



## The Sophists

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It is not possible to understand the activities and teaching of the Sophists without some knowledge of the religious, political, and social conditions of the time. After long struggles between the people and the nobles, democracy had almost everywhere triumphed. But in Greece democracy did not mean what we now mean by that word. It did not mean representative institutions, government by the people through their elected deputies. Ancient Greece was never a single nation under a single government. Every city, almost every hamlet, was an independent State, governed only by its own laws. Some of these States were so small that they comprised merely a handful of citizens. All were so small that all the citizens could meet together in one place, and themselves in person enact the laws and transact public business. There was no necessity for representation. Consequently in Greece every citizen was himself a politician and a legislator. In these circumstances, partisan feeling ran to extravagant lengths. Men forgot the interests of the State in the interests of party, and this ended in men forgetting the interests of their party in their own interests. Greed, ambition, grabbing, selfishness, unrestricted egotism, unbridled avarice, became the dominant notes of the political life of the time.

Hand in hand with the rise of democracy went the decay of religion. Belief in the gods was almost everywhere discredited. This was partly due to the moral worthlessness of the Greek religion itself. Any action, however scandalous or disgraceful, could be justified by the examples of the gods themselves as related by the poets and mythologers of Greece. But, in greater measure, the collapse of religion was due to that advance of science and philosophy which we have been considering in these lectures. The universal tendency of that philosophy was to find natural causes for what had hitherto been ascribed to the action of the divine powers, and this could not but have an undermining effect upon popular belief. Nearly all the philosophers had been secretly, and many of them openly, antagonistic to the people's religion. The attack was begun by Xenophanes; Heracleitus carried it on; and lastly Democritus had attempted to explain belief in the gods as being caused by fear of gigantic terrestrial and astronomical phenomena. No educated man any longer believed in divination, auguries, and miracles. A wave of rationalism and scepticism passed over the Greek people. The age became one of negative, critical, and destructive thought. Democracy had undermined the old aristocratic institutions of the State, and science had undermined religious orthodoxy. With the downfall of these two pillars of things established, all else went too. All morality, all custom, all authority, all tradition, were criticised and rejected. What was regarded with awe and pious veneration by their fore-fathers the modern Greeks now looked upon as fit subjects for jest and mockery. Every restraint of custom, law, or morality, was resented as an unwarrantable restriction upon the natural impulses of man. What alone remained when these were thrust aside were the lust, avarice, and self-will of the individual.

The teaching of the Sophists was merely a translation into theoretical propositions of

these practical tendencies of the period. The Sophists were the children of their time, and the interpreters of their age. Their philosophical teachings were simply the crystallization of the impulses which governed the life of the people into abstract principles and maxims.

Who and what were the Sophists? In the first place, they were not a school of philosophers. They are not to be compared, for example, with the Pythagoreans or Eleatics. They had not, as a school has, any system of philosophy held in common by them all. None of them constructed systems of thought. They had in common only certain loose tendencies of thought. Nor were they, as we understand the members of a school to be, in any close personal association with one another. They were a professional class rather than a school, and as such they were scattered over Greece, and nourished among themselves the usual professional rivalries. They were professional teachers and educators. The rise of the Sophists was due to the growing demand for popular education, which was partly a genuine demand for light and knowledge, but was mostly a desire for such spurious learning as would lead to worldly, and especially political, success. The triumph of democracy had brought it about that political careers were now open to the masses who had hitherto been wholly shut out from them. Any man could rise to the highest positions in the State, if he were endowed with cleverness, ready speech, whereby to sway the passions of the mob, and a sufficient equipment in the way of education. Hence the demand arose for such an education as would enable the ordinary man to carve out a political career for himself. It was this demand which the Sophists undertook to satisfy. They wandered about Greece from place to place, they gave lectures, they took pupils, they entered into disputations. For these services they exacted large fees. They were the first in Greece to take fees for the teaching of wisdom. There was nothing disgraceful in this in itself, but it had never been customary. The wise men of Greece had never accepted any payment for their wisdom. Socrates, who never accepted any payment, } but gave his wisdom freely to all who sought it, somewhat proudly contrasted himself with the Sophists in this respect.

