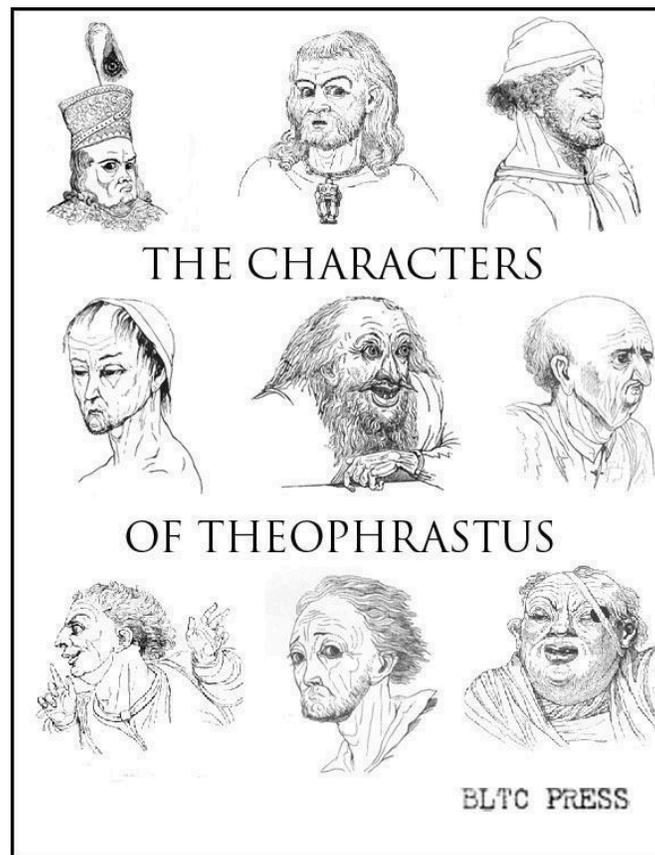


Save Ancient Studies Alliance
Summer 2023 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group

Is this your neighbor, is this you? Looking at others and ourselves in Theophrastus' *Characters*



Book cover of *The Characters of Theophrastus* (BLTC Press, 2008) bearing corresponding character sketches of Francis Howell from 1824

“All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely”...*Characters?* In adjusting this famous quote from Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, we are reminded that we are all not necessarily perceived as Players but, rather, as stock characters in the stories of our lives. How we characterize ourselves is sometimes different than how others might characterize us.

Theophrastus (c. 371 - c. 287 BCE) was a philosopher and natural scientist who succeeded Aristotle as the head of the Lyceum in Athens. His *Characters*, published late in his life (when he was 99 years old according to the preface), consisted of thirty character sketches of unsavory kinds of people he encountered in Athens. Such characters were arrogant, unpleasant, petty, miserly, or simply gross. Reading Theophrastus' caricatures can perhaps give us a slice of life in early Hellenistic Athens, but, more importantly, it will help us consider harsh stereotypes we might have of others while also questioning our own behaviors and attitudes. While Theophrastus did not invent stereotypes (or even the use of stereotypes in literature), he is often credited with creating the character sketch genre that influenced later authors of the early modern period and beyond. In this reading group, we will grapple with the problems of stereotypes, moral qualities, and ethical behavior. In doing so, we will interrogate our own lives and how we perceive others and ourselves.

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Translations:

There are several translations of Theophrastus' *Characters* available. Richard Jebb's 1870 translation can be found [here](#). Bennet and Hammond's 1902 translation can be found [here](#) (there is also an audiobook version of their translation found [here](#)). There is also Philip Vellacourt's 1967 Penguin [translation](#). Warren Anderson's 1970 translation can be found [here](#) for purchase. I found another translation [here](#), but I am unable to verify who the translator was. The Loeb Classical Library also has a [2003 translation](#) by Jeffrey Rusten and Ian Cunningham, but institutional access is required for this online version (though a [hardcover version](#) can be purchased).

Pamela Mensch's 2018 translation can be purchased [online](#)—this is the version that I will be using.

The Ancient Greek text edited by Hermann Diels in 1909 can be found [here](#).

Bonus: Jean de La Bruyère's 1688 French translation can be found in the U.S. [Library of Congress](#) (the *Characters* start at image 65).

