consideration of the circumstances, they

mistake sometimes the precepts of counsellors for the precepts of them that command; and sometimes the contrary; according as it best agreeth with the conclusions they would infer, or the actions they approve. To avoid which mistakes and render to those terms of commanding, counselling, and exhorting, their proper and distinct significations, I define them thus.

Leviathan, PART II, 135c

In written laws men use to make a difference between the *letter* and the *sentence* of the law: and when by the *letter* is meant whatsoever can be gathered from the bare words, it is well distinguished. For the significations of almost all words are either in themselves, or in the metaphorical use of them, ambiguous; and may be drawn in argument to make many senses; but there is only one sense of the law. But if by the letter be meant the literal sense, then the letter and the sentence or intention of the law is all one. For the literal sense is that which the legislator intended should by the letter of the law be signified. Now the intention of the legislator is always supposed to be equity: for it were a great contumely for a judge to think otherwise of the sovereign. He ought therefore, if the word of the law do not fully authorize a reasonable sentence, to supply it with the law of nature; or if the case be difficult, to respite judgement till he have received more ample authority. For example, a written law ordaineth that he which is thrust out of his house by force shall be restored by force. It happens that a man by negligence leaves his house empty, and returning is kept out by force, in which case there is no special law ordained.

Leviathan, PART II, 157c

Unnecessary laws are not good laws, but traps for money: which, where the right of sovereign power is acknowledged, are superfluous; and where it is not acknowledged, insufficient to defend the people.
the perspicuity consisteth not so much in the words of the law itself, as in a declaration of the causes and motives for which it was made. That is it that shows us the meaning of the legislator; and the meaning of the legislator known, the law is more easily understood by few than many words. For all words are subject to ambiguity; and therefore multiplication of words in the body of the law is multiplication of ambiguity: besides it seems to imply, by too much diligence, that whosoever can evade the words is without the compass of the law. And this is a cause of many unnecessary processes. For when I consider how short were the laws of ancient tomes, and how they grew by degrees still longer, methinks I see a contention between the penners and pleaders of the law; the former seeking to circumscribe the latter, and the latter to evade their

circumscriptions; and that the pleaders have got the victory. It belongeth therefore to the office of a legislator (such as is in all Commonwealths the supreme representative, be it one man or an assembly) to make the reason perspicuous why the law was made, and the body of the law itself as short, but in as proper and significant terms, as may be.

Leviathan, PART III, 172a

Which question cannot be resolved without a more particular consideration of the kingdom of God; from whence also, we are to judge of the authority of interpreting the Scripture. For, whosoever hath a lawful power over any writing, to make it law, hath the power also to approve or disapprove the interpretation of the same.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Of the Signification of Spirit, Angel, and Inspiration in the Books of Holy Scripture

Seeing the foundation of all true ratiocination is the constant signification of words; which, in the doctrine following, dependeth not (as in natural science) on the will of the writer, nor (as in common conversation) on vulgar use, but on the sense they carry in the Scripture; it is necessary, before I proceed any further, to determine, out of the Bible, the meaning of such words as by their ambiguity may render what I am to infer upon them obscure or disputable. I will begin with the words *body* and *spirit,* which in the language of the Schools are termed *substances, corporeal* and *incorporeal.*

25 MONTAIGNE: *Essays*, 253c-254a; 284d-285a; 517b-519a

Essays, 253c-254a

Protagorus says that there is nothing in nature but doubt; that a man may equally dispute of all things. Nausiphanes, that of things which seem to be, nothing is more than it is not: that there is nothing certain but uncertainty; Parmenides, that of that which is seems there is no one thing in general; that there is but One;[109] Zeno, that there's no One, and that there is nothing: if there were One, it would either be in another or in itself; if it be in another, they are two; if it be in itself, they are yet two; the comprehending and the comprehended. According to these doctrines, the nature of things is no other than a shadow, either vain or absolutely false.

This way of speaking in a Christian man has ever seemed to me very indiscreet and irreverent: "God cannot die; God cannot contradict Himself; God cannot do this, or that." I do not like to have the divine power so limited by the laws of men's mouths; and the idea which presents itself to

[109] Aristotle, *Metaphys.,* i. v.

us in those propositions, ought to be more religiously and reverently expressed.

Our speaking has its failings and defects, as well as all the rest: grammar is that which creates most disturbance in the world: our suits only spring from disputation as to the interpretation of laws; and most wars proceed from the inability of ministers clearly to express the conventions and treaties of amity among princes. How many quarrels, and those of how great importance, has the doubt of the meaning of this syllable *Hoc* created in the world? Let us take the conclusion that logic itself presents us as manifestly clear: if you say it is fine weather, and that you say true, it is, then, fine weather. Is not this a very certain form of speaking? and yet it will deceive us; that it will do so, let us follow the example: if you say, I lie, and that you say true, then you do lie. The art, reason and force of the conclusion of this are the same with the other; and yet we are gravelled. The Pyrrhonian philosophers, I see, cannot express their general conception in any kind of speaking; for they would require a new language on purpose: ours is all formed of affirmative propositions, which are totally hostile to them; insomuch that when they say “I doubt,” they are presently taken by the throat, to make them confess that at least they know and are assured of this, that they do doubt. And so they have been compelled to shelter themselves under this medical comparison, without which their humour would be inexplicable: when they pronounce, “I know not”; or, “I doubt”; they say that this proposition carries of itself with the rest, no more nor less than rhubarb that drives out the ill humours and carries itself off with them. This fancy is more certainly understood by interrogation: What do I know? as I bear it with the emblem of a balance.

See what use we make of this irreverent way of speaking: in the present disputes about our religion, if you press the adversaries too hard, they will roundly tell you, “that it is not in the power of God to make it so that His body should be in paradise and upon earth, and in several places at once.” And see what advantage the old scoffer makes of this! “At least,” says he, “it is no little consolation to man to see that God cannot do all things; for he cannot kill himself though he would, which is the greatest privilege we have in our condition: he cannot make mortals immortal, nor revive the dead, nor make it so that he who has lived has not, nor that he who has had honours, has not had them, having no other power over the past than that of oblivion. And that the comparison of a man to God may yet be made out by pleasant examples, he cannot order it so that twice ten shall not be twenty.” This is what he says, and what a Christian ought to take heed shall not escape his lips.

Essays, 284d-285a

This opinion put me in mind of the experience we have, that there is no sense nor aspect of anything, whether bitter or sweet, straight or crooked, that human wit does not find out in the writings it undertakes to rummage over. Into the simplest, purest, and most perfect speaking that can possibly be, how many lies and falsities have we suggested? What heresy has not there found ground and testimony sufficient to set forth and defend itself. ‘Tis on this account that the authors of such errors will never surrender this proof of the testimony of the interpretation of words. A person of dignity who would prove to me by authority the search of the philosopher’s stone wherein he was over head and ears engaged, alleged to me the other day, five or six passages in the Bible upon which he said he first founded his attempt, for the discharge of his conscience (for he is a divine); and in truth the invention was not only amusing, but, moreover, very well accommodated to the defence of this fine science.

By this way the reputation of divining fables is acquired; there is no fortune-teller, if he have but this authority that people will condescend to turn over and curiously peep into all the folds and glosses of his words, but we may make him, like the Sybils, say what we will. There are so many ways of interpretation that it will be hard but that, either obliquely or in a direct line, an ingenious wit will find out in every subject some air that will serve for his purpose: therefore ‘tis we find a cloudy and ambitious style in so frequent and ancient use. Let the author but contrive to attract and busy posterity about his predictions; which not only his own parts, but as much or more the accidental favour of the matter itself, may effect; that, as to the rest, he express himself foolishly or subtlely, somewhat obscurely and contradictorily, ‘tis no matter: a number of wits, shaking and sifting him, will bring out a great many several forms, either according to his own, or collateral, or contrary to it, which will all redound to his honour: he will see himself enriched, by the means of his disciples, like the regents of colleges by their pupils at Landy. This is it which has given reputation to many things of no worth at all; that has brought several writings into vogue, and given them the fame of containing all sorts of matter that can be desired; one and the same thing receiving a thousand and a thousand images and various considerations, even as many as we please.

Essays, 517b-519a

Whence does it come to pass that our common language, so easy for all other uses, becomes obscure, and unintelligible in wills and contracts? and that he who so clearly expresses himself, in whatever else he speaks or writes, cannot find in these, any way of declaring himself that does not fall into doubt and contradiction? if it be not that the princes of that art, applying themselves with a peculiar attention to cull out portentous words

and to contrive artificial sentences, have so weighed every syllable, and so thoroughly sifted every sort of quirking connection, that they are now confounded and intangled in the infinity of figures and minute divisions, and can no more fall within any rule or prescription, nor any certain intelligence: *Confusum est, quidquid usque in pulverem sectum est.*[110] As you see children trying to bring a mass of quicksilver to a certain number of parts; the more they press and work it, and endeavour to reduce it to their own will, the more they irritate the liberty of this generous metal; it evades their endeavour, and sprinkles itself into so many separate bodies as frustrate all reckoning; so is it here; for in subdividing these subtleties, we teach men to increase their doubts; they put us onto a way of extending and diversifying difficulties, and lengthen and disperse them. In sowing and retailing questions, they make the world fructify and increase in uncertainties and disputes, as the earth is made fertile by being crumbled and dug deep: *Difficultatem facit doctrina.*[111] We doubted of Ulpian, and are now still more perplexed with Bartolus and Baldus. We should efface the trace of this innumerable diversity of opinions; not adorn ourselves with it, and fill posterity with crotchets. I know not what to say to it; but experience makes it manifest, that so many interpretations dissipate truth, and break it. Aristotle wrote to be understood; if he could not do this, much less will another that is not so good at it; and a third then he, who expressed his own thoughts. We open the matter, and spill it in pouring out: of one subject we make a thousand, and in multiplying and subdividing them, fall again into the infinity of atoms of Epicurus. Never did two men make the same judgment of the same thing; and 'tis impossible to find two opinions exactly alike, not only in several men, but in the same man, at diverse hours. I often find matter of doubt in things of which the commentary has disdained to take notice; I am most apt to stumble in an even country, like some horses that I have known, that make most trips in the smoothest way.

Who will not say that glosses augment doubts and ignorance, since there's no book to be found, either human or divine, which the world busies itself about, whereof the difficulties are cleared by interpretation. The hundredth commentator passes it on to the next, still more knotty and perplexed than he found it. When were we ever agreed amongst ourselves: "this book has enough; there is now no more to be said about it?" This is most apparent in the law; we give the authority of law to infinite doctors, infinite decrees, and as many interpretations; yet do we find any end of the need of interpreting? is there, for all that, any progress or advancement towards peace, or do we stand in need of any fewer advocates and judges, than when this great mass of law was yet in its first infancy? On the contrary, we

[110] Whatever is beaten into powder is confused.—Seneca, *Epist.,* 89.
[111] Doctrine begets difficulty.—Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.,* x. 3.

darken and bury intelligence; we can no longer discover it, but at the mercy of so many fences and barriers. Men do not know the natural disease of the mind; it does nothing but ferret and inquire, and is eternally wheeling, juggling, and perplexing itself like silkworms, and then suffocates itself in its work; *Mus in pice*.[112] It thinks it discovers at a great distance, I know not what glimpses of light and imaginary truth; but whilst running to it, so many difficulties, hindrances and new inquisitions cross it, that it loses its way, and is made drunk with the motion: not much unlike Æsop's dogs, that seeing something like a dead body floating in the sea, and not being able to approach it, set to work to drink the water and lay the passage dry, and so choked themselves. To which, what one Crates said of the writings of Heraclitus, falls pat enough, "that they required a reader who could swim well," so that the depth and weight of his doctrine might not overwhelm and stifle him. 'Tis nothing but particular weakness that makes us content with what others or ourselves have found out in this chase after knowledge: one of better understanding will not rest so content; there is always room for one to follow, nay, even for ourselves; and another road; there is no end of our inquisitions; our end is in the other world. 'Tis a sign either that the mind has grown short-sighted when it is satisfied, or that it has got weary. No generous mind can stop in itself; it will still tend further, and beyond its power; it has sallies beyond its effects; if it do not advance and press forward, and retire, and rush and wheel about, 'tis but half alive; its pursuits are without bound or method; its aliment is admiration, the chase, ambiguity, which Apollo sufficiently declared in always speaking to us in a double, obscure, and oblique sense; not feeding, but amusing and puzzling us. 'Tis an irregular and perpetual motion, without model and without aim; its inventions heat, pursue, and inter-produce one another:

> *Ainsi veoid on, en un ruisseau coulant,*
> *Sans fin l'une eau, apres l'autre roulant;*
> *Et tout de reng, d'un eternel conduict,*
> *L'une suyt l'autre, et l'une l'autre fuyt.*
> *Par cette-cy, celle-lá est pouslee,*
> *Et cette-cy par l'autre est devancée:*
> *Tousiours l'eau va dans l'eau; et tousiours est-ce*
> *Mesme ruisseau, et tousiours eau diverse.*[113]

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[112] A mouse in a pitch barrel.

[113] Eteinne de la Boëtie, thus translated by Cotton:
So in a running stream one wave we see
After another roll incessantly,
And as they glide, each does successively
Pursue the other, each the other fly:
By this that's evermore pushed on, and this
By that continually preceded is:
The water still does into water swill,
Still the same brook, but different water still.

There is more ado to interpret interpretations that to interpret things; and more books upon books than upon any other subject; we do nothing but comment upon one another. Every place swarms with commentaries; of authors there is great scarcity. Is it not the principal and most reputed knowledge of our later ages to understand the learned? Is it not the common and final end of all studies? Our opinions are grafted upon one another; the first serves as a stock to the second, the second to the third, and so forth; thus step by step we climb the ladder: whence it comes to pass that he who is mounted highest, has often more honour than merit, for he is got up but an inch upon the shoulders of the last but one.

How often, and, peradventure, how foolishly, have I extended my book, to make it speak of itself; foolishly, if for no other reason but this, that it should remind me of what I say of others who do the same: that the frequent amorous glances they cast upon their work witness that their hearts pant with self-love; and that even the disdainful severity wherewith they scourge them, are but the dandlings and caressings of maternal love; as Aristotle, whose valuing and under valuing himself often springs from the same air of arrogance.[114] My own excuse is, that I ought in this to have more liberty than others, forasmuch as I write specifically of myself and of my writings, as I do of my other actions; that my theme turns upon itself; but I know not whether others will accept this excuse.

I have observed in Germany, that Luther has left as many divisions and disputes about the doubt of his opinions, and more, than he himself raised upon the Holy Scriptures. Our contest is verbal: I ask what nature is, what pleasure, circle, and substitution are? the question is about words, and is answered accordingly. A stone is a body; but if a man should further urge: "And what is a body?"—"Substance." "And what is substance?" and so on, he would drive the respondent to the end of his Calepin. We exchange one word for another, and often for one less understood. I better know what Man is, than I know what Animal is, or Mortal, or Rational. To satisfy one doubt, they pop me in the ear with three; 'tis the Hydra's head. Socrates asked Menon, "What virtue was." [115] "There is," says Menon, "the virtue of a man and of a woman, of a magistrate and of a private person, of an old man and of a child." "Very fine," cried Socrates, "we were in quest of one virtue, and thou hast brought us a whole swarm." We put one question, and they return us a whole hive. As no event, no face, entirely resembles another, so do they not entirely differ: an ingenious mixture of nature. If our faces were not alike, we could not distinguish man from beast; if they were not unlike, we could not distinguish one man from another; all things hold by some similitude; every example halts, and the relation which is drawn from experience is always faulty and imperfect. Comparisons are ever

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[114] *Ethics,* iv. 3.

[115] Plato, in *Meno.*

coupled at one end or other: so do the laws serve, and are fitted to every one of our affairs, by some wrested, biassed, and forced interpretation. Since the ethic laws, that concern the particular duty of every one in himself, are so hard to be framed, as we see they are, ‘tis no wonder if those which govern so many particulars are much more so. Do but consider the form of this justice that governs us; ‘tis a true testimony of human weakness, so full is it of error and contradiction. What we find to be flavour and severity in justice—and we find so much of them both, that I know not whether the medium is as often met with—are sickly and unjust members of the very body and essence of justice.

26 SHAKESPEARE: *Taming of the Shrew,* ACT I, SC II [1-44] 205b-c / *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ACT I, SC I [70-158] 230a-d / *Romeo and Juliet*, ACT II, SC IV [38-140] 297d-298d / *Richard II*, ACT II, SC I [69-99] 328b-d / *Julius Caesar*, ACT I, SC I [1-36] 568b,d

Taming of the Shrew, ACT I, SC II [1-44] 205b-c

Scene II. *Padua: before Hortensio’s house*
Enter PETRUCHIO *and his man* GRUMIO.
Pet. Varona, for a while I take my leave,
To see my friends in Padua, but of all
My best beloved and approved friend,
Hortensio; and I trow this is his house.
Here sirrah Grumio; knock, I say.
Gru. Knock, sir! whom should I knock? is there
any man has rebused your worship?
Pet. Villain, I say, knock me here soundly.
Gru. Knock you here, sir! why, sir, what am I,
sir, that I should knock you here, sir?
Pet. Villain, I say, knock me at this gate
And rap me well, or I’ll knock your knave’s pate.
Gru. My master is grown quarrelsome. I should knock you first,
And then I know after who comes by the worst.
Pet. Will it not be?
Faith, sirrah, and you’ll not knock, I’ll ring it;
I’ll try how you can sol, fa, and sing it.
He wrings him by the ears.
Gru. Help, masters, help! my master is mad.
Pet. Now, knock when I bid you, sirrah villain!
Enter HORTENSIO.
Hor. How now! what’s the matter? My old

friend Grumio! and my good friend Petruchio!
How do you all at Verona?
Pet. Signior Hortensio, come you to part the fray?
Con tutto il cuore, ben trovato, may I say.
Hor. Alla nostra casa ben venuto, molto honorato signor mio Petruchio.
Rise, Grumio, rise: we will compound this quarrel.
Gru. Nay, 'tis no matter, sir, what he 'leges in
Latin. If this be not a lawful cause for me to leave
his service, look you, sir, he bid me knock him
and rap him soundly, sir: well, was it fit for a
servant to use his master so, being perhaps, for
aught I see, two and thirty, a pip out?
Whom would to God I had well knock'd at first,
Then had not Grumio come by the worst.
Pet. A senseless villain! Good Hortensio,
I bade the rascal knock upon your gate
And could not get him for my heart to do it.
Gru. Knock at the gate! O heavens! Spake you
not these words plain, "Sirrah, knock me here,
rap me here, knock me well, and knock me
soundly"? And come you now with, "knocking
at the gate"?
Pet. Sirrah, be gone or talk not, I advise you.