The Sophists were not, technically speaking, philosophers. They did not specialise in the problems of philosophy. Their tendencies were purely practical. They taught any subject whatever for the teaching of which there was a popular demand. For example, Protagoras undertook to impart to his pupils the principles of success as a politician or as a private citizen. Gorgias taught rhetoric and politics, Prodicus grammar and etymology, Hippias history, mathematics and physics. In consequence of this practical tendency of the Sophists we hear of no attempts among them to solve the problem of the origin of nature, or the character of the ultimate reality. The Sophists have been described as teachers of virtue, and the description is correct, provided that the word virtue is understood in its Greek sense, which did not restrict it to morality alone. For the Greeks, it meant the capacity of a person successfully to perform his functions in the State. Thus the virtue of a mechanic is to understand machinery, the virtue of a physician to cure the sick, the virtue of a horse trainer the ability to train horses. The Sophists undertook to train men to virtue in this sense, to make them successful citizens and members of the State.

But the most popular career for a Greek of ability at the time was the political, which offered the attraction of high positions in the State. And for this career what was above all necessary was eloquence, or if that were unattainable, at least ready speech, the ability to argue, to meet every point as it arose, if not with sound reasoning, then with quick repartee. Hence the Sophists very largely concentrated their energies upon the teaching of rhetoric. In itself this was good. They were the first to direct attention to the science of rhetoric, of which they may be considered the founders. But their rhetoric also had its bad side, which indeed, soon became its only side. The aims of the young politicians whom they trained were, not to seek out the truth

for its own sake, but merely to persuade the multitude of whatever they wished them to believe. Consequently the Sophists, like lawyers, not caring for the truth of the matter, undertook to provide a stock of arguments on any subject, or to prove any proposition. They boasted of their ability to make the worse appear the better reason, to prove that black is white. Some of them, like Gorgias, asserted that it was not necessary to have any knowledge of a subject to give satisfactory replies as regards it. And Gorgias ostentatiously undertook to answer any question on any subject instantly and without consideration. To attain these ends mere quibbling, and the scoring of verbal points, were employed. Hence our word "sophistry." The Sophists, in this way, endeavoured to entangle, entrap, and confuse their opponents, and even, if this were not possible, to beat them down by mere violence and noise. They sought also to dazzle by means of strange or flowery metaphors, by unusual figures of speech, by epigrams and paradoxes, and in general by being clever and smart, rather than earnest and truthful. When a man is young he is often dazzled by brilliance and cleverness, by paradox and epigram, but as he grows older he learns to discount these things and to care chiefly for the substance and truth of what is said. And the Greeks were a young people. They loved clever sayings. And this it is which accounts for the toleration which they extended even to the most patent absurdities of the Sophists. The modern question whether a man has ceased beating his wife is not more childish than many of the rhetorical devices of the Sophists, and is indeed characteristic of the methods of the more extravagant among them.

The earliest known Sophist is Protagoras. He was born at Abdera, about 480 B.C. He wandered up and down Greece, and settled for some time at Athens. At Athens, however, he was charged with impiety and atheism. This was on account of a book written by him on the subject of the gods, which began with the words, "As for the gods, I am unable to say whether they exist or whether they do not exist." The book was publicly burnt, and Protagoras had to fly from Athens. He fled to Sicily, but was drowned on the way about the year 410 B.C.