Reading Schedule:

Week 1 (June 2nd) [most translations below are taken from the [Perseus Project](#) translations, with a few exceptions]

- For an ancient biography on Theophrastus, see Diogenes Laertius, [Lives of the Eminent Philosophers](#), 5.2 (written c. 3rd century CE—about 700 years after Theophrastus lived)
- Theophrastus, *Characters* 1-10
 - The Dissembler (Εἴρων)
 - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1108a19-23: “In respect of truth then, the middle character may be called truthful (ἀλήθεια), and the observance of the mean Truthfulness; pretense in the form of exaggeration is Boastfulness, and its possessor a boaster (ἀλαζών); in the form of understatement, Self-depreciation, and its possessor the self-depreciator (εἴρων).”
 - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1127a20-23: “As generally understood then, the boaster is a man who pretends to creditable qualities that he does not possess, or possesses in a lesser degree than he makes out, while conversely the self depreciator (εἴρων) disclaims or disparages good qualities that he does possess; midway between them is the straightforward sort of man who is sincere both in behavior and in speech, and admits the truth about his own qualifications without either exaggeration or understatement.”
 - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1233b39-1234a2: “The truthful and sincere man, called 'downright,' is midway between the dissembler (εἴρων) and the charlatan (ἀλαζών). He that wittingly makes a false statement against himself that is depreciatory is a dissembler (εἴρων), he that exaggerates his merits as a charlatan (ἀλαζών), he that speaks of himself as he is is truthful and in Homer's phrase 'sagacious'; and in general the one is a lover of truth and the others lovers of falsehood.”
 - The Flatterer (Κόλαξις)
 - Plutarch, [On how to tell a flatterer from a friend](#)
 - Plato, *Phaedrus*, 240b: “So, for instance, a flatterer (κόλαξις) is a horrid creature and does great harm, yet Nature has combined with him a kind of pleasure that is not without charm, and one might find fault with a courtesan as an injurious thing, and there are many other such creatures and practices which are yet for the time being very pleasant”

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1108a26-30: “In respect of general pleasantness in life, the man who is pleasant in the proper manner is friendly, and the observance of the mean is Friendliness; he that exceeds, if from no interested motive, is obsequious, if for his own advantage, a flatterer (κόλαξ); he that is deficient, and unpleasant in all the affairs of life, may be called quarrelsome and surly.”
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1127a6-11: “The man who always joins in the pleasures of his companions, if he sets out to be pleasant for no ulterior motive, is Obsequious; if he does so for the sake of getting something by it in the shape of money or money’s worth, he is a Flatterer.”
- The Talker (Ἀδολεσχία)
 - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1117b34-35: “Nor similarly can these terms be applied to the enjoyment of any of the other pleasures that are not bodily pleasures: those who love hearing marvelous tales and telling anecdotes, and who spend their days in trivial gossip, we call idle chatterers (ἀδολέσχας), but not profligates; nor do we call men profligate who feel excessive pain for the loss of fortune or friends.”
 - Plutarch, [*On Talkativeness*](#)
- The Yokel (Ἄγροικος)
 - Knemon in Menander’s [*Dyskolos*](#)
 - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1108a23-26: “In respect of pleasantness and social amusement, the middle character is witty and the middle disposition Wittiness; the excess is Buffoonery and its possessor a buffoon; the deficient man may be called boorish (ἄγροικός), and his disposition Boorishness (ἄγροικία).”
 - Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1128a1-3: “Those on the other hand who never by any chance say anything funny themselves and take offense at those who do, are considered boorish (ἄγροικοί) and morose.”
 - Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1230b18-20: “It specially attaches to persons like the boors who are a stock character in comedy—people who steer clear of pleasures even in moderate and necessary indulgences.”
 - Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1234a3-5: “Wittiness also is a middle state, and the witty man is midway between the boorish or stiff man and the buffoon. For just as in the matter of food the squeamish man differs from the omnivorous in that the former takes nothing or little, and that reluctantly, and the latter accepts everything readily, so the boor stands in

relation to the vulgar man or buffoon—the former takes no joke except with difficulty, the latter accepts everything easily and with pleasure.”

- **The Sycophant (Ἄρεσκος)**

- **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1126b12-14:** “In society and the common life and intercourse of conversation and business, some men are considered to be Obsequious (ἄρεσκοι); these are people who complaisantly approve of everything and never raise objections, but think it a duty to avoid giving pain to those which whom they come in contact.”
- **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1127a6-10:** “The man who always joins in the pleasures of his companions, if he sets out to be pleasant for no ulterior motive, is Obsequious (ἄρεσκος).”
- **Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1233b34-38:** “Dignity is a middle state between Self-will and Obsequiousness. A man who in his conduct pays no regard at all to another but is contemptuous is self-willed; he who regards another in everything and is inferior to everybody is obsequious (ἄρεσκος); he who regards another in some things but not in others, and is regardful of persons worthy of regard, is dignified.”