Two Gentlemen of Verona, ACT I, SC I [70-158] 230a-d

Enter SPEED.

Speed. Sir Proteus, save you! Saw you my master?
Pro. But now he parted hence, to embark for Milan.
Speed. Twenty to one then he is shipp'd already,
And I have play'd the sheep in losing him.
Pro. Indeed, a sheep doth very often stray,
An if the shepherd be a while away.
Speed. You conclude that my master is a shepherd then and I a sheep?
Pro. I do.
Speed. Why then, my horns are his horns, whether I wake or sleep.
Pro. A silly answer and fitting well a sheep.
Speed. This proves me still a sheep.
Pro. True; and thy master a shepherd.
Speed. Nay, that I can deny by a circumstance.
Pro. It shall go hard but I'll prove it by another.
Speed. The shepherd seeks the sheep, and not
the sheep the shepherd; but I seek my master,
and my master seeks not me: therefore I am no

sheep.
Pro. The sheep for fodder follow the shepherd;
the shepherd for food follows not the sheep: thou
for wages followest thy master; thy master for
wages follows not thee: therefore thou art a
sheep.
Speed. Such another proof will make me cry
“baa.”
Pro. But, dost thou hear? gavest thou my letter
to Julia?
Speed. Ay, sir: I, a lost mutton, gave your letter
to her, a laced mutton, and she, a laced mutton,
gave me, a lost mutton, nothing for my labour.
Pro. Here's too small a pasture for such store of
muttons.
Speed. If the ground be overcharged, you were
best stick her.
Pro. Nay: in that you are astray, ’twere best
pound you.
Speed. Nay, sir, less than a pound shall serve me
for carrying your letter.
Pro. You mistake; I mean the pound—a pinfold.
Speed. From a pound to a pin? Fold it over and over,
'Tis threefold too little for carrying a letter to your lover.
Pro. But what said she?
Speed. [*First nodding*] Ay.
Pro. Nod—Ay—why, that's noddy.
Speed. You mistook, sir; I say, she did nod: and
you ask me if she did nod; and I say, “Ay.”
Pro. And that set together is noddy.
Speed. Now you have taken the pains to set it
together, take it for your pains.
Pro. No, no; you shall have it for bearing the
letter.
Speed. Well, I perceive I must be fain to bear
with you.
Pro. Why, sir, how do you bear with me?
Speed. Marry, sir, the letter, very orderly;
having nothing but the word “noddy” for my
pains.
Pro. Beshrew me, but you have a quick wit.
Speed. And yet it cannot overtake your slow
purse.

Pro. Come come, open the matter in brief: what said she?
Speed. Open your purse, that the money and the matter may be both at once delivered.
Pro. Well, sir, here is for your pains. What said she?
Speed. Truly, sir, I think you'll hardly win her.
Pro. Why, couldst thou perceive so much from her?
Speed. Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her; no, not so much as a ducat for delivering your letter: and being so hard to me that brought your mind, I fear she'll prove as hard to you in telling your mind. Give her no token but stones; for she's as hard as steel.
Pro. What said she? nothing?
Speed. No, not so much as “Take this for thy pains.” To testify your bounty, I thank you, you have testerned me; in requital whereof, henceforth carry your letters yourself: and so, sir, I'll commend you to my master.
Pro. Go, go, be gone, to save your ship from wreck,
Which cannot perish having thee aboard,
Being destined to a drier death on shore.
[*Exit* SPEED.

Romeo and Juliet, ACT II, SC IV [38-140] 297d-298d

Enter ROMEO.

Ben. Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo.
Mer. Without his roe, like a dried herring: O flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowed in: Laura to his lady was but a kitchen-wench; marry, she had a better love to be-rhyme her; Dido a dowdy; Cleopatra a gypsy; Helen and Hero hildings and harlots; Thisbe a grey eye or so, but not to the purpose. Signior Romeo, *bon jour!* there’s a French salutation to your French slop. You gave us the counterfeit fairly last night.
Rom. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you?
Mer. The slip, sir, the slip; can you not conceive?

Rom. Pardon, good Mercutio, my business was great; and in such a case as mine a man may strain courtesy.
Mer. That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a man to bow in the hams.
Rom. Meaning, to court'sy?
Mer. Thou hast most kindly hit it.
Rom. A most courteous exposition.
Mer. Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.
Rom. Pink for flower.
Mer. Right.
Rom. Why, then is my pump well flowered.
Mer. Well said: follow me this jest now till thou hast worn out thy pump, that when the single sole of it is worn, the jest may remain after the wearing solely singular.
Rom. O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness!
Mer. Come between us, good Benvolio; my wits faints.
Rom. Switch and spurs, switch and spurs; or I'll cry a match.
Mer. Nay, if thy wits run the wild-goose chase, I have done, for thou hast more of the wild-goose in one of thy wits than, I am sure, I have in my whole five: was I with you there for the goose?
Rom. Thou wast never with me for any thing when thou wast not there for the goose.
Mer. I will bite thee by the ear for that jest.
Rom. Nay, good goose, bite not.
Mer. Thy wit is a very bitter sweeting; it is a most sharp sauce.
Rom. And is it not well served in to a sweet goose?
Mer. O, here's a wit of cheveril, that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad!
Rom. I stretch it out for that word "broad"; which, added to the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.
Mer. Why, is not this better now than groaning for love? now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo; now art thou what thou art, by art as

well as by nature: for this driveling love is like a great natural, that runs lolling up and down to hide his bauble in a hole.
Ben. Stop there, stop there.
Mer. Thou desirest me to stop in my tale against the hair.
Ben. Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.
Mer. Oh, thou art deceived; I would have made it short: for I was come to the whole depth of my tale; and meant, indeed, to occupy the argument no longer.
Rom. Here's goodly gear!
Enter NURSE *and* PETER.
Mer. A sail, a sail!
Ben. Two, two; a shirt and a smock.
Nurse. Peter!
Peter. Anon!
Nurse. My fan, Peter.
Mer. Good Peter, to hide her face; for her fan's the fairer face.
Nurse. God ye good morrow, gentlemen.
Mer. God ye good den, fair gentlewoman.
Nurse. Is it good den?
Mer. 'Tis no less, I tell you, for the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon.
Nurse. Out upon you! What a man are you!
Rom. One, gentlewoman, that God hath made himself to mar.
Nurse. By my troth, it is well said; "for himself to mar," quoth a'? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may find the young Romeo?
Rom. I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when you have found him than he was when you sought him: I am the youngest of that name, for fault of a worse.
Nurse. You say well.
Mer. Yea, is the worst well? very well took, i' faith, wisely, wisely.
Nurse. If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence with you.
Ben. She will indite him to some supper.
Mer. A bawd, a bawd, a bawd! So ho!

Rom. What hast thou found?
Mer. No hare, sir; unless a hare, sir, in a lenten
pie, that is something stale and hoar ere it be
spent. [*Sings*.]

Richard II, ACT II, SC I [69-99] 328b-d
Enter KING RICHARD *and* QUEEN, AUMERLE, BUSHY, GREEN, BAGOT, ROSS,
and WILLOUGHBY.
York. The King is come: deal mildly with his youth;
For young hot colts being raged do rage the more.
Queen. How fares our noble uncle, Lancaster?
K. Rich. What comfort, man? how is't with aged Gaunt?
Gaunt. O, how that name befits my composition!
Old Gaunt indeed, and gaunt in being old:
Within me grief hath kept a tedious fast;
And who abstains from meat that is not gaunt?
For sleeping England long time have I watch'd;
Watching breeds leanness, leanness is all gaunt:
The pleasure that some fathers feed upon,
Is my strict fast; I mean, my children's looks;
And therein fasting, hast thou made me gaunt:
Gaunt am I for the grave, gaunt as a grave,
Whose hollow womb inherits nought but bones.
K. Rich. Can sick men play so nicely with their names?
Gaunt. No, misery makes sport to mock itself:
Since thou dost seek to kill my name in me,
I mock my name, great King, to flatter thee.
K. Rich. Should dying men flatter with those that live?
Gaunt. No, no, men living flatter those that die.
K. Rich. Thou, now a-dying, say'st thou flatterest me.
Gaunt. O, no! thou diest, though I the sicker be.
K. Rich. I am in health, I breathe, and see thee ill.
Gaunt. Now He that made me knows I see thee ill;
Ill in myself to see, and in thee seeing ill.
Thy death-bed is no lesser than thy land
Wherein thou liest in reputation sick;
And thou, too careless patient as thou art,
Commit'st thy anointed body to the cure
Of those physicians that first wounded thee:

Julius Caesar, ACT I, SC I [1-36] 568b,d
Scene I. *Rome: a street*
Enter FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, *and certain* COMMONERS.

Flav. Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home:
Is this a holiday? what! know you not,
Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?
1st Com. Why, sir, a carpenter.
Mar. Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?
You, sir, what trade are you?
2nd Com. Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.
Mar. But what trade art thou? answer me directly.
2nd Com. A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe conscience; which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.
Mar. What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what trade?
2nd. Com. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.
Mar. What meanest thou by that? mend me thou saucy fellow?
2nd Com. Why, sir, cobble you.
Flav. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?
2nd Com. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but with awl. I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I recover them. As proper men as ever trod upon neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork.
Flav. But wherefore art not in thy shop today?
Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?
2nd Com. Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work. But, indeed, sir, we make holiday, to see Cæsar and to rejoice in his triumph.

27 SHAKESPEARE: *Hamlet*, ACT V, SC I [127-149] 65d-66a

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow.
Whose grave's this, sirrah?
1st Clo. Mine, sir.
[*Sings*] "O, a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet."
Ham. I think it be thine, indeed; for thou liest in't.
1st Clo. You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours. For my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.
Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine. 'Tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.
1st Clo. 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.
Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?
1st Clo. For no man, sir.
Ham. What woman, then?
1st Clo. For none, neither.
Ham. Who is to be buried in't?
1st Clo. One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.
Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us.

30 BACON: *Advancement of Learning,* 60b-c / *Novum Organum*, BK I, APH 43 109d-110a; APH 59-60 112b-113a

Advancement of Learning, 60b-c

6. This part concerning *elenches* is excellently handled by Aristotle in precept, but more excellently by Plato in example; not only in the persons of the Sophists, but even in Socrates himself,[116] who, professing to affirm nothing, but to infirm that which was affirmed by another, hath exactly expressed all the forms of objection, fallace, and redargution. And although we have said that the use of this doctrine is for redargution, yet it is manifest the degenerate and corrupt use is for caption and contradiction, which passeth for a great faculty, and no doubt is of very great advantage: though the difference be good which was made between orators and sophisters, that the one is as the greyhound, which hath his advantage in the race, and the other as the hare, which hath her advantage in the turn, so as it is the advantage of the weaker creature.

7. But yet further, this doctrine of *elenches* hath a more ample latitude and extent than is perceived; namely, unto divers parts of knowledge; whereof some are laboured and other omitted. For first, I conceive (though it may seem at first somewhat strange) that that part which is variably referred,

[116] See the opening of the *Theatetus*.

sometimes to logic, sometimes to metaphysic, touching the common adjuncts of essences, is but an *elenche.* For the great sophism of all sophisms being equivocation or ambiguity of words and phrase, specially of such words as are most general and intervene in every inquiry, it seemeth to me that the true and fruitful use (leaving vain subtilities and speculations) of the inquiry of majority, minority, priority, posteriority, identity, diversity, possibility, act, totality, parts, existence, privation, and the like, are but wise cautions against ambiguities of speech. So again the distribution of things into certain tribes, which we call categories or predicaments, are but cautions against the confusion of definitions and divisions.
8. Secondly, there is a seducement that worketh by the strength of the impression, and not by the subtilty of the illaqueation; not so much perplexing the reason, as overruling it by power of the imagination. But this part I think more proper to handle when I shall speak of rhetoric.

Novum Organum, BK I, APH 43 109d-110a
43. There are also idols formed by the reciprocal intercourse and society of man with man, which we call idols of the market, from the commerce and association of men with each other; for men converse by means of language, but words are formed at the will of the generality, and there arises from a bad and unapt formation of words a wonderful obstruction to the mind. Nor can the definitions and explanations with which learned men are wont to guard and protect themselves in some instances afford a complete remedy; words still manifestly force the understanding, throw everything into confusion, and lead mankind into vain and innumerable controversies and fallacies.

Novum Organum, BK I, APH 59-60 112b-113a
59. The idols of the market are the most troublesome of all, those namely which have entwined themselves round the understanding from the associations of words and names. For men imagine that their reason governs words, whilst, in fact, words react upon the understanding; and this has rendered philosophy and the sciences sophistical and inactive. Words are generally formed in a popular sense, and define things by those broad lines which are most obvious to the vulgar mind; but when a more acute understanding, or more diligent observation is anxious to vary those lines, and to adapt them more accurately to nature, words oppose it. Hence the great and solemn disputes of learned men often terminate in controversies about words and names, in regard to which it would be better (imitating the caution of mathematicians) to proceed more advisedly in the first instance, and to bring such disputes to a regular issue by definitions. Such definitions, however, cannot remedy the evil in natural and material objects,

because they consist themselves of words, and these words produce others; so that we must necessarily have recourse to particular instances, and their regular series and arrangement, as we shall mention when we come to the mode and scheme of determining notions and axioms.

60. The idols imposed upon the understanding by words are of two kinds. They are either the names of things which have no existence (for as some objects are from inattention left without a name, so names are formed by fanciful imaginations which are without an object), or they are the names of actual objects, but confused, badly defined, and hastily and irregularly abstracted from things. Fortune, the primum mobile, the planetary orbits, the element of fire, and the like fictions, which owe their birth to futile and false theories, are instances of the first kind. And this species of idols is removed with greater facility, because it can be exterminated by the constant refutation or the desuetude of the theories themselves. The others, which are created by vicious and unskilful abstraction, are intricate and deeply rooted. Take some word for instance, as moist, and let us examine how far the different significations of this word are consistent. It will be found that the word moist is nothing but a confused sign of different actions admitted of no settled and defined uniformity. For it means that which easily diffuses itself over another body; that which is indeterminable and cannot be brought to a consistency; that which yields easily in every direction; that which is easily divided and dispersed; that which is easily united and collected; that which easily flows and is put in motion; that which easily adheres to, and wets another body; that which is easily reduced to a liquid state though previously solid. When, therefore, you come to predicate or impose this name, in one sense flame is moist, in another air is not moist, in another fine powder is moist, in another glass is moist; so that it is quite clear that this notion is hastily abstracted from water only, and common ordinary liquors, without any due verification of it. There are, however, different degrees of distortion and mistake in words. One of the least faulty classes is that of the names of substances, particularly of the less abstract and more defined species (those then of chalk and mud are good, of earth bad); words signifying actions are more faulty, as to generate, to corrupt, to change; but the most faulty are those denoting qualities (except the immediate objects of sense), as heavy, light, rare, dense. Yet in all of these there must be some notions a little better than others, in proportion as a greater or less number of things come before the senses.

31 DESCARTES: *Meditations*, II, 80d-81a / *Objections and Replies*, 208c-d

Meditations, II, 80d-81a

We must then grand that I could not even understand through the imagination what this piece of wax is, and that it is my mind alone which perceives it. I say this piece of wax in particular, for as to wax in general it is yet clearer. But what is this piece of wax which cannot be understood excepting by the [understanding or] mind? It is certainly the same that I see, touch, imagine, and finally it is the same which I have always believed it to be from the beginning. But what must particularly be observed is that its perception is neither an act of vision, nor of touch, nor of imagination, and has never been such although it may have appeared formerly to be so, but only an intuition of the mind, which may be imperfect and confused as it was formerly, or clear and distinct as it is at present, according as my attention is more or less directed to the elements which are found in it, and of which it is composed.

Yet in the meantime I am greatly astonished when I consider [the great feebleness of mind] and its proneness to fall [insensibly] into error; for although without giving expression to my thoughts I consider all this in my own mind, words often impede me and I am almost deceived by the terms of ordinary language. For we say that we see the same wax, if it is present, and not that we simply judge that it is the same from its having the same colour and figure. From this I should conclude that I knew the wax by means of vision and not simply by the intuition of the mind; unless by chance I remember that, when looking from a window and saying I see men who pass in the street, I really do not see them, but infer that what I see is men, just as I say that I see wax. And yet what do I see from the window but hats and coats which may cover automatic machines? Yet I judge these to be men. And similarly solely by the faculty of judgment which rests in my mind, I comprehend that which I believed I saw with my eyes.

A man who makes it his aim to raise his knowledge above the common should be ashamed to derive the occasion for doubting from the forms of speech invented by the vulgar; I prefer to pass on and consider whether I had a more evident and perfect conception of what the wax was when I first perceived it, and when I believed I knew it by means of the external senses or at least by the common sense as it is called, that is to say by the imaginative faculty, or whether my present conception is clearer now that I have most carefully examined what it is, and in what way it can be known.

Objections and Replies, 208c-d

But when you add *that I must also prove that the souls of brutes are incorporeal, and that solid matter contributes nothing to thinking,*[117] you not only show that you do not know on whom the onus of proof lies, but also of what should be proved by each person; for neither do I think that the souls of brutes are incorporeal, nor do I believe that solid matter contributes nothing to their thinking: I merely say that this is by no means the place for the consideration of those matters.

4. You here pursue the question of the obscurity arising out of the ambiguity of the word *soul*, an obscurity which I took such pains to remove that it is wearisome to repeat here what I have said. Therefore, I shall declare only, that names have been conferred on things for the most part by the most part by the inexpert, and that for this reason they do not always fit the things with sufficient accuracy; that it is not our part to chance them after custom has accepted them, but only to permit the emendation of their meanings, when we perceive that others do not understand them aright. Thus because probably men in the earliest times did not distinguish in us that principle in virtue of which we are nourished, grow, and perform all those operations which are common to us with the brutes apart from any thought, from that by which we think they called both by the single name *soul*; then, perceiving the distinction between nutrition and thinking, they called that which thinks *mind*, believing also that this was the chief part of the soul. But I, perceiving that the principle by which we are nourished is wholly distinct from that by means of which we think, have declared that the name *soul* when used for both is equivocal; and I say that, when soul is taken to mean *the primary actuality* or *chief essence of man,* it must be understood to apply only to the principle by which we think, and I have called it by the name *mind* as often as possible in order to avoid ambiguity; for I consider the mind not as part of the soul but as the whole of that soul which thinks.