- **The Senseless Man (Ἀπονενοημένος)**

- **The Babblers (Ἄλλος)**

- **The Newshound (Λογοποιός)**

- **Andocides, *On the Mysteries*, 1.54:** “If, then, any of you yourselves, gentlemen, or any of the public at large has ever been possessed with the notion that I informed against my associates with the object of purchasing my own life at the price of theirs—a tale invented (ἐλογοποιῶν) by my enemies, who wished to present me in the blackest colors—use the facts themselves as evidence”
- **Lysias, 16.11:** “So much for the tenor of my private life: with regard to public matters, I hold that the strongest proof I can give of my decorous conduct is the fact that all the younger set who are found to take their diversion in dice or drink or the like dissipations are, as you will observe, at feud with me, and are most prolific in lying tales (λογοποιούντας) about me. It is obvious, surely, that if we were at one in our desires they would not regard me with such feelings.”
- **Isocrates 5.75:** “By speaking this rubbish, by pretending to have exact knowledge and by speedily effecting in words the overthrow of the whole world, they are convincing many people. They convince, most of all, those

who hunger for the same calamities as do the speech-makers (λογοποιοῦντες)....”

- **The Shameless Man (Αἰσχυντος)**

- **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1108a31-35:** “while he that is deficient in shame, or abashed at nothing whatsoever, is shameless (ἀναίσχυντος), and the man of middle character modest.”
- **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1115a13-15:** “One who fears disgrace is an honorable man, with a due sense of shame; one who does not fear it is shameless (ἀναίσχυντος).”
- **Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1233b26-29:** “Modesty is a middle state between Shamelessness and Bashfulness: the man who pays regard to nobody's opinion is shameless (ἀναίσχυντος), he who regards everybody's is bashful, he who regards the opinion of those who appear good is modest.”
- **Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1368b22-23:** “the foolish man from having mistaken ideas of right and wrong, the shameless (ἀναίσχυντος) from his contempt for the opinion of others.”
- **Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1383b13-15:** “What are the things of which men are ashamed (αἰσχύνονται) or the contrary, and before whom, and in what frame of mind, will be clear from the following considerations. Let shame (αἰσχύνη) then be defined as a kind of pain or uneasiness in respect of misdeeds, past, present, or future, which seem to tend to bring dishonor; and shamelessness (ἀναίσχυντία) as contempt and indifference in regard to these same things. If this definition of shame is correct, it follows that we are ashamed of all such misdeeds as seem to be disgraceful, either for ourselves or for those whom we care for. Such are all those that are due to vice, such as throwing away one's shield or taking to flight, for this is due to cowardice; or withholding a deposit, for this is due to injustice. And illicit relations with any persons, at forbidden places or times, for this is due to licentiousness (ἀκολασίας).”
- **Plato, *Laws* 3.701a:** “For, thinking themselves knowing, men became fearless; and audacity begat effrontery (ἀναίσχυντιαν). For to be fearless of the opinion of a better man, owing to self-confidence, is nothing else than base effrontery (ἀναίσχυντία); and it is brought about by a liberty that is audacious to excess.”

- **The Miser (Μικρολόγος)**

- **Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 2.995a:** “Thus some people will not accept the statements of a speaker unless he gives a mathematical proof; others will not unless he makes use of illustrations; others expect to have a poet adduced as witness. Again, some require exactness in everything, while others are annoyed by it, either because they cannot follow the reasoning or because of its pettiness (*μικρολογία*); for there is something about exactness which seems to some people to be mean (*ἀνελεύθερον*), no less in an argument than in a business transaction.”
- **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1121b-1122a:** “The characters described by such names as niggardly (*φειδωλοί*, lit. the thrifty), close-fisted (*γλίσχροι*, lit. sticky (as in “closed stuck”), and stingy (*κίμβικες*, lit. skinflint [one reuses small pieces of flint rather than buying new ones]) all fall short in giving, but they do not covet the goods of others nor wish to take them. With some of them this is due to an honorable motive of a sort, namely a shrinking from base conduct—since some persons are thought, or at all events profess, to be careful of their money because they wish to avoid being forced at some time or other to do something base; to this class belong the skinflint (*κυμνοπρίστης*, lit. cumin seed-splitter) and similar characters, who get their names from an excessive reluctance to give. But some keep their hands off their neighbors' goods from fear; they calculate that it is not easy to take what belongs to others without others taking what belongs to oneself, and so they ‘prefer (as they say) neither to take nor to give.’ All these take from wrong sources, and more than their due. The common characteristic of all these seems to be sordid greed, since they all endure reproach for gain, and for a small gain. Those who make improper gains from improper sources on a great scale, for instance princes who sack cities and rob temples, are not termed mean (*ἀνελευθέρους*), but rather wicked or impious (*ἀσεβείς*) or unjust (*ἀδίκους*). But the dicer and the clothes-stealer or brigand are to be classed as mean, as showing sordid greed, for both ply their trade and endure reproach for gain, the robber risking his life for plunder, and the dicer making gain out of his friends, to whom one ought to give; hence both are guilty of sordid greed, trying as they do to get gain from wrong sources. And all similar modes of getting wealth are mean for the same reasons. Meanness (*ἀνελευθερία*) is naturally spoken of as the opposite of Liberality (*τῇ ἐλευθεριότητι*, lit. ‘freeness in giving’); for not only is it a greater evil than Prodigality (*ἀσωτία*, lit. ‘having no safety [in resources]’),

but also men more often err on the side of Meanness than on that of Prodigality as we defined it. Let this suffice as an account of Liberality and of the vices which are opposed to it.”

- Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1231b-1232a: “Greatness of Spirit and Magnificence and Liberality are also middle states. Liberality (ἐλευθεριότης) is the mean in regard to the acquisition and expenditure of wealth. The man who is more pleased than he ought to be by all acquisition and more pained than he ought to be by all expenditure is mean, he that feels both feelings less than he ought is prodigal (ἄσωτος), and he that feels both as he ought is liberal (what I mean by 'as he ought,' both in this and in the other cases, is 'as right principle directs'). And since the two former characters consist in excess and deficiency, and where there are extremes there is also a mean, and that mean is best, there being a single best for each kind of action, a single thing, it necessarily follows that liberality is a middle state between prodigality and meanness as regards getting and parting with wealth. But the terms 'wealth' and 'art of wealth' we use in two senses, since one way of using an article of property, for example a shoe or a cloak, is proper to the article itself,¹ another is accidental, though not as using a shoe for a weight would be an accidental use of it, but for example selling it or letting it on hire, for these uses do employ it as a shoe. The covetous man (φιλάργυρος) is the party whose interest centers on money, and money is a thing of ownership instead of accidental use. But the mean man (ἀνελεύθερος) might be even prodigal in regard to the accidental mode of getting wealth, inasmuch as it is in the natural acquisition of wealth that he pursues increase. The prodigal man (ἄσωτος) lacks necessities, but the liberal man (ἐλευθέριος) gives his superfluity. And of these classes themselves there are species designated as exceeding or deficient in respect of parts of the matter concerned: for example, the stingy man (φειδωλός), the skinflint (κίμβιξ) and the profiteer (αἰσχροκερδής) are mean—the stingy in not parting with money, the profiteer in accepting anything, the skinflint is he who is very excited about small sums; also the man who offends by way of meanness is a false reckoner and a cheat. Similarly 'prodigal' includes the spendthrift who is prodigal in unregulated spending and the reckless man who is prodigal in not being able to endure the pain of calculation.”

Week 2 (June 9th)

- Theophrastus, *Characters* 11-20

- **The Obnoxious Man (Βδελυρίας)**
- **The Tactless Man (Ακαιρίας)**
- **The Busybody (Περιεργίας)**
- **The Dullard (Αναισθησίας)**
 - **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1104a:** “Similarly he that indulges in every pleasure and refrains from none turns out a profligate, and he that shuns all pleasure, as boorish persons (ἄγροικοι, ‘the yokel’) do, becomes what may be called insensible (ἀναισθητός).”
 - **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107b:** “Men deficient in the enjoyment of pleasures scarcely occur, and hence this character also has not been assigned a name, but we may call it Insensible (ἀναισθητοι).”
 - **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107b:** “similarly a temperate man appears profligate in contrast with a man insensible (ἀναισθητον) to pleasure and pain, but insensible (ἀναισθητος) in contrast with a profligate; and a liberal man seems prodigal in contrast with a mean man, mean in contrast with one who is prodigal.”
 - **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1119a:** “Men erring on the side of deficiency as regards pleasures, and taking less than a proper amount of enjoyment in them, scarcely occur; such insensibility (ἀναισθησία) is not human (ἀνθρωπική). Indeed, even the lower animals discriminate in food, and like some kinds and not others; and if there be a creature that finds nothing pleasant, and sees no difference between one thing and another, it must be very far removed from humanity. As men of this type scarcely occur, we have no special name for them.”
 - **Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1221a:** “Similarly also one that is a prey to his desires and that exceeds in everything possible is profligate, and one that is deficient and does not desire even to a proper degree and in a natural way, but is as devoid of feeling as a stone, is insensitive (ἀναισθητος).”
- **The Surly Man (Αὐθαδείας)**
 - **Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1367a:** “And in each case we must adopt a term from qualities closely connected, always in the more favorable sense; for instance, the choleric and passionate man may be spoken of as frank and open, the arrogant (αὐθάδη) as magnificent and dignified.”
 - **Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1221a:** “One that joins in approval more than is fitting is a flatterer (ἀρέσκεια), one that does so less than is fitting is surly (εὐθάδεια).”

- Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1233b: “Dignity is a middle state between Self-will (αὐθαδείας) and Obsequiousness (ἄρεσκειας). A man who in his conduct pays no regard at all to another but is contemptuous is self-willed (αὐθάδης); he who regards another in everything and is inferior to everybody is obsequious (ἄρεσκος); he who regards another in some things but not in others, and is regardful of persons worthy of regard, is dignified.”
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1108a: “he that exceeds, if from no interested motive, is obsequious (ἄρεσκος), if for his own advantage, a flatterer; he that is deficient, and unpleasant in all the affairs of life, may be called quarrelsome and surly (ἀηδής).”
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1126b: “Those on the contrary who object to everything and do not care in the least what pain they cause, are called Surly (δύσκολοι) or Quarrelsome (δυσέριδες).
- **The Superstitious Man (Δεισιδαιμονίας)**
 - Aristotle, *Politics*, 5.1314b-1315a: “And he [an effective ruler] must do the opposite of almost all the things mentioned some time back, for he must lay out and adorn the city as if he were a trustee and not a tyrant. And further he must be seen always to be exceptionally zealous as regards religious observances (for people are less afraid of suffering any illegal treatment from men of this sort, if they think that their ruler has religious scruples (δεισιδαιμονα) and pays regard to the gods, and also they plot against him less, thinking that he has even the gods as allies), though he should not display a foolish religiosity.”
 - Plato, *Laws*, 10.908e-910a: “Likewise also the belief that the gods are neglectful breeds two other kinds of impiety; and the belief in their being open to bribes, other two. These kinds being thus distinguished, those criminals who suffer from folly, being devoid of evil disposition and character, shall be placed by the judge according to law in the reformatory for a period of not less than five years, during which time no other of the citizens shall hold intercourse with them, save only those who take part in the nocturnal assembly, and they shall company with them to minister to their souls’ salvation by admonition; and when the period of their incarceration has expired, if any of them seems to be reformed, he shall dwell with those who are reformed, but if not, and if he be convicted again on a like charge, he shall be punished by death. But as to all those who have become like ravening beasts, and who, besides holding that the gods are

negligent [909b] or open to bribes, despise men, charming the souls of many of the living, and claiming that they charm the souls of the dead, and promising to persuade the gods by bewitching them, as it were, with sacrifices, prayers and incantations, and who try thus to wreck utterly not only individuals, but whole families and States for the sake of money,—if any of these men be pronounced guilty, the court shall order him to be imprisoned according to law in the mid-country jail, [909c] and shall order that no free man shall approach such criminals at any time, and that they shall receive from the servants a ration of food as fixed by the Law-wardens. And he that dies shall be cast outside the borders without burial; and if any free man assist in burying him, he shall be liable to a charge of impiety at the hands of anyone who chooses to prosecute. And if the dead man leaves children fit for citizenship, the guardians of orphans shall take them also [909d] under their charge from the day of their father's conviction, just as much as any other orphans. For all these offenders one general law must be laid down, such as will cause the majority of them not only to offend less against the gods by word and deed, but also to become less foolish, through being forbidden to trade in religion illegally. To deal comprehensively with all such cases the following law shall be enacted:—No one shall possess a shrine in his own house: when any one is moved in spirit to do sacrifice, [909e] he shall go to the public places to sacrifice, and he shall hand over his oblations to the priests and priestesses to whom belongs the consecration thereof; and he himself, together with any associates he may choose, shall join in the prayers. This procedure shall be observed for the following reasons—It is no easy task to found temples and gods, and to do this rightly needs much deliberation; yet it is customary for all women especially, and for sick folk everywhere, and those in peril or in distress (whatever the nature of the distress), and conversely for those who have had a slice of good fortune, to dedicate whatever happens to be at hand at the moment, and to vow sacrifices and promise the founding of shrines to gods and demi-gods and children of gods; and through terrors caused by waking visions or by dreams, and in like manner as they recall many visions and try to provide remedies for each of them, they are wont to found altars and shrines, and to fill with them every house and every village, and open places too, and every spot which was the scene of such experiences. For all these reasons their action should be governed by the law now stated; and a further reason is

this—to prevent impious men [910b] from acting fraudulently in regard to these matters also, by setting up shrines and altars in private houses, thinking to propitiate the gods privily by sacrifices and vows, and thus increasing infinitely their own iniquity, whereby they make both themselves and those better men who allow them guilty in the eyes of the gods, so that the whole State reaps the consequences of their impiety in some degree—and deserves to reap them. The lawgiver himself, however, will not be blamed by the god; for this shall be the law laid down:—Shrines of the gods no one must possess [910c] in a private house; and if anyone is proved to possess and worship at any shrine other than the public shrines—be the possessor man or woman,—and if he is guilty of no serious act of impiety, he that notices the fact shall inform the Law-wardens, and they shall give orders for the private shrines to be removed to the public temples, and if the owner disobeys the order, they shall punish him until he removes them. [910d] And if anyone be proved to have committed an impious act, such as is not the venial offense of children, but the serious irreligion of grown men, whether by setting up a shrine on private ground, or on public ground, by doing sacrifice to any gods whatsoever, for sacrificing in a state of impurity he shall be punished with death. And the Law-wardens shall judge what is a childish or venial offense and what not, and then shall bring the offenders before the court, and shall impose upon them the due penalty for their impiety.