31 SPINOZA: *Ethics*, PART II, PROP 47, SCHOL 390c-391a

Schol. Hence we see that the infinite essence and the eternity of God are known to all; and since all things are in God and are conceived through Him, it follows that we can deduce from this knowledge many things which we can know adequately, and that we can thus form that third sort of knowledge mentioned in Schol. 2, Prop. 40, pt. 2, of whose excellence and value the Fifth Part will be the place to speak. The reason why we do not possess a knowledge of God as distinct as that which we have of common notions is, that we cannot imagine God as we can bodies; and because we

[117] Cf. above, p. 173.

have attached the name God to the images of things which we are in the habit of seeing, an error we can hardly avoid, inasmuch as we are continually affected by external bodies. Many errors, of a truth, consist merely in the application of the wrong names to things. For if a man says that the lines which are drawn from the centre of the circle to the circumference are not equal, he understands by the circle, at all events for the time, something else than mathematicians understand by it. So when men make errors in calculation, the numbers which are in their minds are not those which are upon the paper. As far as their mind is concerned there is no error, although it seems as if there were, because we think that the numbers in their minds are those which are upon the paper. If we did not think so, we should not believe them to be in error. For example, when I lately heard a man complaining that his court had flown into one of his neighbour's fowls, I understood what he meant, and therefore did not imagine him to be in error. This is the source from which so many controversies arise—that men either do not properly explain their own thoughts, or do not properly interpret those of other people; for, in truth, when they most contradict one another, they either think the same things or something different, so that those things which they suppose to be errors and absurdities in another person are not so.

35 LOCKE: *Human Understanding*, BK II, CH IV, SECT 5, 131a; CH XIII, SECT 11, 150d-151a; SECT 18 152a-c; SECT 28 155a-b; CH XXIX, SECT 6-12 234d-236c; BK III, CH VI, SECT 28 276a-b; SECT 30-31 276d-277c; SECT 47-51 282a-283a; CH VII, SECT 4-6 283c-284b; CH IX 285a-291c; CH X, SECT 5 292d-293a; SECT 22 297c-298a; CH XI, SECT 3-7 300b-301c; SECT 9 301d-302a; BK IV, CH III, SECT 19 318b-319a; CH VIII, SECT 11 348b-c

Human Understanding, BK II, CH IV, SECT 5, 131a

If there be others that have not these two ideas distinct, but confound them, and make but one of them, I know not how men, who have the same idea under different names, or different ideas under the same name, can in that case talk with one another; any more than a man who, not being blind or deaf, has distinct ideas of the colour of scarlet and the sound of a trumpet, could discourse concerning scarlet colour with the blind man I mentioned in another place, who fancied that the idea of scarlet was like the sound of a trumpet.

Human Understanding, BK II, CH XIII, SECT 11, 150d-151a

11. *Extension and body not the same.* There are some that would persuade us, that body and extension are the same thing, who either change the

signification of words, which I would not suspect them of,—they having so severely condemned the philosophy of others, because it hath been too much placed in the uncertain meaning, or deceitful obscurity of doubtful or insignificant terms. If, therefore, they mean by body and extension the same that other people do, viz. by *body* something that is solid and extended, whose parts are separable and movable different ways; and by *extension*, only the space that lies between the extremities of those solid coherent parts, and which is possessed by them,—they confound very different ideas one with another; for I appeal to every man's own thoughts whether the idea of space be not as distinct from that of solidity, as it is from the idea of scarlet colour? It is true, solidity cannot exist without extension, neither can scarlet colour exist without extension, but this hinders not, but that they are distinct ideas. Many ideas require others, as necessary to their existence or conception, which yet are very distinct ideas. Motion can neither be, nor be conceived, without space; and yet motion is not space, nor space motion; space can exist without it, and they are very distinct ideas; and so, I think, are those of space and solidity.

Human Understanding, BK II, CH XIII, SECT 18 152a-c

18. *Different meanings of substance.* I endeavour as much as I can to deliver myself from those fallacies which we are apt to put upon ourselves, by taking words for things. It helps not our ignorance to feign a knowledge where we have none, by making a noise with sounds, without clear and distinct significations. Names made at pleasure, neither alter the nature of things, nor make us understand them, but as they are signs of and stand for determined ideas. And I desire those who lay so much stress on the sound of these two syllables, *substance*, to consider whether applying it, as they do, to the infinite, incomprehensible God, to finite spirits, and to body, it be in the same sense; and whether it stands for the same idea, when each of those three so different beings are called substances. If so, whether it will thence follow—that God, spirits, and body, agreeing in the same common nature of substance, differ not any otherwise than in a bare different *modification* of that substance; as a tree and a pebble, being in the same sense body, and agreeing in the common nature of body, differ only in a bare modification of that common matter, which will be a very harsh doctrine.[118] If they say, that they apply it to God, finite spirit, and matter, in three different significations and that it stands for one idea when God is said to be a substance; for another when the soul is called substance; and for a third when body is called so;—if the name substance stands for three several distinct ideas, they would do well to make known those distinct ideas, or at least to give three distinct names to them, to

[118] Cf. Spinoza, *Ethics,* Prop. xiv.

prevent in so important a notion the confusion and errors that will naturally follow from the promiscuous use of so doubtful a term; which is so far from being suspected to have three distinct, that in ordinary use it has scarce one clear distinct signification. And if they can thus make three distinct ideas of substance, what hinders why another may not make a fourth?

Human Understanding, BK II, CH XIII, SECT 28 155a-b

28. *Men differ little in clear, simple ideas.* The knowing precisely what our words stand for, would, I imagine, in this as well as a great many other cases, quickly end the dispute. For I am apt to think that men, when they come to examine them, find their simple ideas all generally to agree, though in discourse with one another they perhaps confound one another with different names. I imagine that men who abstract their thoughts, and do well examine the ideas of their own minds, cannot much differ in thinking; however they may perplex themselves with words, according to the way of speaking of the several schools or sects they have been bred up in: though amongst unthinking men, who examine not scrupulously and carefully their own ideas, and strip them not from the marks men use for them, but confound them with words, there must be endless dispute, wrangling, and jargon; especially if they be learned, bookish men, devoted to some sect, and accustomed to the language of it, and have learned to talk after others. But if it should happen that any two thinking men should really have different ideas, I do not see how they could discourse or argue one with another. Here I must not be mistaken, to think that every floating imagination in men's brains is presently of that sort of ideas I speak of. It is not easy for the mind to put off those confused notions and prejudices it has imbibed from custom, inadvertency, and common conversation. It requires pains and assiduity to examine its ideas, till it resolves them into those clear and distinct simple ones, out of which they are compounded; and to see which, amongst its simple ones, have or have not a *necessary* connexion and dependence one upon another. Till a man doth this in the primary and original notions of things, he builds upon floating and uncertain principles, and will often find himself at a loss.

Human Understanding, BK II, CH XXIX, SECT 6-12 234d-236c

6. *Confusion of ideas is in reference to their names.* To remove this difficulty, and to help us to conceive aright what it is that makes the confusion ideas are at any time chargeable with, we must consider, that things ranked under distinct names are supposed different enough to be distinguished, that so each sort by its peculiar name may be marked, and discoursed of apart upon any occasion: and there is nothing more evident, than that the greatest part of different names are supposed to stand for different things.

Now every idea a man has, being visibly what it is, and distinct from all other ideas but itself; that which makes it confused, is, when it is such that it may as well be called by another name as that which it is expressed by; the difference which keeps the things (to be ranked under those two different names) distinct, and makes some of them belong rather to the one and some of them to the other of those names, being left out; and so the distinction, which was intended to be kept up by those different names, is quite lost.

7. *Defaults which make this confusion.* The defaults which usually occasion this confusion, I think, are chiefly these following:

Complex Ideas made up of too few simple ones. First, when any complex idea (for it is complex ideas that are most liable to confusion) is made up of too small a number of simple ideas, and such only as are common to other things, whereby the differences that make it deserve a different name, are left out. Thus, he that has an idea made up of barely the simple ones of a beast with spots, has but a confused idea of a leopard; it not being thereby sufficiently distinguished from a lynx, and several other sorts of beasts that are spotted. So that such an idea, though it hath the peculiar name leopard, is not distinguishable from those designed by the names lynx or panther, and may as well come under the name lynx as leopard. How much the custom of defining of words by general terms contributes to make the ideas we would express by them confused and undetermined, I leave others to consider. This is evident, that confused ideas are such as render the use of words uncertain, and take away the benefit of distinct names. When the ideas, for which we use different terms, have not a difference answerable to their distinct names, and so cannot be distinguished by them, there it is that they are truly confused.

8. *Their simple ones jumbled disorderly together.* Secondly, Another fault which makes our ideas confused is, when, though the particulars that make up any idea are in number enough, yet they are so jumbled together, that it is not easily discernible whether it more belongs to the name that is given it than to any other. There is nothing properer to make us conceive this confusion than a sort of pictures, usually shown as surprising pieces of art, wherein the colours, as they are laid by the pencil on the table itself, mark out very odd and unusual figures, and have no discernible order in their position. This draught, thus made up of parts wherein no symmetry nor order appears, is in itself no more a confused thing, than the picture of a cloudy sky; wherein, though there be as little order of colours or figures to be found, yet nobody thinks it a confused picture. What is it, then, that makes it be thought confused, since the want of symmetry does not? As it is plain it does not: for another draught made barely in imitation of this could not be called confused. I answer, That which makes it be thought confused is, the applying it to some name to which it does no more

discernibly belong than to some other: v.g. when it is said to be the picture of a man, or Cæsar, then any one with reason counts it confused; because it is not discernible in that state to belong more to the name man, or Cæsar, than to the name baboon, or Pompey: which are supposed to stand for different ideas from those signified by man, or Cæsar. But when a cylindrical mirror, placed right, had reduced those irregular lines on the table into their due order and proportion, then the confusion ceases, and the eye presently sees that it is a man, or Cæsar; i.e. that it belongs to those names; and that it is sufficiently distinguishable from a baboon, or Pompey; i.e. from the ideas signified by those names. Just thus it is with our ideas, which are as it were the pictures of things. No one of these mental draughts, however the parts are put together, can be called confused (for they are plainly discernible as they are) till it be ranked under some ordinary name to which it cannot be discerned to belong, any more than it does to some other name of an allowed different signification.

9. *Their simple ones mutable and undetermined.* Thirdly, A third defect that frequently gives the name of confused to our ideas, is, when any one of them is uncertain and undetermined. Thus we may observe men who, not forbearing to use the ordinary words of their language till they have learned their precise signification, change the idea they make this or that term stand for, almost as often as they use it. He that does this out of uncertainty of what he should leave out, or put into his idea of *church*, or *idolatry*, every time he thinks of either, and holds not steady to any one precise combination of ideas that makes it up, is said to have a confused idea of idolatry or the church: though this be still for the same reason as the former, viz. because a mutable idea (if we will allow it to be one idea) cannot belong to one name rather than another, and so loses the distinction that distinct names are designed for.[119]

10. *Confusion without reference to names, hardly conceivable.* By what has been said, we may observe how much *names*, as supposed steady signs of things, and by their difference to stand for, and keep things distinct that in themselves are different, are the occasion of denominating ideas distinct or confused, by a secret and unobserved reference the mind makes of its ideas to such names. This perhaps will be fuller understood, after what I say of Words in the third Book has been read and considered. But without taking notice of such a reference of ideas to distinct names, as the signs of distinct things, it will be hard to say what a confused idea is. And therefore when a man designs, by any name, a sort of things, or any one particular thing, distinct from all others, the complex idea he annexes to that name is the more distinct, the more particular the ideas are, and the greater and more determinate the number and order of them is, whereof it is made up.

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[119] Cf. ch. xxii. § 7; also Bk. III. ch. x. §§ 3, 4.

For, the more it has of these, the more it has still of the perceivable differences, whereby it is kept separate and distinct from all ideas belonging to other names, even those that approach nearest to it, and thereby all confusion with them is avoided.

11. *Confusion concerns always two ideas.* Confusion making it a difficulty to separate two things that should be separated, concerns always two ideas; and those most which most approach one another. Whenever, therefore, we suspect any idea to be confused, we must examine what other it is in danger to be confounded with, or which it cannot easily be separated from; and that will always be found an idea belonging to another name, and so should be a different thing, from which yet it is not sufficiently distinct: being either the same with it, or making a part of it, or at least as properly called by that name as the other it is ranked under; and so keeps not that difference from that other idea which the different names import.

12. *Causes of confused ideas.* This, I think, is the confusion proper to ideas; which still carries with it a secret reference to names. At least, if there be any other confusion of ideas, this is that which most of all disorders men's thoughts and discourses: ideas, as ranked under names, being those that for the most part men reason of within themselves, and always those which they commune about with others. And therefore where there are supposed two different ideas, marked by two different names, which are not as distinguishable as the sounds that stand for them, there never fails to be confusion; and where any ideas are distinct as the ideas of those two sounds they are marked by, there can be between them no confusion. The way to prevent it is to collect and unite into one complex idea, as precisely as is possible, all those ingredients whereby it is differenced from others; and to them, so united in a determinate number and order, apply steadily the same name. But this neither accommodating men's ease or vanity, nor serving any design but that of naked truth, which is not always the thing aimed at, such exactness is rather to be wished than hoped for. And since the loose application of names, to undetermined, variable, and almost no ideas, serves both to cover our own ignorance, as well as to perplex and confound others, which goes for learning and superiority in knowledge, it is no wonder that most men should use it themselves, whilst they complain of it in others. Though I think no small part of the confusion to be found in the notions of men might, by care and ingenuity, be avoided, yet I am far from concluding it everywhere wilful. Some ideas are so complex, and made up of so many parts, that the memory does not easily retain the very same precise combination of simple ideas under one name: much less are we able constantly to divine for what precise complex idea such a name stands in another man's use of it. From the first of these, follows confusion in a man's own reasonings and opinions within himself; from the latter, frequent confusion in discoursing and arguing with others. But having more at large

treated of Words, their defects, and abuses, in the following Book, I shall here say no more of it.

Human Understanding, BK III, CH VI, SECT 28 276a-b

28. *But not so arbitrary as mixed modes.* But though these nominal essences of substances are made by the mind, they are not yet made so arbitrarily as those of mixed modes. To the making of any nominal essence, it is necessary, First, that the ideas whereof it consists have such a union as to make but one idea, how compounded soever. Secondly, that the particular ideas so united be exactly the same, neither more nor less. For if two abstract complex ideas differ either in number or sorts of their component parts, they make two different, and not one and the same essence. In the first of these, the mind, in making its complex ideas of substances, only follows nature; and puts none together which are not supposed to have a union in nature. Nobody joins the voice of a sheep with the shape of a horse; nor the colour of lead with the weight and fixedness of gold, to be the complex ideas of any real substances; unless he has a mind to fill his head with chimeras, and his discourse with unintelligible words. Men observing certain qualities always joined and existing together, therein copied nature; and of ideas so united made their complex ones of substances. For, though men may make what complex ideas they please, and give what names to them they will; yet, if they will be understood *when they speak of things really existing,* they must in some degree conform their ideas to the things they would speak of; or else men's language will be like that of Babel; and every man's words, being intelligible only to himself, would no longer serve to conversation and the ordinary affairs of life, if the ideas they stand for be not some way answering the common appearances and agreement of substances as they really exist.

Human Understanding, BK III, CH VI, SECT 30-31 276d-277c

30. *Yet, imperfect as they thus are, they serve for common converse.* But though this serves well enough for gross and confused conceptions, and inaccurate ways of talking and thinking; yet *men are far enough from having agreed on the precise number of simple ideas or qualities belonging to any sort of things, signified by its name.* Nor is it a wonder; since it requires much time, pains, and skill, strict inquiry, and long examination to find out what, and how many, those simple ideas are, which are constantly and inseparably united in nature, and are always to be found together in the same subject. Most men, wanting either time, inclination, or industry enough for this, even to some tolerable degree, content themselves with some few obvious and outward appearances of things, thereby readily to distinguish and sort them for the common affairs of life: and so, without further examination, give them names, or take up the names already in use.

Which, though in common conversation they pass well enough for the signs of some few obvious qualities co-existing, are yet far enough from comprehending, in a settled signification, a precise number of simple ideas, much less all those which are united in nature. He that shall consider, after so much stir about genus and species, and such a deal of talk of specific differences, how few words we have yet settled definitions of, may with reason imagine, that those *forms* which there hath been so much noise made about are only chimeras, which give us no light into the specific natures of things. And he that shall consider how far the names of substances are from having significations wherein all who use them do agree, will have reason to conclude that, though the nominal essences of substances are all supposed to be copied from nature, yet they are all, or most of them, very imperfect. Since the composition of those complex ideas are, in several men, very different: and therefore that these boundaries of species are as men, and not as Nature, makes them, if at least there are in nature any such prefixed bounds. It is true that many particular substances are so made by Nature, that they have agreement and likeness one with another, and so afford a foundation of being ranked into sorts. But the sorting of things by us, or the making of determinate species, being in order to naming and comprehending them under general terms, I cannot see how it can be properly said, that Nature sets the boundaries of the species of things: or, if it be so, our boundaries of species are not exactly conformable to those in nature. For we, having need of general names for present use, stay not for a perfect discovery of all those qualities which would *best* show us their most material differences and agreements; but we ourselves divide them, by certain obvious appearances, into species, that we may the easier under general names communicate our thoughts about them. For, having no other knowledge of any substance but of the simple ideas that are united in it; and observing several particular things to agree with others in several of those simple ideas; we make that collection our specific idea, and give it a general name; that in recording our thoughts, and in our discourse with others, we may in one short word designate all the individuals that agree in that complex idea, without enumerating the simple ideas that make it up; and so not waste our time and breath in tedious descriptions: which we see they are fain to do who would discourse of any new sort of things they have not yet a name for.

31. *Essences of species under the same name very different in different minds.* But however these species of substances pass well enough in ordinary conversation, it is plain that this complex idea, wherein they observe several individuals to agree, is by different men made very differently; by some more, and others less accurately. In some, this complex idea contains a greater, and in others a smaller number of qualities; and so is apparently such as the mind makes it. The yellow shining colour makes

gold to children; others add weight, malleableness, and fusibility; and others yet other qualities, which they find joined with that yellow colour, as constantly as its weight and fusibility. For in all these and the like qualities, one has as good a right to be put into the complex idea of that substance wherein they are all joined as another. And therefore different men, leaving out or putting in several simple ideas which others do not, according to their various examination, skill, or observation of that subject, have different essences of gold, which must therefore be of their own and not of nature's making.

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47. This piece of matter, thus denominated *zahab* by Adam, being quite different from any he had seen before, nobody, I think, will deny to be a distinct species, and to have its peculiar essence: and that the name *zahab* is the mark of the species, and a name belonging to all things partaking in that essence. But here it is plain the essence Adam made the name *zahab* stand for was nothing but a body hard, shining, yellow, and very heavy. But the inquisitive mind of man, not content with the knowledge of these, as I may say, superficial qualities, puts Adam upon further examination of this matter. He therefore knocks, and beats it with flints, to see what was discoverable in the inside: he finds it yield to blows, but not easily separate into pieces: he finds it will bend without breaking. Is not now ductility to be added to his former idea, and made part of the essence of the species that name *zahab* stands for? Further trials discover fusibility and fixedness. Are not they also, by the same reason that any of the others were, to be put into the complex idea signified by the name *zahab*? If not, what reason will there be shown more for the one than the other? If these must, then all the other properties, which any further trials shall discover in this matter, ought by the same reason to make a part of the ingredients of the complex idea which the name *zahab* stands for, and so be the essence of the species marked by that name. Which properties, because they are endless, it is plain that the idea made after this fashion, by this archetype, will be always inadequate.

48. *The abstract ideas of substances always imperfect, and therefore various*. But this is not all. It would also follow that the names of substances would not only have, as in truth they have, but would also be supposed to have different significations, as used by different men, which would very much cumber the use of language. For if every distinct quality that were discovered in any matter by any one were supposed to make a necessary part of the complex idea signified by the common name given to it, it must follow, that men must suppose the same word to signify different things in different men: since they cannot doubt but different men

may have discovered several qualities, in substances of the same denomination, which others know nothing of.

49. *Therefore to fix their nominal species, a real essense is supposed*. To avoid this therefore, they have supposed a real essence belonging to every species, from which these properties all flow, and would have their name of the species stand for that. But they, not having any idea of that real essence in substances, and their words signifying nothing but the ideas they have, that which is done by this attempt is only to put the name or sound in the place and stead of the thing having that real essence, without knowing what the real essence is, and this is that which men do when they speak of species of things, as supposing them made by nature, and distinguished by real essences.

50. *Which supposition is of no use*. For, let us consider, when we affirm that "all gold is fixed," either it means that fixedness is a part of the definition, i.e., part of the nominal essence the word gold stands for; and so this affirmation, "all gold is fixed," contains nothing but the signification of the term gold. Or else it means, that fixedness, not being a part of the definition of the gold, is a property of that substance itself: in which case it is plain that the word gold stands in the place of a substance, having the real essence of a species of things made by nature. In which way of substitution it has so confused and uncertain a signification, that, though this proposition — "gold is fixed" — be in that sense an affirmation of something real; yet it is a truth will always fail us in its particular application, and so is of no real use or certainty. For let it be ever so true, that all gold, i.e. all that has the real essence of gold, is fixed, what serves this for, whilst we know not, in this sense, *what is or is not gold*? For if we know not the real essence of gold, it is impossible we should know what parcel of matter has that essence, and so whether *it* be true gold or no.[120]

51. *Conclusion*. To conclude: what liberty Adam had at first to make any complex ideas of *mixed modes* by no other pattern but by his own thoughts, the same have all men ever since had. And the same necessity of conforming his ideas of *substances* to things without him, as to archetypes made by nature, that Adam was under, if he would not wilfully impose upon himself, the same are all men ever since under too. The same liberty also that Adam had of affixing any new name to any idea, the same has any one still, (especially the beginners of languages, if we can imagine any such); but only with this difference, that, in places where men in society have already established a language amongst them, the significations of words are very warily and sparingly to be altered. Because men being furnished already with names for their ideas, and common use having appropriated known names to certain ideas, an affected misapplication of them cannot but be

[120] Cf. ch. x. § 17.

very ridiculous. He that hath new notions will perhaps venture sometimes on the coining of new terms to express them: but men think it a boldness, and it is uncertain whether common use will ever make them pass for current. But in communication with others, it is necessary that we conform the ideas we make the vulgar words of any language stand for to their known proper significations, (which I have explained at large already), or else to make known that new signification we apply them to.

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4. *They are all marks of some action or intimation of the mind.* Neither is it enough, for the explaining of these words, to render them, as is usual in dictionaries, by words of another tongue which come nearest to their signification: for what is meant by them is commonly as hard to be understood in one as another language. They are all marks of some action or intimation of the mind; and therefore to understand them rightly, the several views, postures, stands, turns, limitations, and exceptions, and several other thoughts of the mind, for which we have either none or very deficient names, are diligently to be studied. Of these there is a great variety, much exceeding the number of particles that most languages have to express them by: and therefore it is not to be wondered that most of these particles have divers and sometimes almost opposite significations. In the Hebrew tongue there is a particle consisting of but one single letter, of which there are reckoned up, as I remember, seventy, I am sure above fifty, several significations.

5. *Instance in "but."* "But" is a particle, none more familiar in our language: and he that says it is a discretive conjunction, and that it answers to *sed* Latin, or *mais* in French, thinks he has sufficiently explained it. But yet it seems to me to intimate several relations the mind gives to the several propositions or parts of them which it joins by this monosyllable.

First, "But to say no more": here it intimates a stop of the mind in the course it was going, before it came quite to the end of it.

Secondly, "I saw but two plants"; here it shows that the mind limits the sense to what is expressed, with a negation of all other.

Thirdly, "You pray; but it is not that God would bring you to the true religion."

Fourthly, "But that he would confirm you in your own." The first of these *buts* intimates a supposition in the mind of something otherwise than it should be: the latter shows that the mind makes a direct opposition between that and what goes before it.

Fifthly, "All animals have sense, but a dog is an animal": here it signifies little more but that the latter proposition is joined to the former, as the minor of a syllogism.

6. *This matter of the use of particles but lightly touched here.* To these, I doubt not, might be added a great many other significations of this particle, if it were my business to examine it in its full latitude, and consider it in all the places it is to be found: which if one should do, I doubt whether in all those manners it is made use of, it would deserve the title of *discretive,* which grammarians give to it. But I intend not here a full explication of this sort of signs. The instances I have given in this one may give occasion to reflect on their use and force in language, and lead us into the contemplation of several actions of our minds in discoursing, which it has found a way to intimate to others by these particles, some whereof constantly, and others in certain constructions, have the sense of a whole sentence contained in them.

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Chap. IX. *Of the Imperfection of Words*

1. *Words are used for recording and communicating our thoughts.* From what has been said in the foregoing chapters, it is easy to perceive what imperfection there is in language, and how the very nature of words makes it almost unavoidable for many of them to be doubtful and uncertain in their significations. To examine the perfection or imperfection of words, it is necessary first to consider their use and end: for as they are more or less fitted to attain that, so they are more or less perfect. We have, in the former part of this discourse often, upon occasion, mentioned a double use of words.

First, One for the recording of our own thoughts.

Secondly, The other for the communicating of our thoughts to others. [121]

2. *Any words will serve for recording.* As to the first of these, *for the recording our own thoughts for the help of our own memories,* whereby, as it were, we talk to ourselves, any words will serve the turn. For since sounds are voluntary and indifferent signs of any ideas, a man may use what words he pleases to signify his own ideas to himself: and there will be no imperfection in them, if he constantly use the same sign for the same idea: for then he cannot fail of having his meaning understood, wherein consists the right use and perfection of language.

3. *Communication by words either for civil or philosophical purposes.* Secondly, As to *communication by words*, that too has a double use.

I. *Civil*.

II. *Philosophical*.

First, by their *civil* use, I mean such a communication of thoughts and ideas by words, as may serve for the upholding common conversation and

[121] Cf. ch. x. § 23.

commerce, about the ordinary affairs and conveniences of civil life, in the societies of men, one amongst another.
Secondly, By the *philosophical* use of words, I mean such a use of them as may serve to convey the precise notions of things, and to express in general propositions certain and undoubted truths, which the mind may rest upon and be satisfied with in its search after true knowledge. These two uses are very distinct; and a great deal less exactness will serve in the one than in the other, as we shall see in what follows.
4. *The imperfection of words is the doubtfulness or ambiguity of their signification, which is caused by the sort of ideas they stand for.* The chief end of language in communication being to be understood, words serve not well for that end, neither in civil nor philosophical discourse, when any word does not excite in the hearer the same idea which it stands for in the mind of the speaker. Now, since sounds have no natural connexion with our ideas, but have all their signification from the arbitrary imposition of men, the doubtfulness and uncertainty of their signification, which is the imperfection we here are speaking of, has its cause more in the ideas they stand for than in any incapacity there is in one sound more than in another to signify any idea: for in that regard they are all equally perfect.
That then which makes doubtfulness and uncertainty in the signification of some more than other words, is the difference of ideas they stand for.
5. *Natural causes of their imperfection, especially in those that stand for mixed modes, and for our ideas of substances.* Words having naturally no signification, the idea which each stands for must be learned and retained, by those who would exchange thoughts, and hold intelligible discourse with others, in any language. But this is the hardest to be done where,
First, The ideas they stand for are very complex, and made up of a great number of ideas put together.
Secondly, Where the ideas they stand for have no certain connexion in nature; and so no settled standard anywhere in nature existing, to rectify and adjust them by.
Thirdly, When the signification of the word is referred to a standard, which standard is not easy to be known.
Fourthly, Where the signification of the word and the real essence of the thing are not exactly the same.
These are difficulties that attend the signification of several words that are intelligible. Those which are not intelligible at all, such as names standing for any simple ideas which another has not organs or faculties to attain; as the names of colours to a blind man, or sounds to a deaf man, need not here be mentioned.
In all these cases we shall find an imperfection in words; which I shall more at large explain, in their particular application to our several sorts of ideas: for if we examine them, we shall find that the *names of Mixed Modes are*

most liable to doubtfulness and imperfection, for the two first of these reasons; and the *names of Substances chiefly for the two latter.*

6. *The names of mixed modes doubtful. First, because the ideas they stand for are so complex.* First, The names of *mixed modes* are, many of them, liable to great uncertainty and obscurity in their signification.

I. Because of that *great composition* these complex ideas are often made up of. To make words serviceable to the end of communication, it is necessary, as has been said, that they excite in the hearer exactly the same idea they stand for in the mind of the speaker. Without this, men fill one another's heads with noise and sounds; but convey not thereby their thoughts, and lay not before one another their ideas, which is the end of discourse and language. But when a word stands for a very complex idea that is compounded and decompounded, it is not easy for men to form and retain that idea so exactly, as to make the name in common use stand for the same precise idea, without any the least variation. Hence it comes to pass that men's names of very compound ideas, such as for the most part are moral words, have seldom in two different men the same precise signification; since one man's complex idea seldom agrees with another's, and often differs from his own—from that which he had yesterday, or will have to-morrow.

7. *Secondly, because they have no standards in nature.* Because the names of mixed modes for the most part *want standards in nature,* whereby men may rectify and adjust their significations; therefore they are very various and doubtful. They are assemblages of ideas put together at the pleasure of the mind, pursuing its own ends of discourse, and suited to its own notions; whereby it designs not to copy anything really existing, but to denominate and rank things as they come to agree with those archetypes or forms it has made. He that first brought the word *sham*, or *wheedle*, or *banter*, in use, put together as he thought fit those ideas he made it stand for; and as it is with any new names of modes that are now brought into any language, so it was with the old ones when they were first made use of. Names, therefore, that stand for collections of ideas which the mind makes at pleasure must needs be of doubtful signification, when such collections are nowhere to be found constantly united in nature, nor any patterns to be shown whereby men may adjust them. What the word *murder*, or *sacrilege*, &c., signifies can never be known from things themselves: there be many of the parts of those complex ideas which are not visible in the action itself; the intention of the mind, or the relation of holy things, which make a part of murder or sacrilege, have no necessary connexion with the outward and visible action of him that commits either: and the pulling the trigger of the gun with which the murder is committed, and is all the action that perhaps is visible, has no natural connexion with those other ideas that make up the complex one named murder. They have their union and combination only

from the understanding which unites them under one name: but, uniting them without any rule or pattern, it cannot be but that the signification of the name that stands for such voluntary collections should be often various in the minds of different men, who have scarce any standing rule to regulate themselves and their notions by, in such arbitrary ideas.

8. *Common use, or propriety not a sufficient remedy.* It is true, common use, that is, the rule of propriety may be supposed here to afford some aid, to settle the signification of language; and it cannot be denied but that in some measure it does. Common use regulates the meaning of words pretty well for common conversation; but nobody having an authority to establish the precise signification of words, nor determine to what ideas any one shall annex them, common use is not sufficient to adjust them to Philosophical Discourses; there being scarce any name of any very complex idea (to say nothing of others) which, in common use, has not a great latitude, and which, keeping within the bounds of propriety, may not be made the sign of far different ideas. Besides, the rule and measure of propriety itself being nowhere established, it is often matter of dispute, whether this or that way of using a word be propriety of speech or no. From all which it is evident, that the names of such kind of very complex ideas are naturally liable to this imperfection, to be of doubtful and uncertain signification; and even in men that have a mind to understand one another, do not always stand for the same idea in speaker and hearer. Though the names *glory* and *gratitude* be the same in every man's mouth through a whole country, yet the complex collective idea which every one thinks on or intends by that name, is apparently very different in men using the same language.

9. *The way of learning these names contributes also to their doubtfulness.* The way also wherein the names of mixed modes are ordinarily learned, does not a little contribute to the doubtfulness of their signification. For if we will observe how children learn languages, we shall find that, to make them understand what the names of simple ideas or substances stand for, people ordinarily show them the thing whereof they would have them have the idea; and then repeat to them the name that stands for it; as *white*, *sweet*, *milk*, *sugar*, *cat*, *dog*. But as for mixed modes, especially the most material of them, *moral words*, the sounds are usually learned first; and then, to know what complex ideas they stand for, they are either beholden to the explication of others, or (which happens for the most part) are left to their own observation and industry; which being little laid out in the search of the true and precise meaning of names, these moral words are in most men's mouths little more than bare sounds; or when they have any, it is for the most part but a very loose and undetermined, and, consequently, obscure and confused signification. And even those themselves who have with more attention settled their notions, do yet hardly avoid the

inconvenience to have them stand for complex ideas different from those which other, even intelligent and studious men, make them the signs of. Where shall one find any, either controversial debate, or familiar discourse, concerning honour, faith, grace, religion, church, &c., wherein it is not easy to observe the different notions men have of them? Which is nothing but this, that they are not agreed in the signification of those words, nor have in their minds the same complex ideas which they make them stand for, and so all the contests that follow thereupon are only about the meaning of a sound. And hence we see that, in the interpretation of laws, whether divine or human, there is no end; comments beget comments, and explications make new matter for explications; and of limiting, distinguishing, varying the signification of these moral words there is no end. These ideas of men's making are, by men still having the same power, multiplied *in infinitum*. Many a man who was pretty well satisfied of the meaning of a text of Scripture, or clause in the code, at first reading, has, by consulting commentators, quite lost the sense of it, and by these elucidations given rise or increase to his doubts, and drawn obscurity upon the place. I say not this that I think commentaries needless; but to show how uncertain the names of mixed modes naturally are, even in the mouths of those who had both the intention and the faculty of speaking as clearly as language was capable to express their thoughts.

10. *Hence unavoidable obscurity in ancient authors*. What obscurity this has unavoidably brought upon the writings of men who have lived in remote ages, and different countries, it will be needless to take notice. Since the numerous volumes of learned men, employing their thoughts that way, are proofs more than enough, to show what attention, study, sagacity, and reasoning are required to find out the true meaning of ancient authors. But, there being no writings we have any great concernment to be very solicitous about the meaning of, but those that contain either truths we are required to believe, or laws we are to obey, and draw inconveniences on us when we mistake or transgress, we may be less anxious about the sense of other authors; who, writing but their own opinions, we are under no greater necessity to know them, than they to know ours. Our good or evil depending not on their decrees, we may safely be ignorant of their notions: and therefore in the reading of them, if they do not use their words with a due clearness and perspicuity, we may lay them aside, and without any injury done them, resolve thus with ourselves,

Si non vis intelligi, debes negligi.

11. *Names of substances of doubtful signification, because the ideas they stand for relate to the reality of things.* If the signification of the names of mixed modes be uncertain, because there be no real standards existing in nature to which those ideas are referred, and by which they may be adjusted, the names of *substances* are of a doubtful signification, for a

contrary reason, viz. because the ideas they stand for are supposed conformable to the reality of things, and are referred to as standards made by Nature. In our ideas of substances we have not the liberty, as in mixed modes, to frame what combinations we think fit, to be the characteristical notes to rank and denominate things by. In these we must follow Nature, suit our complex ideas to real existences, and regulate the signification of their names by the things themselves, if we will have our names to be signs of them, and stand for them. Here, it is true, we have patterns to follow; but patterns that will make the signification of their names very uncertain: for names must be of a very unsteady and various meaning, if the ideas they stand for be referred to standards without us, that either cannot be known at all, or can be known but imperfectly and uncertainly.

12. *Names of substances referred, to real essences that cannot be known.* The names of substances have, as has been shown,[122] a double reference in their ordinary use.

First, Sometimes they are made to stand for, and so their signification is supposed to agree to, *the real constitution of things*, from which all their properties flow, and in which they all centre. But this real constitution, or (as it is apt to be called) essence, being utterly unknown to us,[123] any sound that is put to stand for it must be very uncertain in its application; and it will be impossible to know what things are or ought to be called a *horse*, or *antimony*, when those words are put for real essences that we have no ideas of at all. And therefore in this supposition, the names of substances being referred to standards that cannot be known, their significations can never be adjusted and established by those standards.

13. *To co-existing qualities, which are known but imperfectly.* Secondly, The simple ideas that are *found to co-exist in substances* being that which their names immediately signify, these, as united in the several sorts of things, are the proper standards to which their names are referred, and by which their significations may be best rectified. But neither will these archetypes so well serve to this purpose as to leave these names without very various and uncertain significations. Because these simple ideas that co-exist, and are united in the same subject, being very numerous, and having all an equal right to go into the complex specific idea which the specific name is to stand for, men, though they propose to themselves the very same subject to consider, yet frame very different ideas about it; and so the name they use for it unavoidably comes to have, in several men, very different significations. The simple qualities which make up the complex ideas, being most of them powers, in relation to changes which they are apt to make in, or receive from other bodies, are almost infinite. He that shall but observe what a great variety of alterations any one of the baser metals

[122] Ch. vi.
[123] Cf. Bk. II. ch. viii.

is apt to receive, from the different application only of fire; and how much a greater number of changes any of them will receive in the hands of a chymist, by the application of other bodies, will not think it strange that I count the properties of any sort of bodies not easy to be collected, and completely known, by the ways of inquiry which our faculties are capable of. They being therefore at least so many, that no man can know the precise and definite number, they are differently discovered by different men, according to their various skill, attention, and ways of handling; who therefore cannot choose but have different ideas of the same substance, and therefore make the signification of its common name very various and uncertain. For the complex ideas of substances, being made up of such simple ones as are supposed to co-exist in nature, every one has a right to put into his complex idea those qualities he has found to be united together. For, though in the substance of gold one satisfies himself with colour and weight, yet another thinks solubility in *aqua regia* as necessary to be joined with that colour in his idea of gold, as any one does its fusibility; solubility in *aqua regia* being a quality as constantly joined with its colour and weight as fusibility or any other; others put into it ductility or fixedness, &c., as they have been taught by tradition or experience. Who of all these has established the right signification of the word, gold? Or who shall be the judge to determine? Each has his standard in nature, which he appeals to, and with reason thinks he has the same right to put into his complex idea signified by the word gold, those qualities, which, upon trial, he has found united; as another who has not so well examined has to leave them out; or a third, who has made other trials, has to put in others. For the union in nature of these qualities being the true ground of their union in one complex idea, who can say one of them has more reason to be put in or left out than another? From hence it will unavoidably follow, that the complex ideas of substances in men using the same names for them, will be very various, and so the significations of those names very uncertain.