- Hippocrates, [*On the Sacred Disease, 1*](#)
- Plutarch, [*On Superstition*](#)
- The Complainer (Μεμψιμοιρίας)
 - [Aristotle], *Athenian Constitution*, 12.5 [a poetic fragment of the Athenian lawgiver Solon]: “And again in his taunting reply to the later querulous complaints (μεμψιμοιρίας) of both the parties: “If openly I must reprove the people / Never in the dreams of sleep could they have seen / The things that they have now . . . / While all the greater and the mightier men / Might praise me and might deem me as a friend.”
 - Isocrates, *Panathenaicus*, 12.8-9: “and, lastly, I have been ranked, not among those who are despised or ignored, but among those whom the most cultivated of the Hellenes will recall and talk about as men of consequence and worth. And yet, although I have been blessed with all these gifts, some in surpassing, others in sufficient measure, I am not content to live on these

terms; on the contrary, my old age is so morose and captious and discontented (μεμψίμοιρον) that I have oftentimes before this found fault with my nature which no other man has contemned, and have deplored my fortune, although I have had no complaint against it other than that the philosophy which I have chosen to pursue has been the object of unfortunate and unscrupulous attacks.”

- **The Distrustful Man (Απιστίας)**
- **The Slovenly Man (Δυσχέρειας)**
- **The Vulgar Man (Αηδίας)**

Week 3 (June 16th)

- **Theophrastus, *Characters* 21-30**
 - **The Social Climber (Μικροφιλοτιμίας)**
 - **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1124a:** “Honor (τιμὰς) and dishonor (ἀτιμίας) then are the objects with which the great-souled man (μεγαλοψυχία) is especially concerned. Great honors accorded by persons of worth will afford him pleasure in a moderate degree: he will feel he is receiving only what belongs to him, or even less, for no honor can be adequate to the merits of perfect virtue, yet all the same he will deign to accept their honors, because they have no greater tribute to offer him. Honor rendered by common people and on trivial grounds he will utterly despise, for this is not what he merits. He will also despise dishonor, for no dishonor can justly attach to him. The great-souled man then, as has been said, is especially concerned with honor; but he will also observe due measure in respect to wealth, power, and good and bad fortune in general, as they may befall him; he will not rejoice overmuch in prosperity, nor grieve overmuch at adversity. For he does not care much even about honor, which is the greatest of external goods (since power and wealth are desirable only for the honor they bring, at least their possessors wish to be honored for their sake); he therefore to whom even honor is a small thing will be indifferent to other things as well. Hence great-souled men are thought to be haughty.”
 - **The Pinchpenny (Ἀνελευθερίας)**
 - **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107b:** “In regard to giving and getting money, the observance of the mean is Liberality; the excess and deficiency are Prodigality and Meanness (ἀνελευθερία), but the prodigal man and the mean man (ἀνελεύθερος) exceed and fall short in opposite ways to one

another: the prodigal exceeds in giving and is deficient in getting, whereas the mean man exceeds in getting and is deficient in giving.”

- **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1119b:** “Prodigality and Meanness (*ἀνελευθερία*) on the other hand are both of them modes of excess and of deficiency in relation to wealth. Meanness (*ἀνελευθερίαν*) is always applied to those who care more than is proper about wealth, but Prodigality is sometimes used with a wider connotation, since we call the unrestrained and those who squander money on debauchery prodigal; and therefore prodigality is thought to be extremely wicked, because it is a combination of vices.”
- **Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1231b-1232a:** “The man who is more pleased than he ought to be by all acquisition and more pained than he ought to be by all expenditure is mean (*ἀνελεύθερος*), he that feels both feelings less than he ought is prodigal, and he that feels both as he ought is liberal (what I mean by ‘as he ought,’ both in this and in the other cases, is ‘as right principle directs’). And since the two former characters consist in excess and deficiency, and where there are extremes there is also a mean, and that mean is best, there being a single best for each kind of action, a single thing, it necessarily follows that liberality is a middle state between prodigality and meanness (*ἀνελευθερίας*) as regards getting and parting with wealth. But the terms ‘wealth’ and ‘art of wealth’ we use in two senses, since one way of using an article of property. For example a shoe or a cloak, is proper to the article itself, another is accidental, though not as using a shoe for a weight would be an accidental use of it, but for example selling it or letting it on hire, for these uses do employ it as a shoe. The covetous man is the party whose interest centers on money, and money is a thing of ownership instead of accidental use. But the mean man (*ἀνελεύθερος*) might be even prodigal in regard to the accidental mode of getting wealth, inasmuch as it is in the natural acquisition of wealth that he pursues increase. The prodigal man lacks necessities, but the liberal man gives his superfluity. And of these classes themselves there are species designated as exceeding or deficient in respect of parts of the matter concerned: for example, the stingy man, the skinflint and the profiteer are mean (*ἀνελεύθερος*)—the stingy in not parting with money, the profiteer in accepting anything, the skinflint is he who is very excited about small sums; also the man who offends by way of meanness (*ἀνελευθερίαν*) is a false reckoner and a cheat. Similarly ‘prodigal’ includes

the spendthrift who is prodigal in unregulated spending and the reckless man who is prodigal in not being able to endure the pain of calculation.”