14. *Thirdly, to co-existing qualities which are known but imperfectly.* Besides, there is scarce any particular thing existing, which, in some of its simple ideas, does not communicate with a greater, and in others a less number of particular beings: who shall determine in this case which are those that are to make up the precise collection that is to be signified by the specific name? or can with any just authority prescribe, which obvious or common qualities are to be left out; or which more secret, or more particular, are to be put into the signification of the name of any substance? All which together, seldom or never fail to produce that various and doubtful signification in the names of substances, which causes such uncertainty, disputes, or mistakes, when we come to a philosophical use of them.

15. *With this imperfection, they may serve for civil, but not well for philosophical use*. It is true, as to civil and common conversation, the

general names of substances, regulated in their ordinary signification by some obvious qualities, (as by the shape and figure in things of known seminal propagation, and in other substances, for the most part by colour, joined with some other sensible qualities), do well enough to design the things men would be understood to speak of: and so they usually conceive well enough the substances meant by the word gold or apple, to distinguish the one from the other. But in *philosophical* inquiries and debates, where general truths are to be established, and consequences drawn from positions laid down, there the precise signification of the names of substances will be found not only not to be well established, but also very hard to be so. For example: he that shall make malleability, or a certain degree of fixedness, a part of his complex idea of gold, may make propositions concerning gold, and draw consequences from them, that will truly and clearly follow from gold, taken in such a signification: but yet such as another man can never be forced to admit, nor be convinced of their truth, who makes not malleableness, or the same degree of fixedness, part of that complex idea that the name gold, in his use of it, stands for.

16. *Instance, liquor.* This is a natural and almost unavoidable imperfection in almost all the names of substances, in all languages whatsoever, which men will easily find when, once passing from confused or loose notions, they come to more strict and close inquiries. For then they will be convinced how doubtful and obscure those words are in their signification, which in ordinary use appeared very clear and determined. I was once in a meeting of very learned and ingenious physicians, where by chance there arose a question, whether any liquor passed through the filaments of the nerves. The debate having been managed a good while, by variety of arguments on both sides, I (who had been used to suspect, that the greatest part of disputes were more about the signification of words than a real difference in the conception of things) desired, that, before they went any further on in this dispute, they would first examine and establish amongst them, what the word *liquor* signified. They at first were a little surprised at the proposal; and had they been persons less ingenious, they might perhaps have taken it for a very frivolous or extravagant one: since there was no one there that thought not himself to understand very perfectly what the word liquor stood for; which I think, too, none of the most perplexed names of substances. However, they were pleased to comply with my motion; and upon examination found that the signification of that word was not so settled or certain as they had all imagined; but that each of them made it a sign of a different complex idea. This made them perceive that the main of their dispute was about the signification of that term; and that they differed very little in their opinions concerning *some* fluid and subtle matter, passing through the conduits of the nerves; though

it was not so easy to agree whether it was to be called *liquor* or no, a thing, which, when considered, they thought it not worth the contending about.

17. *Instance, gold.* How much this is the case in the greatest part of disputes that men are engaged so hotly in, I shall perhaps have an occasion in another place to take notice. Let us only here consider a little more exactly the forementioned instance of the word *gold*, and we shall see how hard it is precisely to determine its signification. I think all agree to make it stand for a body of a certain yellow shining colour; which being the idea to which children have annexed that name, the shining yellow part of a peacock's tail is properly to them gold. Others finding fusibility joined with that yellow colour in certain parcels of matter, make of that combination a complex idea to which they give the name gold, to denote a sort of substances; and so exclude from being gold all such yellow shining bodies as by fire will be reduced to ashes; and admit to be of that species, or to be comprehended under that name gold, only such substances as, having that shining yellow colour, will by fire be reduced to fusion, and not to ashes. Another, by the same reason, adds the weight, which, being a quality as straightly joined with that colour as its fusibility, he thinks has the same reason to be joined in its idea, and to be signified by its name: and therefore the other made up of body, of such a colour and fusibility, to be imperfect; and so on of all the rest: wherein no one can show a reason why some of the inseparable qualities, that are always united in nature, should be put into the nominal essence, and others left out: or why the word gold, signifying that sort of body the ring on his finger is made of, should determine that sort rather by its colour, weight, and fusibility, than by its colour, weight, and solubility in *aqua regia*: since the dissolving it by that liquor is as inseparable from it as the fusion by fire; and they are both of them nothing but the relation which that substance has to two other bodies, which have a power to operate differently upon it. For by what right is it that fusibility comes to be a part of the essence signified by the word gold, and solubility but a property of it? Or why is its colour part of the essence, and its malleableness but a property? That which I mean is this, That these being all but properties, depending on its real constitution, and nothing but powers, either active or passive, in reference to other bodies, no one has authority to determine the signification of the word gold (as referred to such a body existing in nature) more to one collection of ideas to be found in that body than to another: whereby the signification of that name must unavoidably be very uncertain. Since, as has been said, several people observe several properties in the same substance; and I think I may say nobody all. And therefore we have but very imperfect descriptions of things, and words have very uncertain significations.

18. *The names of simple ideas the least doubtful.* From what has been said, it is easy to observe what has been before remarked, viz. that the *names of*

simple ideas are, of all others, the least liable to mistakes, and that for these reasons. First, Because the ideas they stand for, being each but one single perception, are much easier got, and more clearly retained, than the more complex ones, and therefore are not liable to the uncertainty which usually attends those compounded ones of substances and mixed modes, in which the precise number of simple ideas that make them up are not easily agreed, so readily kept in mind. And, Secondly, Because they are never referred to any other essence, but barely that perception they immediately signify: which reference is that which renders the signification of the names of substances naturally so perplexed, and gives occasion to so many disputes. Men that do not perversely use their words, or on purpose set themselves to cavil, seldom mistake, in any language which they are acquainted with, the use and signification of the name of simple ideas. *White* and *sweet*, *yellow* and *bitter*, carry a very obvious meaning with them, which every one precisely comprehends, or easily perceives he is ignorant of, and seeks to be informed. But what precise collection of simple ideas *modesty* or *frugality* stand for, in another's use, is not so certainly known. And however we are apt to think we well enough know what is meant by *gold* or *iron*; yet the precise complex idea others make them the signs of is not so certain: and I believe it is very seldom that, in speaker and hearer, they stand for exactly the same collection. Which must needs produce mistakes and disputes, when they are made use of in discourses, wherein men have to do with universal propositions, and would settle in their minds universal truths, and consider the consequences that follow from them.[124]

19. *And next to them, simple modes.* By the same rule, the names of *simple modes* are, next to those of simple ideas, least liable to doubt and uncertainty; especially those of figure and number, of which men have so clear and distinct ideas. Who ever that had a mind to understand them mistook the ordinary meaning of *seven*, or a *triangle*? And in general the least compounded ideas in every kind have the least dubious names.

20. *The most doubtful are the names of very compounded mixed modes and substances.* Mixed modes, therefore, that are made up but of a few and obvious simple ideas, have usually names of no very uncertain signification. But the names of mixed modes which comprehend a great number of simple ideas, are commonly of a very doubtful and undetermined meaning, as has been shown. The names of substances, being annexed to ideas that are neither the real essences, nor exact representations of the patterns they are referred to, are liable to yet greater imperfection and uncertainty, especially when we come to a philosophical use of them.

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[124] Cf. Bk. II. ch. vi. § 2; also Bk. II. ch. viii.

21. *Why this imperfection charged upon words.* The great disorder that happens in our names of substances, proceeding, for the most part, from our want of knowledge, and inability to penetrate into their real constitutions, it may probably be wondered why I charge this as an imperfection rather upon our words than understandings. This exception has so much appearance of justice, that I think myself obliged to give a reason why I have followed this method. I must confess, then, that, when I first began this Discourse of the Understanding, and a good while after, I had not the least thought that any consideration of words was at all necessary to it. But when, having passed over the original and composition of our ideas,[125] I began to examine the extent and certainty of our knowledge,[126] I found it had so near a connexion with words, that, unless their force and manner of signification were first well observed, there could be very little said clearly and pertinently concerning knowledge: which being conversant about truth, had constantly to do with propositions. And though it terminated in things, yet it was for the most part so much by the intervention of words, that they seemed scarce separable from our general knowledge. At least they interpose themselves so much between our understandings, and the truth which it would contemplate and apprehend, that, like the medium through which visible objects pass, the obscurity and disorder do not seldom cast a mist before our eyes, and impose upon our understandings. If we consider, in the fallacies men put upon themselves, as well as others, and the mistakes in men's disputes and notions, how great a part is owing to words, and their uncertain or mistaken significations, we shall have reason to think this no small obstacle in the way to knowledge; which I conclude we are the more carefully to be warned of, because it has been so far from being taken notice of as an inconvenience, that the arts of improving it have been made the business of men's study, and obtained the reputation of learning and subtilty, as we shall see in the following chapter.[127] But I am apt to imagine, that, were the imperfections of language, as the instrument of knowledge, more thoroughly weighed, a great many of the controversies that make such a noise in the world, would of themselves cease; and the way to knowledge, and perhaps peace too, lie a great deal opener than it does.

22. *This should teach us moderation in imposing our own sense of old authors.* Sure I am that the signification of words in all languages, depending very much on the thoughts, notions, and ideas of him that uses them, must unavoidably be of great uncertainty to men of the same language and country. This is so evident in the Greek authors, that he that shall peruse their writings will find in almost every one of them, a distinct

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[125] In Bk. II.
[126] In Bk. IV.
[127] See especially §§ 6-22.

language, though the same words. But when to this natural difficulty in every country, there shall be added different countries and remote ages, wherein the speakers and writers had very different notions, tempers, customs, ornaments, and figures of speech, &c., every one of which influenced the signification of their words then, though to us now they are lost and unknown; it would become us to be charitable one to another in our interpretations or misunderstandings of those ancient writings; which, though of great concernment to be understood, are liable to the unavoidable difficulties of speech, which (if we except the names of simple ideas, and some very obvious things) is not capable, without a constant defining the terms, of conveying the sense and intention of the speaker, without any manner of doubt and uncertainty to the hearer. And in discourses of religion, law, and morality, as they are matters of the highest concernment, so there will be the greatest difficulty.

23. *Especially of the Old and New Testament Scriptures.* The volumes of interpreters and commentators on the Old and New Testament are but too manifest proofs of this. Though everything said in the text be infallibly true, yet the reader may be, nay, cannot choose but be, very fallible in the understanding of it. Nor is it to be wondered, that the will of God, when clothed in words, should be liable to that doubt and uncertainty which unavoidably attends that sort of conveyance, when even his Son, whilst clothed in flesh, was subject to all the frailties and inconveniences of human nature, sin excepted. And we ought to magnify his goodness, that he hath spread before all the world such legible characters of his works and providence, and given all mankind so sufficient a light of reason, that they to whom this written word never came, could not (whenever they set themselves to search) either doubt of the being of a God, or of the obedience due to him. Since then the precepts of Natural Religion are plain, and very intelligible to all mankind, and seldom come to be controverted; and other revealed truths, which are conveyed to us by books and languages, are liable to the common and natural obscurities and difficulties incident to words; methinks it would become us to be more careful and diligent in observing the former, and less magisterial, positive, and imperious, in imposing our own sense and interpretations of the latter.

Human Understanding, BK III, CH X, SECT 5 292d-293a

5. *Unsteady application of them. Secondly,* Another great abuse of words is *inconstancy* in the use of them. It is hard to find a discourse written on any subject, especially of controversy, wherein one shall not observe, if he read with attention, the same words (and those commonly the most material in the discourse, and upon which the argument turns) used something for one collection of simple ideas, and sometimes for another; which is a perfect abuse of language. Words being intended for signs of my ideas, to make

them known to others, not by any natural signification, but by a voluntary imposition, it is plain cheat and abuse, when I make them stand sometimes for one thing and sometimes for another; the wilful doing whereof can be imputed to nothing but great folly, or greater dishonesty. And a man, in his accounts with another may, with as much fairness make the characters of numbers stand sometimes for one and sometimes for another collection of units: v. g. this character 3, stand sometimes for three, sometimes for four, and sometimes for eight, as in his discourse or reasoning make the same words stand for different collections of simple ideas. If men should do so in their reckonings, I wonder who would have to do with them? One who would speak thus in the affairs and business of the world, and call 8 sometimes seven, and sometimes nine, as best served his advantage, would presently have clapped upon him, one of the two names men are commonly disgusted with. And yet in arguings and learned contests, the same sort of proceedings passes commonly for wit and learning; but to me it appears a greater dishonesty than the misplacing of counters in the casting up a debt; and the cheat the greater, by how much truth is of greater concernment and value than money.

Human Understanding, BK III, CH X, 22 297c-298a

22. VI. *By proceeding upon the supposition that the words we use have a certain and evident signification which other men cannot but understand. Sixthly*, there remains yet another more general, though perhaps less observed, abuse of words; and that is, that men having by a long and familiar use annexed to them certain ideas, they are apt to imagine *so near and necessary a connexion between the names and the signification they use them in,* that they forwardly suppose one cannot but understand what their meaning is; and therefore one ought to acquiesce in the words delivered, as if it were past doubt that, in the use of those common received sounds, the speaker and hearer had necessarily the same precise ideas. Whence presuming, that when they have in discourse used any term, they have thereby, as it were, set before others the very thing they talked of. And so likewise taking the words of others as naturally standing for just what they themselves have been accustomed to apply them to, they never trouble themselves to explain their own, or understand clearly others' meaning. From whence commonly proceeds noise, and wrangling, without improvement or information; whilst men take words to be the constant regular marks of agreed notions, which in truth are no more but the voluntary and unsteady signs of their own ideas. And yet men think it strange, if in discourse, or (where it is often absolutely necessary) in dispute, one sometimes asks the meaning of their terms: though the arguings one may every day observe in conversation make it evident, that there are few names of complex ideas which any two men use for the same

just precise collection. It is hard to name a word which will not be a clear instance of this. *Life* is a term, none more familiar. Any one almost would take it for an affront to be asked what he meant by it. And yet if it comes in question, whether a plant that lies ready formed in the seed have life; whether the embryo in an egg before incubation, or a man in a swoon without sense or motion, be alive or no; it is easy to perseive that a clear, distinct, settled idea does not always accompany the use of so known a word as that of life is. Some gross and confused conceptions men indeed ordinarily have, to which they apply the common words of their language; and such a loose use of their words serves them well enough in their ordinary discourses or affairs. But this is not sufficient for philosophical inquiries. Knowledge and reasoning require precise determinate ideas. And though men will not be so importunately dull as not to understand what others say, without demanding an explication of their terms; nor so troublesomely critical as to correct others in the use of the words they receive from them: yet, where truth and knowledge are concerned in the case, I know not what fault it can be, to desire the explication of words whose sense seems dubious; or why a man should be ashamed to own his ignorance in what sense another man uses his words; since he has no other way of certainly knowing it but by being informed. This abuse of taking words upon trust has nowhere spread so far, nor with so ill effects, as amongst men of letters. The multiplication and obstinacy of disputes, which have so laid waste the intellectual world, is owing to nothing more than to this ill use of words. For though it be generally believed that there is great diversity of opinions in the volumes and variety of controversies the world is distracted with; yet the most I can find that the contending learned men of different parties do, in their arguings one with another, is, that they speak different languages. For I am apt to imagine, that when any of them, quitting terms, think upon things, and know what they think, they think all the same: though perhaps what they would have be different.

Human Understanding, BK III, CH XI, SECT 3-7 300b-301c

3. *But yet necessary to those who search after truth.* But though the market and exchange must be left to their own ways of talking, and gossipings not be robbed of their ancient privilege: though the schools, and men of argument would perhaps take it amiss to have anything offered, to abate the length or lessen the number of their disputes; yet methinks those who pretend seriously to search after or maintain truth, should think themselves obliged to study how they might deliver themselves without obscurity, doubtfulness, or equivocation, to which men's words are naturally liable, if care be not taken.

4. *Misuse of words the great cause of errors.* For he that shall well consider the errors and obscurity, the mistakes and confusion, that are spread in the

world by an ill use of words, will find some reason to doubt whether language, as it has been employed, has contributed more to the improvement or hindrance of knowledge amongst mankind. How many are there, that, when they would think on things, fix their thoughts only on words, especially when they would apply their minds to moral matters? And who then can wonder if the result of such contemplations and reasonings, about little more than sounds, whilst the ideas they annex to them are very confused and very unsteady, or perhaps none at all; who can wonder, I say, that such thoughts and reasonings end in nothing but obscurity and mistake, without any clear judgment or knowledge?

5. *Has made men more conceited and obstinate.* This inconvenience, in an ill use of words, men suffer in their own private meditations: but much more manifest are the disorders which follow from it, in conversation, discourse, and arguings with others. For language being the great conduit, whereby men convey their discoveries, reasonings, and knowledge, from one to another, he that makes an ill use of it, though he does not corrupt the fountains of knowledge, which are in things themselves, yet he does, as much as in him lies, break or stop the pipes whereby it is distributed to the public use and advantage of mankind. He that uses words without any clear and steady meaning, what does he but lead himself and others into errors? And he that designedly does it, ought to be looked on as an enemy to truth and knowledge. And yet who can wonder that all the sciences and parts of knowledge have been so overcharged with obscure and equivocal terms, and insignificant and doubtful expressions, capable to make the most attentive or quick-sighted very little, or not at all, the more knowing or orthodox: since subtlety, in those who make profession to teach or defend truth, hath passed so much for a virtue: a virtue, indeed, which, consisting for the most part in nothing but the fallacious and illusory use of obscure or deceitful terms, is only fit to make men more conceited in their ignorance, and more obstinate in their errors.

6. *Addicted to wrangling about sounds.* Let us look into the books of controversy of any kind, there we shall see that the effect of obscure, unsteady, or equivocal terms is nothing but noise and wrangling about sounds, without convincing or bettering a man's understanding. For if the idea be not agreed on, betwixt the speaker and hearer, for which the words stand, the argument is not about things, but names. As often as such a word whose signification is not ascertained betwixt them, comes in use, their understandings have no other object wherein they agree, but barely the sound; the things that they think on at that time, as expressed by that word, being quite different.

7. *Instance, bat and bird.* Whether a *bat* be a *bird* or no, is not a question, Whether a bat be another thing than indeed it is, or have other qualities than indeed it has; for that would be extremely absurd to doubt of. But the

question is, (1) Either between those that acknowledged themselves to have but imperfect ideas of one or both of this sort of things, for which these names are supposed to stand. And then it is a real inquiry concerning the *nature* of a bird or a bat, to make their yet imperfect ideas of it more complete; by examining whether all the simple ideas to which, combined together, they both give the name bird, be all to be found in a bat: but this is a question only of inquirers (not disputers) who neither affirm nor deny, but examine: Or, (2) It is a question between disputants; whereof the one affirms, and the other denies that a bat is a bird. And then the question is barely about the signification of one or both these *words*; in that they not having both the same complex ideas to which they give these two names, one holds and the other denies, that these two names may be affirmed one of another. Were they agreed in the signification of these two names, it were impossible they should dispute about them. For they would presently and clearly see (were that adjusted between them), whether all the simple ideas of the more general name bird were found in the complex idea of a bat or no; and so there could be no doubt whether a bat were a bird or no. And here I desire it may be considered, and carefully examined, whether the greatest part of the disputes in the world are not merely verbal, and about the signification of words; and whether, if the terms they are made in were defined, and reduced in their signification (as they must be where they signify anything) to determined collections of the simple ideas they do or should stand for, those disputes would not end of themselves, and immediately vanish. I leave it then to be considered, what the learning of disputation is, and how well they are employed for the advantage of themselves or others, whose business is only the vain ostentation of sounds; i.e. those who spend their lives in disputes and controversies. When I shall see any of those combatants strip all his terms of ambiguity and obscurity, (which every one may do in the words he uses himself), I shall think him a champion for knowledge, truth, and peace, and not the slave of vain-glory, ambition, or a party.

Human Understanding, BK III, CH XI, SECT 9 301d-302a

9. *Second remedy: To have distinct, determinate ideas annexed to words, especially in mixed modes.* Secondly, It is not enough a man uses his words as signs of some ideas: those he annexes them to, if they be simple, must be clear and distinct; if complex, must be determinate,[128] i.e. the precise collection of simple ideas settled in the mind, with that sound annexed to it, as the sign of that precise determined collection, and no other. This is very necessary in names of modes, and especially moral words; which, having no settled objects in nature, from whence their ideas are taken, as

[128] See “Epistle to the Reader,” p. 91.

from their original, are apt to be very confused. *Justice* is a word in every man's mouth, but most commonly with a very undertermined, loose signification; which will always be so, unless a man has in his mind a distinct comprehension of the component parts that complex idea consists of: and if it be decompounded, must be able to resolve it still on, till he at last comes to the simple ideas that make it up: and unless this be done, a man makes an ill use of the word, let it be justice, for example, or any other. I do not say, a man needs stand to recollect, and make this analysis at large, every time the word justice comes in his way: but this at least is necessary, that he have so examined the signification of that name, and settled the idea of all its parts in his mind, that he can do it when he pleases. If any one who makes his complex idea of justice to be, such a treatment of the person or goods of another as is according to law, hath not a clear and distinct idea what *law* is, which makes a part of his complex idea of justice, it is plain his idea of justice itself will be confused and imperfect. This exactness will, perhaps, be judged very troublesome; and therefore most men will think they may be excused from settling the complex ideas of mixed modes so precisely in their minds. But yet I must say, till this be done, it must not be wondered, that they have a great deal of obscurity and confusion in their own minds, and a great deal of wrangling in their discourse with others.[129]

Human Understanding, BK IV, CH III, SECT 19 318b-319a

19. *Two things have made moral ideas to be thought incapable of demonstration: their unfitness for sensible representation, and their complexedness.* That which in this respect has given the advantage to the ideas of quantity, and made them thought more capable of certainty and demonstration, is,

First, That they can be set down and represented by sensible marks, which have a greater and nearer correspondence with them than any words or sounds whatsoever. Diagrams drawn on paper are copies of the ideas in the mind, and not liable to the uncertainty that words carry in their signification. An angle, circle, or square, drawn in lines, lies open to the view, and cannot be mistaken: it remains unchangeable, and may at leisure be considered and examined, and the demonstration be revised, and all the parts of it may be gone over more than once, without any danger of the least change in the ideas. This cannot be thus done in moral ideas: we have no sensible marks that resemble them, whereby we can set them down; we have nothing but words to express them by; which, though when written

[129] The famous discussion in the first and second Book of Plato's *Republic*, of the "mixed mode" named justice, is relevant in this connexion.

they remain the same, yet the ideas they stand for may change in the same man; and it is very seldom that they are not different in different persons.[130] Secondly, Another thing that makes the greater difficulty in ethics is, That moral ideas are commonly more complex than those of the figures ordinarily considered in mathematics. From whence these two inconveniences follow:—First, that their names are of more uncertain signification, the precise collection of simple ideas they stand for not being so easily agreed on; and so the sign that is used for them in communication always, and in thinking often, does not steadily carry with it the same idea.[131] Upon which the same disorder, confusion, and error follow, as would if a man, going to demonstrate something of an heptagon, should, in the diagram he took to do it, leave out one of the angles, or by oversight make the figure with one angle more than the name ordinarily imported, or he intended it should when at first he thought of his demonstration. This often happens, and is hardly avoidable in very complex moral ideas, where the same name being retained, one angle, i.e. one simple idea, is left out, or put in the complex one (still called by the same name) more at one time than another. Secondly, From the complexedness of these moral ideas there follows another inconvenience, viz. that the mind cannot easily retain those precise combinations so exactly and perfectly as is necessary in the examination of the habitudes and correspondences, agreements or disagreements, of several of them one with another; especially where it is to be judged of by long deductions, and the intervention of several other complex ideas to show the agreement or disagreement of two remote ones. The great help against this which mathematicians find in diagrams and figures, which remain unalterable in their draughts, is very apparent, and the memory would often have great difficulty otherwise to retain them so exactly, whilst the mind went over the parts of them step by step to examine their several correspondences. And though in casting up a long sum either in addition, multiplication, or division, every part be only a progression of the mind taking a view of its own ideas, and considering their agreement or disagreement, and the resolution of the question be nothing but the result of the whole, made up of such particulars, whereof the mind has a clear perception: yet, without setting down the several parts by marks, whose precise significations are known, and by marks that last, and remain in view when the memory had let them go, it would be almost impossible to carry so many different ideas in the mind, without confounding or letting slip some parts of the reckoning, and thereby making all our reasonings about it useless. In which case the cyphers or marks help not the mind at all to perceive the agreement of any two or more numbers, their equalities or proportions; that the mind has only by intuition of its

[130] Cf. Bk. III. chh. v; ix. §§ 6, 7; xi. §§ 15-18.
[131] Cf. Bk. III. chh. v; ix. §§ 6, 7; xi. §§ 15-18.

own ideas of the numbers themselves. But the numerical characters are helps to the memory, to record and retain the several ideas about which the demonstration is made, whereby a man may know how far his intuitive knowledge in surveying several of the particulars has proceeded; that so he may without confusion go on to what is yet unknown; and at last have in one view before him the result of all his perceptions and reasonings.

Human Understanding, BK IV, CH VIII, SECT 11 348b-c

11. *Thirdly, using words variously is trifling with them.* Though yet concerning most words used in discourses, equally argumentative and controversial, there is this more to be complained of, which is the worst sort of trifling, and which sets us yet further from the certainty of knowledge we hope to attain by them, or find in them; viz. that most writers are so far from instructing us in the nature and knowledge of things, that they use their words loosely and uncertainly, and do not, by using them constantly and steadily in the same significations, make plain and clear deductions of words one from another, and make their discourses coherent and clear, (how little soever they were instructive); which were not difficult to do, did they not find it convenient to shelter their ignorance or obstinacy under the obscurity and perplexedness of their terms: to which, perhaps, inadvertency and ill custom do in many men much contribute.

35 BERKELEY: *Human Knowledge*, SECT 143 441c-d

143. It will not be amiss to add, that the doctrine of *abstract idea* has had no small share in rendering those sciences intricate and obscure which are particularly conversant about spiritual things. Men have imagined they could frame abstract notions of the powers and acts of the mind, and consider them prescinded as well from the mind or spirit itself, as from their respective objects and effects. Hence a great number of dark and ambiguous terms, presumed to stand for abstract notions, have been intoduced into metaphysics and morality, and from these have grown infinite distractions and disputes amongst the learned.

35 HUME: *Human Understanding*, SECT VII, DIV 48 470d-471c; SECT VIII, DIV 62-63 478b-d

Human Understanding, SECT VII, DIV 48 470d-471c

48. The great advantage of the mathematical sciences above the moral consists in this, that the ideas of the former, being sensible, are always clear and determinate, the smallest distinction between them is immediately perceptible, and the same terms are still expressive of the same ideas, without ambiguity or variation. An oval is never mistaken for a

circle, nor an hyperbola for an ellipsis. The isosceles and scalenum are distinguished by boundaries more exact than vice and virtue, right and wrong. If any term be defined in geometry, the mind readily, of itself, substitutes, on all occasions, the definition for the term defined: Or even when no definition is employed, the object itself may be presented to the senses, and by that means be steadily and clearly apprehended. But the finer sentiments of the mind, the operations of the understanding, the various agitations of the passions, though really in themselves distinct, easily escape us, when surveyed by reflection; nor is it in our power to recal the original object, as often as we have occasion to contemplate it. Ambiguity, by this means, is gradually introduced into our reasonings: Similar objects are readily taken to be the same: And the conclusion becomes at last very wide of the premises.

One may safely, however, affirm, that, if we consider these sciences in a proper light, their advantages and disadvantages nearly compensate each other, and reduce both of them to a state of equality. If the mind, with greater facility, retains the ideas of geometry clear and determinate, it must carry on a much longer and more intricate chain of reasoning, and compare ideas much wider of each other, in order to reach the abstruser truths of that science. And if moral ideas are apt, without extreme care, to fall into obscurity and confusion, the inferences are always much shorter in these disquisitions, and the intermediate steps, which lead to the conclusion, much fewer than in the sciences which treat of quantity and number. In reality, there is scarcely a proposition in Euclid so simple, as not to consist of more parts, than are to be found in any moral reasoning which runs not into chimera and conceit. Where we trace the principles of the human mind through a few steps, we may be very well satisfied with our progress; considering how soon nature throws a bar to all our enquiries concerning causes, and reduces us to an acknowledgment of our ignorance. The chief obstacle, therefore, to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences is the obscurity of the ideas, and ambiguity of the terms. The principal difficulty in the mathematics is the length of inferences and compass of thought, requisite to the forming of any conclusion. And, perhaps, our progress in natural philosophy is chiefly retarded by the want of proper experiments and phaenomena, which are often discovered by chance, and cannot always be found, when requisite, even by the most diligent and prudent enquiry. As moral philosophy seems hitherto to have received less improvement than either geometry or physics, we may conclude, that, if there be any difference in this respect among these sciences, the difficulties, which obstruct the progress of the former, require superior care and capacity to be surmounted.

62. It might reasonably be expected in questions which have been canvassed and disputed with great eagerness, since the first origin of science and philosophy, that the meaning of all the terms, at least, should have been agreed upon among the disputants; and our enquiries, in the course of two thousand years, been able to pass from words to the true and real subject of the controversy. For how easy may it seem to give exact definitions of the terms employed in reasoning, and make these definitions, not the mere sound of words, the object of future scrutiny and examination? But if we consider the matter more narrowly, we shall be apt to draw a quite opposite conclusion. From this circumstance alone, that a controversy has been long kept on foot, and remains still undecided, we may presume that there is some ambiguity in the expression, and that the disputants affix different ideas to the terms employed in the controversy. For as the faculties of the mind are supposed to be naturally alike in every individual; otherwise nothing could be more fruitless than to reason or dispute together; it were impossible, if men affix the same ideas to their terms, that they could so long form different opinions of the same subject; especially when they communicate their views, and each party turn themselves on all sides, in search of arguments which may give them the victory over their antagonists. It is true, if men attempt the discussion of questions which lie entirely beyond the reach of human capacity, such as those concerning the origin of worlds, or the economy of the intellectual system or region of spirits, they may long beat the air in their fruitless contests, and never arrive at any determinate conclusion. But if the question regard any subject of common life and experience, nothing, one would think, could preserve the dispute so long undecided but some ambiguous expressions, which keep the antagonists still at a distance, and hinder them from grappling with each other.

63. This has been the case in the long disputed question concerning liberty and necessity; and to so remarkable a degree that, if I be not much mistaken, we shall find, that all mankind, both learned and ignorant, have always been of the same opinion with regard to this subject, and that a few intelligible definitions would immediately have put an end to the whole controversy. I own that this dispute has been so much canvassed on all hands, and has led philosophers into such a labyrinth of obscure sophistry, that it is no wonder, if a sensible reader indulge his ease so far as to turn a deaf ear to the proposal of such a question, from which he can expect neither instruction or entertainment. But the state of the argument here proposed may, perhaps, serve to renew his attention; as it has more novelty, promises at least some decision of the controversy, and will not much disturb his ease by any intricate or obscure reasoning.

I hope, therefore, to make it appear that all men have ever agreed in the doctrine both of necessity and of liberty, according to any reasonable sense, which can be put on these terms; and that the whole controversy has hitherto turned merely upon words. We shall begin with examining the doctrine of necessity.

36 SWIFT: *Gulliver*, PART IV, 154a

It is likewise to be observed, that this society hath a peculiar cant and jargon of their own, that no other mortal can understand, and wherein all their laws are written, which they take special care to multiply; whereby they have wholly confounded the very essence of truth and falshood, of right and wrong; so that it will take thirty years to decide whether the field, left me by my ancestors for six generations, belong to me, or to a stranger three hundred miles off.

In the tryal of persons accused for crimes against the State, the method is much more short and commendable: for if those in power, who know well how to choose instruments fit for their purpose, take care to recommend and promote out of this clan a proper person, his method of education and practice makes it easy for him, when his patrons disposition is understood, without difficulty or study either to condemn and acquit the criminal, and at the same time strictly preserve all due forms of law.

Here my master interposing said it was a pity, that creatures endowed with such prodigious abilities of mind as these advocates by the description I gave of them must certainly be, were not rather encouraged to be instructors of others in wisdom and knowledge. In answer to which I assured his honour that the business and study of their own calling and profession so took up all their thoughts and engrossed all their time, that they minded nothing else, and that therefore, in all points out of their own trade, many of them were of so great ignorance and stupidity, that it was hard to pick out of any profession a generation of men more despicable in common conversation, or who were so much looked upon as avowed enemies to all knowledge and learning, being equally disposed to pervert the general reason of mankind in every other subject of discourse, as in that of their own calling.

36 STERNE: *Tristram Shandy*, 234b-236b; 307b-308b

Tristram Shandy, 234b-236b

He was one morning lying upon his back in his bed, the anguish and nature of the wound upon his groin suffering him to lie in no other position, when a thought came into his head, that if he could purchase such a thing, and have it pasted down upon a board, as a large map of the fortification of the

town and citadel of Namur, with its environs, it might be a means of giving him ease.—I take notice of his desire to have the environs along with the town and citadel, for this reason,—because my uncle Toby's wound was got in one of the traverses, about thirty toises from the returning angle of the trench, opposite to the salient angle of the demi-bastion of St. Roch:—so that he was pretty confident he could stick a pin upon the identical spot of ground where he was standing on when the stone struck him.

All this succeeded to his wishes, and not only freed him from a world of sad explanations, but, in the end, it proved the happy means, as you will read, of procuring my uncle Toby his Hobby-Horse.

Chapter 2

There is nothing so foolish, when you are at the expense of making an entertainment of this kind, as to order things so badly, as to let your critics and gentry of refined taste run it down: Nor is there any thing so likely to make them do it, as that of leaving them out of the party, or, what is full as offensive, of bestowing your attention upon the rest of your guests in so particular a way, as if there was no such thing as a critic (by occupation) at table.

——I guard against both; for, in the first place, I have left half a dozen places purposely open for them;—and in the next place, I pay them all court.——Gentlemen, I kiss your hands, I protest no company could give me half the pleasure,—by my soul I am glad to see you—I beg only you will make no strangers of yourselves, but sit down without any ceremony, and fall on heartily.

I said I had left six places, and I was upon the point of carrying my complaisance so far, as to have left a seventh open for them,—and in this very spot I stand on; but being told by a Critic, (tho' not by occupation,—but by nature) that I had acquitted myself well enough, I shall fill it up directly, hoping, in the mean time, that I shall be able to make a great deal of more room next year.

—How, in the name of wonder! could your uncle Toby, who, it seems was a military man, and whom you have represented as no fool,—be at the same time such a confused, pudding-headed, muddle-headed fellow, as—Go look.

So, Sir Critic, I could have replied; but I scorn it.——'Tis language un-urbane,—and only befitting the man who cannot give clear and satisfactory accounts of things, or dive deep enough into the first causes of human ignorance and confusion. It is moreover the reply valiant—and therefore I reject it: for tho' it might have suited my uncle Toby's character as a soldier excellently well,—and had he not accustomed himself, in such attacks, to whistle the *Lillabullero*, as he wanted no courage, 'tis the very

answer he would have given; yet it would by no means have done for me. You see as plain as can be, that I write as a man of erudition; that even my similes, my allusions, my illustrations, my metaphors, are erudite,—and that I must sustain my character properly, and contrast it properly too,—else what would become of me? Why, Sir, I should be undone;—at this very moment that I am going here to fill up one place against a critic,—I should have made an opening for a couple.

——Therefore I answer thus:

Pray, Sir, in all the reading which you have ever read, did you ever read such a book as Locke's Essay upon the Human Understanding?——Don't answer me rashly—because many, I know, quote the book, who have not read it—and many have read it who understand it not:—If either of these is your case, as I write to instruct, I will tell you in three words what the book is.—It is a history.——A history! of who? what? where? when? Don't hurry yourself—It is a history-book, Sir, (which may possibly recommend it to the world) of what passes in a man's own mind; and if you will say so much of the book, and no more, believe me, you will cut no contemptible figure in a metaphysic circle.