- **The Charlatan (Ἀλαζονείας)**

- **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1127a:** “The observance of the mean in relation to Boastfulness (ἀλαζονείας) has to do with almost the same things. It also is without a name; but it will be as well to discuss these unnamed excellences with the rest, since we shall the better understand the nature of the moral character if we examine its qualities one by one; and we shall also confirm our belief that the virtues are modes of observing the mean, if we notice how this holds good in every instance. Now we have treated of behavior in Society with relation to giving pleasure and pain. Let us now discuss truthfulness and falsehood similarly displayed in word and deed, and in one's personal pretensions. As generally understood then, the boaster (ἀλαζών) is a man who pretends to creditable qualities that he does not possess, or possesses in a lesser degree than he makes out, while conversely the self depreciator disclaims or disparages good qualities that he does possess; midway between them is the straightforward sort of man who is sincere both in behavior and in speech, and admits the truth about his own qualifications without either exaggeration or understatement. Each of these things may be done with or without an ulterior motive; but when a man is acting without ulterior motive, his words, actions, and conduct always represent a his true character. Falsehood is in itself base and reprehensible, and truth noble and praiseworthy; and similarly the sincere man who stands between the two extremes is praised, and the insincere of both kinds are blamed, more especially the boaster (ἀλαζών). Let us discuss each of the two, beginning with the truthful man.”

- **Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 2.2.12:** “Hush!” said Cyrus. “Don't call these men humbugs (ἀλαζόνες). For to me, the name ‘humbug’ (ἀλαζών) seems to apply to those who pretend that they are richer than they are or braver than they are, and to those who promise to do what they cannot do, and that, too, when it is evident that they do this only for the sake of getting something or making some gain. But those who invent stories to amuse their companions and not for their own gain nor at the expense of their hearers nor to the injury of any one, why should these men not be called ‘witty’ and ‘entertaining’ rather than ‘humbugs’ (ἀλαζόνες)?”

- **The Arrogant Man (ὑπερηφανίας)**

- **Isocrates, *Antidosis*, 15.131:** “For while he was no anti-democrat (μισόδημος) nor a misanthrope (μισάνθρωπος), nor arrogant (ὑπερήφανος), nor possessed of any such defect of character, yet because of his proud bearing—an advantage to the office of a general but out of place in dealing with men from day to day—everyone attributed to him the faults which I have named; for he was by nature as inept in courting the favor of men as he was gifted in handling affairs.”
- **The Coward (Δειλίας)**
 - **Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1115a:** “Again, it is no doubt right not to fear poverty, disease, or in general any evil not caused by vice and not due to ourselves. But one who is fearless in regard to these things is not courageous either (although the term is applied to him, too, by analogy); since some men who are cowards in war (ἐν τοῖς πολεμικοῖς κινδύνοις δειλοὶ) are liberal with money, and face loss of fortune boldly. Nor yet is a man cowardly (δειλός) if he fears insult to his wife and children, or envy, or the like; nor courageous if he shows a bold face when about to undergo a flogging.”
 - **Plato, *Laws*, 1.639b:**

Athenian

And how about the army commander? Is a man fit for command, provided that he has military science, even though he be a coward (δειλός) and sea-sick with a kind of tipsy terror when danger comes?

Megillus

Certainly not.

Athenian

And suppose he has no military skill, besides being a coward (δειλός)?

Megillus

You are describing an utterly worthless fellow, not a commander of men at all, but of the most womanish of women.
 - **Plato, *Laws*, 2.655a-b:**

Athenian

Well said, my friend. But in, fact, while postures and tunes do exist in music, which deals with rhythm and harmony, so that one can rightly speak of a tune or posture being “rhythmical” or “harmonious,” one cannot rightly

apply the choir masters metaphor “well-colored” to tune and posture; but one can use this language about the posture and tune of the brave man and the coward (δειλοῦ), and one is right in calling those of the brave man good, and those of the coward (δειλῶν) bad. To avoid a tediously long disquisition, let us sum up the whole matter by saying that the postures and tunes which attach to goodness of soul or body, or to some image thereof, are universally good, while those which attach to badness are exactly the reverse.

- **Plato, *Republic*, 6.486b:** “Hence such a man will not suppose death to be terrible?” “Least of all.” “Then a cowardly (δειλῆ) and illiberal spirit, it seems, could have no part in genuine philosophy.” “I think not.” “What then? Could a man of orderly spirit (κόσμιος), not a lover of money (φιλοχρήματος), not illiberal (ἀνελεύθερος), nor a braggart (ἀλαζών) nor a coward (δειλός), ever prove unjust (ἄδικος), or a driver of hard bargains?” “Impossible.” “This too, then, is a point that in your discrimination of the philosophic and unphilosophic soul you will observe—whether the man is from youth up just and gentle or unsocial and savage.”
- **Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, 9.4-6:** “However, it is proper not to pass over the means by which he contrived to bring about this result. Clearly, what he did was to ensure that the brave should have happiness, and the coward (κακοδαιμονίαν) misery. [4] For in other states when a man proves a coward (ὅπότεν τις κακὸς γένηται), the only consequence is that he is called a coward (κακός). He goes to the same market as the brave man, sits beside him, attends the same gymnasium, if he chooses. But in Lacedaemon everyone would be ashamed to have a coward (κακὸν) with him at the mess or to be matched with him in a wrestling bout. [5] Often when sides are picked for a game of ball he is the odd man left out: in the chorus he is banished to the ignominious place; in the streets he is bound to make way; when he occupies a seat he must needs give it up, even to a junior; he must support his spinster relatives at home and must explain to them why they are old maids: he must make the best of a fireside without a wife, and yet pay forfeit for that: he may not stroll about with a cheerful countenance, nor behave as though he were a man of unsullied fame, or else he must submit to be beaten by his betters. [6] Small wonder, I think, that where such a load of dishonor is laid on the coward (τοιούτης τοῖς κακοῖς), death seems preferable to a life so dishonored, so ignominious.”

- Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*, 10.6-7: “For he believed, it seems, that enslavement, fraud, robbery, are crimes that injure only the victims of them; but the wicked man (κακῶν) and the coward (ἀνάνδρων) are traitors to the whole body politic. And so he had good reason, I think, for visiting their offenses with the heaviest penalties. [7] And he laid on the people the duty of practicing the whole virtue of a citizen as a necessity irresistible. For to all who satisfied the requirements of his code he gave equal rights of citizenship, without regard to bodily infirmity or want of money. But the coward who shrank from the task of observing the rules of his code (εἰ δέ τις ἀποδειλιάσειε τοῦ τὰ νόμιμα διαπονεῖσθαι) he caused to be no more reckoned among the peers.”
- **The Authoritarian (Ὀλιγαρχίας)**
 - [Xenophon], *Constitution of the Athenians* [a political treatise written in the 420s BCE by someone with oligarchic leanings; the author is definitely not the famous Xenophon, so the author is sometimes named “The Old Oligarch”]
- **The Late Learner (Ὀψιμαθίας)**
- **The Slanderer (Κακολογίας)**
- **The Friend of Scoundrels (Φιλοπονηρίας)**
 - Thucydides, *Histories*, 8.47.2: “When the Athenians at Samos found that he had influence with Tissaphernes, principally of their own motion (though partly also through Alcibiades himself sending word to their chief men to tell the best men in the army, that if there were only an oligarchy and neither the villainy (πονηρία) nor the democracy that had banished him, he would be glad to return to his country and to make Tissaphernes their friend), the captains and chief men in the armament at once embraced the idea of subverting the democracy.”
 - [Xenophon], *Constitution of the Athenians*, 2.19: “It is my opinion that the people at Athens know which citizens are good and which bad (πονηροί), but that in spite of this knowledge they cultivate those who are complaisant and useful to themselves, even if bad (πονηροί); and they tend to hate the good. For they do not think that the good are naturally virtuous for the people’s benefit, but for their hurt. On the other hand, some persons are not by nature democratic although they are truly on the people’s side.”
- **The Chiseler (Αἰσχροκερδείας)**

- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1122a: “The common characteristic of all these seems to be sordid greed (αἰσχροκέρδεια), since they all endure reproach for gain, and for a small gain. Those who make improper gains from improper sources on a great scale, for instance princes who sack cities and rob temples, are not termed mean, but rather wicked or impious or unjust. But the dicer and the foot-pad or brigand are to be classed as mean, as showing sordid greed (αἰσχροκερδεῖς), for both ply their trade and endure reproach for gain, the robber risking his life for plunder, and the dicer making gain out of his friends, to whom one ought to give; hence both are guilty of sordid greed (αἰσχροκερδεῖς), trying as they do to get gain from wrong sources.”
- Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1383b: “And making profit out of what is petty or disgraceful, or out of the weak, such as the indigent or dead; whence the proverb, “to rob even a corpse,” for this is due to base love of gain (αἰσχροκερδείας) and stinginess (ἀνελευθερίας).”

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