But this by the way.

Now if you will venture to go along with me, and look down into the bottom of this matter, it will be found that the cause of obscurity and confusion, in the mind of a man, is threefold.

Dull organs, dear Sir, in the first place. Secondly, slight and transient impressions made by the objects, when the said organs are not dull. And thirdly, a memory like unto a sieve, not able to retain what it has received.——Call down Dolly your chamber-maid, and I will give you my cap and bell along with it, if I make not this matter so plain that Dolly herself should understand it as well as Malebranch.——When Dolly has indited her epistle to Robin, and has thrust her arm into the bottom of her pocket hanging by her right-side;—take that opportunity to recollect that the organs and faculties of perception can, by nothing in this world be so aptly typified and explained as by that one thing which Dolly's hand is in search of.——Your organs are not so dull that I should inform you,—’tis an inch, Sir, of red seal-wax.

When this is melted and dropped upon the letter, if Dolly fumbles too long for her thimble, till the wax is over hardened, it will not receive the mark of her thimble from the usual impulse which was wont to imprint it. Very well. If Dolly's wax, for want of better, is beeswax, or of a temper too soft—tho’ it may receive,—it will not hold the impression, how hard soever Dolly thrusts against it; and last of all, supposing the wax good, and eke the thimble, but applied thereto in careless haste, as her Mistress rings the bell;—in any one of these three cases the print left by the thimble will be as unlike the prototype as a brass-jack.

Now you must understand that not one of these was the true cause of the confusion in my uncle Toby's discourse; and it is for that very reason I enlarge upon them so long, after the manner of great physiologists—to shew the world, what it did *not* arise from.

What it did arise from, I have hinted above, and a fertile source of obscurity it is,—and ever will be,—and that is the unsteady uses of words, which have perplexed the clearest and most exalted understandings.

It is ten to one (at Arthur's) whether you have ever read the literary histories of past ages;—if you have, what terrible battles, ’yclept logomachies, have they occasioned and perpetuated with so much gall and ink-shed,—that a good-natured man cannot read the accounts of them without tears in his eyes.

Gentle critic! when thou hast weighed all this, and considered within thyself how much of thy own knowledge, discourse, and conversation has been pestered and disordered, at one time or other, by this, and this only:—What a pudder and racket in Councils about *οὐοία* and *ὑπόστασις*; and in the Schools of the learned about power and about spirit;—about essences, and about quintessences;—about substances and about space.—What confusion in greater Theatres from words of little meaning, and as indeterminate a sense! when thou considerest this, thou wilt not wonder at my uncle Toby's perplexities,—thou wilt drop a tear of pity upon his scarp and his counterscarp;—his glacis and his covered way;—his ravelin and his half-moon: ’Twas not by ideas,—by Heaven; his life was put in jeopardy by words.

Tristram Shandy, 307b-308b

Chapter 30

——“All is not gain that is got into the purse.”——So that not with standing my father had the happiness of reading the oldest books in the universe, and had moreover, in himself, the oddest way of thinking that ever man in it was blessed with, yet it had this drawback upon him after all—that it laid him open to some of the oddest and most whimsical distresses; of which this particular one, which he sunk under at present, is as strong an example as can be given.

No doubt, the breaking down of the bridge of a child’s nose, by the edge of a pair of forceps—however scientifically applied—would vex any man in the world, who was at so much pains in begetting a child, as my father was—yet it will not account for the extravagance of his affliction, nor will it justify the unchristian manner he abandoned and surrendered himself up to.

To explain this, I must leave him upon the bed for half an hour—and my uncle Toby in his old fringe chair sitting beside him.

Chapter 31

——I think it a very unreasonable demand—cried my great-grandfather, twisting up the paper, and throwing it upon the table.——By this account, madam, you have but two thousand pounds fortune, and not a shilling more—and you insist upon having three hundred pounds a year jointure for it.——

——"Because," replied my great-grandmother, "you have little or no nose, Sir."——

Now before I venture to make use of the word Nose a second time—to avoid all confusion in what will be said upon it, in this interesting part of my story, it may not be amiss to explain my own meaning, and define, with all possible exactness and precision, what I would willingly be understood to mean by the term: being of opinion, that 'tis owing to the negligence and perverseness of writers in despising this precaution, and to nothing else—that all the polemical writings in divinity are not as clear and demonstrative as those upon a Will o' the Wisp, or any other sound part of philosophy, and nature pursuit; in order to which, what have you to do, before you set out, unless you intend to go puzzling on to the day of judgment—but to give the world a good definition, and stand to it, of the main word you have most occasion for—changing it, Sir, as you would a guinea, into small coin?—which done— let the father of confusion puzzle you, if he can; or put a different idea either into your head, or your reader's head, if he knows how.

In books of strict morality and close reasoning, such as this I am engaged in—the neglect is inexcusable; and Heaven is witness, how the world has revenged itself upon me for leaving so many openings to equivocal strictures—and for depending so much as I have done, all along, upon the cleanliness of my readers' imaginations.

——Here are two senses, cried Eugenius, as we walked along, pointing with the fore finger of his right hand to the word Crevice, in the one hundred and seventy-eighth page of the first volume of this book of books;—here are two senses—quoth he—And here are two roads, replied I, turning short upon him—a dirty and a clean one—which shall we take?——The clean, by all means, replied Eugenius. Eugenius, said I, stepping before him, and laying my hand upon his breast—to define—is to distrust.—Thus I triumphed over Eugenius; but I triumphed over him as I always do, like a fool.——'Tis my comfort, however, I am not an obstinate one: therefore

I define a nose as follows—intreating only beforehand, and beseeching my readers, both male and female, of what age, complexion, and condition

soever, for the love of God and their own souls, to guard against the temptations and suggestions of the devil, and suffer him by no art or wile to put any other ideas into their minds, than what I put into my definition—For by the word Nose, throughout all this long chapter of noses, and in every other part of my work, where the word Nose occurs—I declare, by that word I mean a nose, and nothing more, or less.

Chapter 32

——"Because," quoth my great-grandmother, repeating the words again—"you have little or no nose, Sir."——
'Sdeath! cried my great-grandfather, clapping his hand upon his nose,—'tis not so small as that comes to;—'tis a full inch longer than my father's.——Now, my great-grandfather's nose was for all the world like unto the noses of all the men, women, and children, whom Pantagruel found dwelling upon the island of Ennasin.——By the way, if you would know the strange way of getting a-kin amongst so flat-nosed a people—you must read the book;—find it out yourself, you never can.——

37 FIELDING: *Tom Jones*, 38d-39a; 264b

Tom Jones, 38d-39a

This gentleman and Mr. Thwackum scarce ever met without a disputation; for their tenets were indeed diametrically opposite to each other. Square held human nature to be the perfection of all virtue, and that vice was a deviation from our nature, in the same manner as deformity of body is. Thwackum, on the contrary, maintained that the human mind, since the fall, was nothing but a sink of iniquity, till purified and redeemed by grace. In one point only they agreed, which was, in all their discourses on morality never to mention the word goodness. The favourite phrase of the former, was the natural beauty of virtue; that of the latter, was the divine power of grace. The former measured all actions by the unalterable rule of right, and the eternal fitness of things; the latter decided all matters by authority; but in doing this, he always used the scriptures and their commentators, as the lawyer doth his Coke upon Lyttleton, where the comment is of equal authority with the text.

After this short introduction, the reader will be pleased to remember, that the parson had concluded his speech with a triumphant question, to which he had apprehended no answer; viz., Can any honour exist independent of religion?

To this Square answered; that it was impossible to discourse philosophically concerning words, till their meaning was first established: that there were scarce any two words of a more vague and uncertain signification, than the two he had mentioned; for that there were almost as many different

opinions concerning honour, as concerning religion. “But,” says he, “if by honour you mean the true natural beauty of virtue, I will maintain it may exist independent of any religion whatever. Nay,” added he, “you yourself will allow it may exist independent of all but one: so will a Mahometan, a Jew, and all the maintainers of all the different sects in the world.” Thwackum replied, this was arguing with the usual malice of all the enemies to the true Church. He said, he doubted not but that all the infidels and hereticks in the world would, if they could, confine honour to their own absurd errors and damnable deceptions; “but honour,” says he, “is not therefore manifold, because there are many absurd opinions about it; nor is religion manifold, because there are various sects and heresies in the world.

Tom Jones, 264b

Chapter 11

The disasters which befel Jones on his departure for Coventry; with the sage remarks of Partridge

No road can be plainer than that from the place where they now to Coventry; and though neither Jones, nor Partridge, nor the guide, had ever travelled it before, it would have been almost impossible to have missed their way, had it not been for the two reasons mentioned in the conclusion if the last chapter.

These two circumstances, however, happening both unfortunately to intervene, our travellers deviated into a much less frequented track; and after riding full six miles, instead of arriving at the stately spires of Coventry, they found themselves still in a very dirty lane, where they saw no symptoms of approaching the suburbs of a large city.

Jones now declared that they must certainly have lost their way; but this the guide insisted upon was impossible; a word which, in common conversation, is often used to signify not only improbable, but often what is really very likely, and, sometimes, what hath certainly happened; and hyperbolical violence like that which is so frequently offered to the words infinite and eternal; by the former of which it is usual to express a distance of half a yard, and by the latter, a duration of five minutes.

38 MONTESQUIEU: *Spirit of Laws*, BK XII, 89c-d

12. *Of indiscreet Speeches.* Nothing renders the crime of high treason more arbitrary than declaring people guilty of it for indiscreet speeches. Speech is so subject to interpretation; there is so great a difference between indiscretion and malice; and frequently so little is there of the latter in the

freedom of expression, that the law can hardly subject people to a capital punishment for words unless it expressly declares what words they are.[132] Words do not constitute an overt act; they remain only in idea. When considered by themselves, they have generally no determinate signification; for this depends on the tone in which they are uttered. It often happens that in repeating the same words they have not the same meaning; this depends on their connection with other things, and sometimes more is signified by silence than by any expression whatever. Since there can be nothing so equivocal and ambiguous as all this, how is it possible to convert it into a crime of high treason? Wherever this law is established, there is an end not only of liberty, but even of its very shadow.

In the manifesto of the late Czarina against the family of the D'Olgoruckys,[133] one of these princes is condemned to death for having uttered some indecent words concerning her person: another, for having maliciously interpreted her imperial laws, and for having offended her sacred person by disrespectful expressions.

Not that I pretend to diminish the just indignation of the public against those who presume to stain the glory of their sovereign; what I mean is that, if despotic princes are willing to moderate their power, a milder chastisement would be more proper on those occasions than the charge of high treason—a thing always terrible even to innocence itself.[134]

42 KANT: *Pure Reason*, 113b-c / *Practical Reason*, 294b-c; 315d-316a / *Science of Right*, 400d

Pure Reason, 113b-c

SECTION I—*Of Ideas in General*

Despite the great wealth of words which European languages possess, the thinker finds himself often at a loss for an expression exactly suited to his conception, for want of which he is unable to make himself intelligible either to others or to himself. To coin new words is a pretension to legislation in language which is seldom successful; and, before recourse is taken to so desperate an expedient, it is advisable to examine the dead and learned languages, with the hope and the probability that we may there meet with some adequate expression of the notion we have in our minds. In this case, even if the original meaning of the word has become somewhat uncertain, from carelessness or want of caution on the part of the authors of it, it is always better to adhere to and confirm its proper meaning—even

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[132] *Si non tale sit delictum in quod vel scriptura legis descendit vel ad exemplum legis vindicandum est,* says Modestinus in *Leg.* 7, § 3, ff. *ad leg. Jul. Majest.*

[133] In 1740.

[134] *Nec lubricum linguœ ad pœnam facile trahendum est.*—Modestinus, in *Leg.* 7, § 3, ff. *ad leg. Jul. Majest.*

although it may be doubtful whether it was formerly used in exactly this sense—than to make our labour vain by want of sufficient care to render ourselves intelligible.
For this reason, when it happens that there exists only a single word to express a certain conception, and this word, in its usual acceptation, is thoroughly adequate to the conception, the accurate distinction of which from related conceptions is of great importance, we ought not to employ the expression improvidently, or, for the sake of variety and elegance of style, use it as a synonym for other cognate words. It is our duty, on the contrary, carefully to preserve its peculiar signification, as otherwise it easily happens that when the attention of the reader is no longer particularly attracted to the expression, and it is lost amid the multitude of other words of very different import, the thought which it conveyed, and which it alone conveyed, is lost with it.

Practical Reason, 294b-c

I have no fear, as regards this treatise, of the reproach that I wish to introduce a *new language,* since the sort of knowledge here in question has itself somewhat of an everyday character. Nor even in the case of the former critique could this reproach occur to anyone who had thought it through and not merely turned over the leaves. To invent new words where the language has no lack of expressions for given notions is a childish effort to distinguish oneself from the crowd, if not by new and true thoughts, yet by new patches on the old garment. If, therefore, the readers of that work know any more familiar expressions which are as suitable to the thought as those seem to me to be, or if they think they can show the *futility* of these thoughts themselves and hence that of the expression, they would, in the first case, very much oblige me, for I only desire to be understood: and, in the second case, they would deserve well of philosophy. But, as long as these thoughts stand, I very much doubt that suitable and yet more common expressions for them can be found.[135]

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[135] I am more afraid in the present treatise of occasional misconception in respect of some expressions which I have chosen with the greatest care in order that the notion to which they point may not be missed. Thus, in the table of categories of the *practical* reason under the title of *Modality*, the *permitted*, and *forbidden* (in a practical objective point of view, possible and impossible) have almost the same meaning in common language as the next category, *duty* and *contrary to duty*. Here, however, the *former* means what coincides with, or contradicts, a merely *possible* practical precept (for example, the solution of all problems of geometry and mechanics); the *latter*, what is similarly related to a law *actually* present in the reason; and this distinction is not quite foreign even to common language, although somewhat unusual. For example, it is *forbidden* to an orator, as such, to forge new words or constructions; in a certain degree this is *permitted* to a poet; in neither case is there any question of duty. For if anyone chooses to forfeit his reputation as an orator, no one can prevent him. We have here only to do with the distinction of *imperatives* into *problematical*, *assertorial*, and *apodeictic*. Similarly in the note in which I have compared the moral ideas of practical perfection in different philosophical schools, I have

In this manner, then, the *a priori* principles of two faculties of the mind, the faculty of cognition and that of desire, would be found and determined as to the conditions, extent, and limits of their use, and thus a sure foundation be paid for a scientific system of philosophy, both theoretic and practical.

Practical Reason, 315d-316a

It is an old formula of the schools: *Nihil appetimus nisi sub ratione boni; Nihil aversamur nisi sub ratione mali,* and it is used often correctly, but often also in a manner injurious to philosophy, because the expressions *boni* and *mali* are ambiguous, owing to the poverty of language, in consequence of which they admit a double sense, and, therefore, inevitably bring the practical laws into ambiguity; and philosophy, which in employing them becomes aware of the different meanings in the same word, but can find no special expressions for them, is driven to subtile distinctions about which there is subsequently no unanimity, because the distinction could not be directly marked by any suitable expression.[136]

The German language has the good fortune to possess expressions which do not allow this difference to be overlooked. It possesses two very distinct concepts and especially distinct expressions for that which the Latins express by a single word, *bonum.* For *bonum* it has *das Gute* [good], and *das Wohl* [well, weal], for *malum das Böse* [evil], and *das Übel* [ill, bad], or *das Weh* [woe]. So that we express two quite distinct judgements when we consider in an action the *good* and *evil* of it, or our *weal* and *woe* (ill). Hence it already follows that the above quoted psychological proposition is at least very doubtful if it is translated: "We desire nothing except with a

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distinguished the idea of *wisdom* from that of *holiness*, although I have stated that essentially and objectively they are the same. But in that place I understand by the former only that wisdom to which man (the Stoic) lays claim; therefore I take it *subjectively* as an attribute alleged to belong to man. (Perhaps the expression *virtue*, with which also the Stoic made great show, would better mark the characteristic of his school.) The expression of a *postulate* of pure practical reason might give most occasion to misapprehension in case the reader confounded it with the signification of the postulates in pure mathematics, which carry apodeictic certainty with them. These, however, postulate the *possibility of an action*, the object of which has been previously recognized *a priori* in theory as *possible*, and that with perfect certainty. But the former postulates the possibility of an object itself (God and the immortality of the soul) from apodeictic *practical* laws, and therefore only for the purposes of a practical reason. This certainty of the postulated possibility then is not at all theoretic, and consequently not apodeictic; that is to say, it is not a known necessity as regards the object, but a necessary supposition as regards the subject, necessary for the obedience to its objective but practical laws. It is, therefore, merely a necessary hypothesis. I could find no better expression for this rational necessity, which is subjective, but yet true and unconditional.

[136] Besides this, the expression *sub ratione boni* is also ambiguous. For it may mean: "We represent something to ourselves as good, when and because we *desire* (will) it"; or "We desire something because we *represent* it to ourselves as *good*," so that either the desire determines the notion of the object as a good, or the notion of good determines the desire (the will); so that in the first case *sub ratione boni* would mean, "We will something *under the idea* of the good"; in the second, "*In consequence of this idea,*" which, as determining the volition, must precede it.

view to our *weal* or *woe*"; on the other hand, if we render it thus: "Under the direction of reason we desire nothing except so far as we esteem it good or evil," it is indubitably certain and at the same time quite clearly expressed.

Science of Right, 400d

The *dictum* of the right of necessity is put in these terms: "Necessity has no law" (*Necessitas non habet legem*). And yet there cannot be a necessity that could make what is wrong lawful.

It is apparent, then, that in judgements relating both to "equity" and "the right of necessity," the *equivocations* involved arise from an interchange of the objective and subjective grounds that enter into the application of the principles of right, when viewed respectively by reason or by a judicial tribunal. What one may have good grounds for recognising as right, in itself, may not find confirmation in a court of justice; and what he must consider to be wrong, in itself, may obtain recognition in such a court. And the reason of this is that the conception of right is not taken in the two cases in one and the same sense.

43 FEDERALIST: NUMBER 37, 120a-b

All new laws, though penned with the greatest technical skill, and passed on the fullest and most mature deliberation, are considered as more or less obscure and equivocal, until their meaning be liquidated and ascertained by a series of particular discussions and adjudications. Besides the obscurity arising from the complexity of objects, and the imperfection of the human faculties, the medium through which the conceptions of men are conveyed to each other adds a fresh embarrassment. The use of words is to express ideas. Perspicuity, therefore, requires not only that the ideas should be distinctly formed, but that they should be expressed by words distinctly and exclusively appropriate to them. But no language is so copious as to supply words and phrases for every complex idea, or so correct as not to include many equivocally denoting different ideas. Hence it must happen that however accurately objects may be discriminated in themselves, and however accurately the discrimination may be considered, the definition of them may be rendered inaccurate by the inaccuracy of the terms in which it is delivered. And this unavoidable inaccuracy must be greater or less, according to the complexity and novelty of the objects defined. When the Almighty himself condescends to address mankind in their own language, his meaning, luminous as it must be, is rendered dim and doubtful by the cloudy medium through which it is communicated.

Here, then, are three sources of vague and incorrect definitions: indistinctness of the object, imperfection of the organ of conception,

inadequateness of the vehicle of ideas. Any one of these must produce a certain degree of obscurity. The convention, in delineating the boundary between the federal and State jurisdictions, must have experienced the full effect of them all.

To the difficulties already mentioned may be added the interfering pretensions of the larger and smaller States. We cannot err in supposing that the former would contend for a participation in the government, fully proportioned to their superior wealth and importance; and that the latter would not be less tenacious of the equality at present enjoyed by them. We may well suppose that neither side would entirely yield to the other, and consequently that the struggle could be terminated only by compromise.

43 MILL: *Utilitarianism*, 447b-d

Chapter 2

What Utilitarianism Is

A passing remark is all that needs be given to the ignorant blunder of supposing that those who stand up for utility as the test of right and wrong, use the term in that restricted and merely colloquial sense in which utility is opposed to pleasure. An apology is due to the philosophical opponents of utilitarianism, for even the momentary appearance of confounding them with any one capable of so absurd a misconception; which is the more extraordinary, inasmuch as the contrary accusation, of referring everything to pleasure, and that too in its grossest form, is another of the common charges against utilitarianism: and, as has been pointedly remarked by an able writer, the same sort of persons, and often the very same persons, denounce the theory “as impracticably dry when the word utility precedes the word pleasure, and as too practicably voluptuous when the word pleasure precedes the word utility.” Those who know anything about the matter are aware that every writer, from Epicurus to Bentham, who maintained the theory of utility, meant by it, not something to be contradistinguished from pleasure, but pleasure itself, together with exemption from pain; and instead of opposing the useful to the agreeable or the ornamental, have always declared that the useful means these, among other things. Yet the common herd, including the herd of writers, not only in newspapers and periodicals, but in books of weight and pretension, are perpetually falling into this shallow mistake. Having caught up the word utilitarian, while knowing nothing whatever about it but its sound, they habitually express by it the rejection, or the neglect, of pleasure in some of its forms; of beauty, of ornament, or of amusement. Nor is the term thus ignorantly misapplied solely in disparagement, but occasionally in compliment; as though it implied superiority to frivolity and the mere pleasures of the moment. And this perverted use is the only one in which

the word is popularly known, and the one from which the new generation are acquiring their sole notion of its meaning. Those who introduced the word, but who had for many years discontinued it as a distinctive appellation, may well feel themselves called upon to resume it, if by doing so they can hope to contribute anything towards rescuing it from this utter degradation.[137]

46 HEGEL: *Philosophy of History*, PART I, 218a-c

The nature of their written language is at the outset a great hindrance to the development of the sciences. Rather, conversely, because a true scientific interest does not exist, the Chinese have acquired no better instrument for representing and imparting thought. They have, as is well known, beside a spoken language, a *written language*; which does not express, as ours does, individual sounds – does not present the spoken words to the eye, but represents the ideas themselves by signs. This appears at first sight a great advantage, and has gained the suffrages of many great men – among others, of Leibnitz. In reality, it is anything but such. For if we consider in the first place, the effect of such a mode of writing on the spoken language, we shall find this among the Chinese very imperfect, on account of that separation. For our spoken language is matured to distinctness chiefly through the necessity of finding signs for each single sound, which latter, by reading, we learn to express distinctly. The Chinese, to whom such a means of orthoepic development is wanting, do not mature the modifications of sounds in their language to distinct articulations capable of being represented by letters and syllables. Their spoken language consists of an inconsiderable number of monosyllabic words, which are used with more than one signification. The sole methods of denoting distinctions of meaning are the connection, the accent, and the pronunciation – quicker or slower, softer or louder. The ears of the Chinese have become very sensible to such distinctions. Thus I find that the word *po* has eleven different meanings according to the tone, denoting: glass, to boil, to winnow wheat, to cleave asunder, to water, to prepare, an old woman, a slave, a liberal man, a wise person, a little.
As to their written language, I will specify only the obstacles which it presents to the advance of the sciences. Our written language is very

[137] The author of this essay has reason for believing himself to be the first person who brought the word utilitarian into use. He did not invent it, but adopted it from a passing expression in Mr. Galt's *Annals of the Parish.* After using it as a designation for several years, he and others abandoned it from a growing dislike to anything resembling a badge or watchword of sectarian distinction. But as a name for one single opinion, not a set of opinions—to denote the recognition of utility as a standard, not any particular way of applying it—the term supplies a want in the language, and offers, in many cases, a convenient mode of avoiding tiresome circumlocution.

simple for a learner, as we analyze our spoken language into about twenty-five articulations, by which analysis, speech is rendered definite, the multitude of possible sounds is limited, and obscure intermediate sounds are banished: we have to learn only these signs and their combinations. Instead of twenty-five signs of this sort, the Chinese have many thousands to learn. The number necessary for use is reckoned at 9,353, or even 10,516, if we add those recently introduced; and the number of characters generally, for ideas and their combinations as they are presented in books, amounts to from 80,000 to 90,000. As to the sciences themselves, *history* among the Chinese comprehends the bare and definite facts, without any opinion or reasoning upon them. In the same way their *jurisprudence* gives only fixed laws, and their *ethics* only determinate duties, without raising the question of a subjective foundation for them. The Chinese have, however, in addition to other sciences, a *philosophy*, whose elementary principles are of great antiquity, since the *Y-King*, the *Book of Fates*, treats of origination and destruction. In this book are found the purely abstract ideas of unity and duality; the philosophy of the Chinese appears therefore to proceed from the same fundamental ideas as that of Pythagoras.[138] The fundamental principle recognized is *reason – tao*; that essence lying at the basis of the whole, which effects everything. To become acquainted with its forms is regarded among the Chinese also as the highest science; yet this has no connection with the educational pursuits which more nearly concern the state. The works of Lao-tse, and especially his work *Tao-te-ching*, are celebrated. Confucius visited this philosopher in the sixth century before Christ, to testify his reverence for him.

50 MARX: *Capital*, 104d [fn 4]

That portion of the working day, then, during which this reproduction takes place, I call *necessary* labour time, and the labour expended during that time I call *necessary* labour.[139]

53 JAMES: *Psychology*, 549b-550a

Space-relations

But with distance and direction we pass to the category of space-*relations,* and are immediately confronted by an opinion which makes of all relations

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[138] *Vide* Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. i. p. 138, etc.

[139] In this work, we have, up to now, employed the term "necessary labour time," to designate the time necessary under given social conditions for the production of any commodity. Henceforward we use it to designate also the time necessary for the production of the particular commodity, labour power. The use of one and the same technical term in different senses is inconvenient, but in no science can it be altogether avoided. Compare, for instance, the higher with the lower branches of mathematics.

something *toto cœlo* different from all facts of feeling or imagination whatsoever. A relation, for the Platonizing school in psychology, is an energy of pure thought, and, as such, is quite incommensurable with the data of sensibility between which it may be perceived to obtain.

We may consequently imagine a disciple of this school to say to us at this point: "Suppose you *have* made a separate specific sensation of each line and each angle, what boots it? You have still the order of directions and of distances to account for; you have still the relative magnitudes of all these felt figures to state; you have their respective positions to define before you can be said to have brought order into your space. And not one of these determinations can be effected except through an act of relating thought, so that your attempt to give an account of space in terms of pure sensibility breaks down almost at the very outset. *Position,* for example, can never be a sensation, for it has nothing intrinsic about it; it can only obtain *between* a spot, line, or other figure and *extraneous co-ordinates,* and can never be an element of the sensible datum, the line or the spot, in itself. Let us then confess that Thought alone can unlock the riddle of space, and that Thought is an adorable but unfathomable mystery."

Such a method of dealing with the problem has the merit of shortness. Let us, however, be in no such hurry, but see whether we cannot get a little deeper by patiently considering what these space-relations are.

"Relation" is a very slippery word. It has so many different concrete meanings that the use of it as an abstract universal may easily introduce bewilderment into our thought. We must therefore be careful to avoid ambiguity by making sure, wherever we have to employ it, what its precise meaning is in that particular sphere of application. At present we have to do with space-relations, and no others. Most "relations" are feelings of an entirely different order from the terms they relate. The relation of similarity, e. g., may equally obtain between jasmine and tuberose, or between Mr. Browning's verses and Mr. Story's; it is itself neither odorous nor poetical, and those may well be pardoned who have denied to it all sensational content whatever. But just as, in the field of quantity, the relation between two numbers is another number, so *in the field of space the relations are facts of the same order with the facts they relate. If these latter be patches in the circle of vision, the former are certain other patches between them.* When we speak of the relation of direction of two points toward each other, we mean simply the sensation of the line that joins the two points together. *The line is the relation;* feel it and you feel the relation, see it and you see the relation; nor can you in any conceivable way think the latter except by imagining the former (however vaguely), or describe or indicate the one except by pointing to the other. And the moment you have imagined the line, the relation stands before you in all its completeness, with nothing further to be done. Just so the relation of *direction* between two lines is

identical with the peculiar sensation of shape of the space enclosed between them. This is commonly called an angular relation.

54 FREUD: *Interpretation of Dreams*, 277d-278a / *General Introduction*, 517c-518b; 540c-541b

Interpretation of Dreams, 277d-278a

The one thought whose mode of expression has perhaps been determined by other factors will therewith exert a distributive and selective influence on the expressions available for the others, and it may even do this from the very start, just as it would in the creative activity of a poet. When a poem is to be written in rhymed couplets, the second rhyming line is bound by two conditions: it must express the meaning allotted to it, and its expression must permit of a rhyme with the first line. The best poems are, of course, those in which one does not detect the effort to find a rhyme, and in which both thoughts have as a matter of course, by mutual induction, selected the verbal expression which, with a little subsequent adjustment, will permit of the rhyme.

In some cases the change of expression serves the purposes of dream-condensation more directly, in that it provides an arrangement of words which, being ambiguous, permits of the expression of more than one of the dream-thoughts. The whole range of verbal wit is thus made to serve the purpose of the dream-work. The part played by words in dream-formation ought not to surprise us. A word, as the point of junction of a number of ideas, possesses, as it were, a predestined ambiguity, and the neuroses (obsessions, phobias) take advantage of the opportunities for condensation and disguise afforded by words quite as eagerly as do dreams.[140] That dream-distortion also profits by this displacement of expression may be readily demonstrated. It is indeed confusing if one ambiguous word is substituted for two with single meanings, and the replacement of sober, everyday language by a plastic mode of expression baffles our understanding, especially since a dream never tells us whether the elements presented by it are to be interpreted literally or metaphorically, whether they refer to the dream-material directly, or only by means of interpolated expressions. Generally speaking, in the interpretation of any element of a dream it is doubtful whether it

(a) is to be accepted in the negative or the positive sense (contrast relation);
(b) is to be interpreted historically (as a memory);
(c) is symbolic; or whether
(d) its valuation is to be based upon its wording.

[140] Compare *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*.

General Introduction, 517c-518b

One of our most surprising discoveries is the manner in which *opposites* in the latent dream are dealt with by the dream-work. We know already that points of agreement in the latent material are replaced by condensation in the manifest dream. Now contraries are treated in just the same way as similarities, with a marked preference for expression by means of the *same* manifest element. An element in the manifest dream which admits of an opposite may stand simply for itself, or for its opposite, or for both together; only the sense can decide which translation is to be chosen. It accords with this that there is no representation of a *No* in dreams, or at least none which is not ambiguous.

A welcome analogy to this strange behaviour of the dream-work is furnished in the development of language. Many philologists have maintained that in the oldest languages opposites such as: strong—weak, light—dark, large—small, were expressed by the same root word (*antithetical sense of primal words*). Thus, in old Egyptian *ken* stood originally for both "strong" and "weak." In speaking, misunderstanding was guarded against in the use of such ambivalent words by the intonation and accompanying gestures; in writing, by the addition of a so-called "determinative," that is to say, of a picture which was not meant to be expressed orally. Thus, *ken*="strong" was written in such a way that after the letters there was a picture of a little man standing upright; when *ken* meant "weak," there was added the picture of a man in a slack, crouching attitude. Only at a later period did the two opposite meanings of the same primal word come to be designated in two different ways by slight modifications of the original. Thus, from *ken* meaning "strong—weak" were derived two words: *ken*="strong" and *kan*="weak." Nor is it only the oldest languages, in the last stages of their development, which have retained many survivals of these early words capable of meaning either of two opposites, but the same is true of much younger languages, even those which are today still living. I will quote some illustrations of this taken from the work of C. Abel (1884):

In Latin, such ambivalent words are:

altus=high or deep. *sacer*=sacred or accursed.

As examples of modifications of the original root, I quote:

clamare=to shout. *clam* = quietly, silently, secretly.

siccus=dry. *succus*=juice.

and, in German: *Stimme*=voice. *stumm*=dumb.

A comparison of kindred languages yields a large number of examples:

English: lock=to shut. German: *Loch*=hole. *Lücke*=gap.

English: cleave.[141] German: *kleben*=to stick, adhere.

The English word “without,” originally carrying with it both a positive and a negative connotation, is today used in the negative sense only, but it is clear that “with” has the signification, not merely of ”adding to,” but of “depriving of,” from the compounds “withdraw,” “withhold” (cf. the German *wieder*).

Yet another peculiarity of the dream-work has its counterpart in the development of language. In ancient Egyptian, as well as in other later languages, the sequence of sounds was transposed so as to result in different words for the same fundamental idea. Examples of this kind of parallels between English and German words may be quoted:

Topf (pot)—pot. Boat—tub. Hurry—*Ruhe* (rest).

Balken (beam)—*Kloben* (club). wait — *täuwen* (to wait).

Parallels between Latin and German:

capere—packen (to seize). *ren—Niere* (kidney).

Such transpositions as have taken place here in the case of single words are made by the dream-work in a variety of ways. The inversion of the meaning, i.e., substitution by the opposite, is a device with which we are already familiar; but, besides this, we find in dreams inversion of situations or of the relations existing between two persons, as though the scene were laid in a “topsy-turvy” world. In dreams often enough the hare chases the hunter. Again, inversion is met with in the sequence of events, so that in dreams cause follows effect, which reminds us of what sometimes happens in a third-rate theatrical performance, when first the hero falls and then the shot which kills him is fired from the wings.

General Introduction, 540c-541b

In ancient systems of expression, for instance, in the scripts of the oldest languages, indefiniteness of various kinds is found with a frequency which we should not tolerate in our writings today. Thus in many Semitic writings only the consonants of the words appear: the omitted vowels have to be supplied by the reader from his knowledge and from the context. Hieroglyphic writing follows a similar principle, although not exactly the same; and this is the reason why nothing is known of the pronunciation of ancient Egyptian. There are besides other kinds of indefiniteness in the sacred writings of the Egyptians: for example, it is left to the writer’s choice to inscribe the pictures from right to left or from left to right. To be able to read them, we have to remember that we must be guided by the direction of the faces of the figures, birds, and so forth. But it was also open to the writer to set the pictures in vertical columns and, in the case of inscriptions on smaller objects, he was led by considerations of what was

[141] Both senses of cleave are still alive in English: to cleave (=separate) and to cleave to (=adhere).—Tr.

pleasing to the eye, and of the space at his disposal, to introduce still further alterations in the arrangement of the signs. The most confusing feature in hieroglyphic script is that there is no spacing between the words. The pictures are all placed at equal intervals on the page, and it is generally impossible to know whether any given sign goes with the preceding one or forms the beginning of a new word. In Persian cuneiform writing, on the other hand, a slanting sign is used to separate the words.

The Chinese language, both spoken and written, is exceedingly ancient but is still used today by four hundred million people. Don't suppose that I understand it at all; I only obtained some information about it because I hoped to find in it analogies to the kinds of indefiniteness occurring in dreams; nor was I disappointed in my expectation, for Chinese is so full of uncertainties as positively to terrify one. As is well known, it consists of a number of syllabic sounds which are pronounced singly or doubled in combination. One of the chief dialects has about four hundred of these sounds, and since the vocabulary of this dialect is estimated at somewhere about four thousand words it is evident that every sound has an average of ten different meanings—some fewer, but some all the more. For this reason there are a whole series of devices to escape ambiguity, for the context alone will not show which of the ten possible meanings of the syllable the speaker wishes to convey to the hearer. Amongst these devices is the combining of two sounds into a single word and the use of four different "tones" in which these syllables may be spoken. For purposes of our comparison a still more interesting fact is that this language is practically without grammar: it is impossible to say of any of the one-syllabled words whether it is a noun, a verb or an adjective; and, further there are no inflections to show gender, number, case, tense or mood. The language consists, as we may say, of the raw material only; just as our thought-language is resolved into its raw material by the dream-work omitting to express the relations in it. Wherever there is any uncertainty in Chinese the decision is left to the intelligence of the listener, who is guided by the context. I made a note of a Chinese saying, which literally translated runs thus: "Little what see, much what wonderful." This is simple enough to understand. It may mean: "The less a man has seen, the more he finds to wonder at," or "There is much to wonder at for the man who has seen little." Naturally there is no occasion to choose between these two translations which differ only in grammatical construction. We are assured that in spite of these uncertainties the Chinese language is a quite exceptionally good medium of expression; so it is clear that indefiniteness does not necessarily lead to ambiguity.

Now we must certainly admit that the position of affairs is far less favourable in regard to the mode of expression in dreams than it is with these ancient tongues and scripts; for these latter were originally designed

as a means of communication; that is, they were intended to be understood, no matter what ways or means they had to employ. But just this character is lacking to dreams: their object is not to tell anyone anything; they are not a means of communication; on the contrary, it is important to them not to be understood. So we ought not to be surprised or misled if the result is that a number of the ambiguities and uncertainties in dreams cannot be determined. The only certain piece of knowledge gained from our comparison is that this indefiniteness (which people would like to make use of as an argument against the accuracy of our dream-interpretations) is rather to be recognized as a regular characteristic of all primitive systems of expression.