Protagoras was the author of the famous saying, "Man is the measure of all things; of what is, that it is; of what is not, that it is not." Now this saying puts in a nutshell, so to speak, the whole teaching of Protagoras. And, indeed, it contains in germ the entire thought of the Sophists. It is well, therefore, that we should fully understand exactly what it means. The earlier Greek philosophers had made a clear distinction between sense and thought, between perception and reason, and had believed that the truth is to be found, not by the senses, but by reason. The Eleatics had been the first to emphasize this distinction. The ultimate reality of things, they said, is pure Being, which is known only through reason; it is the senses which delude us with a show of becoming. Heraclitus had likewise affirmed that the truth, which was, for him, the law of becoming, is known by thought, and that it is the senses which delude us with a show of permanence. Even Democritus believed that true being, that is, material atoms, are so small that the senses cannot perceive them, and only reason is aware of their existence. Now the teaching of Protagoras really rests fundamentally upon the denying and confusing of this distinction. If we are to see this, we must first of all understand that reason is the universal, sensation the particular, element in man. In the first place, reason is communicable, sensation incommunicable. My sensations and feelings are personal to myself, and cannot be imparted to other people. For example, no one can communicate the sensation of redness to a colour-blind man, who has not already experienced it. But a thought, or rational idea, can be communicated to any rational being. Now suppose the question is whether the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal. We may approach the problem in two ways. We may appeal either to the senses or to reason. If we appeal to the senses, one man will come forward and say that to him the angles look equal. Another man will say that one angle looks bigger than the other, and so

on. But if, like Euclid, we appeal to reason, then it can be proved that the two angles are equal, and there is no room left for mere personal impressions, because reason is a law universally valid and binding upon all men. My sensations are private and peculiar to myself. They bind no one but myself. My impressions about the triangle are not a law to anyone except myself. But my reason I share with all other rational beings. It is not a law for me merely, but for all. It is one and the same reason in me and in other men. Reason, therefore, is the universal, sensation the particular, element in man. Now it is practically this distinction that Protagoras denied. Man, he said, is the measure of all things. By man he did not mean mankind at large. He meant the individual man. And by measure of all things he meant the standard of the truth of all things. Each individual man is the standard of what is true to himself. There is no truth except the sensations and impressions of each man. What seems true to me is true for me. What seems true to you is true for you.

We commonly distinguish between subjective impressions and objective truth. The words subjective and objective are constantly recurring throughout the history of philosophy, and as this is the first time I use them, I will explain them here. In every act of thought there must necessarily be two terms. I am now looking at this desk and thinking of this desk. There is the "I" which thinks, and there is the desk which is thought. "I" am the subject of the thought, the desk is the object of the thought. In general, the subject is that which thinks, and the object is that which is thought. Subjective is that which appertains to the subject, and objective is that which appertains to the object. So the meaning of the distinction between subjective impressions and the objective truth is clear. My personal impression may be that the earth is flat, but the objective truth is that the earth is round. Travelling through a desert, I may be subject to a mirage, and think that there is water in front of me. That is my subjective impression. The objective truth is that there is nothing but sand. The objective truth is something which has an existence of its own, independent of me. It does not matter what I think, or what you think, what I want, or what you want; the truth is what it is. We must conform ourselves to the truth. Truth will not conform itself to our personal inclinations, wishes, or impressions. The teaching of Protagoras practically amounted to a denial of this. What it meant was that there is no objective truth, no truth independent of the individual subject. Whatever seems to the individual true is true for that individual. Thus truth is identified with subjective sensations and impressions.

To deny the distinction between objective truth and subjective impression is the same as to deny the distinction between reason and sense. To my senses the earth seems flat. It looks flat to the eye. It is only through reason that I know the objective truth that the world is round. Reason, therefore, is the only possible standard of objective truth. If you deny the rational element its proper part, it follows that you will be left a helpless prey to diverse personal impressions. The impressions yielded by the senses differ in different people. One man sees a thing in one way, another sees it in another. If, therefore, what seems to me true is true for me, and what seems to you true is true for you, and if our impressions differ, it will follow that two contradictory propositions must both be true. Protagoras clearly understood this, and did not flinch from the conclusion. He taught that all opinions are true, that error is impossible, and that, whatever proposition is put forward, it is always possible to oppose to it a contradictory proposition with equally good arguments and with equal truth. In reality, the result of this procedure is to rob the distinction between truth and falsehood of all meaning. It makes no difference whether we say that all opinions are true, or whether we say that all are false. The words truth and falsehood, in such context, have no meaning. To say that whatever I feel is the truth for me means only that what I feel I feel. To call this "truth for me," adds nothing to the meaning.

Protagoras seems to have been led to these doctrines partly by observing the different

accounts of the same object which the sense-organs yield to different people, and even to the same person at different times. If knowledge depends upon these impressions, the truth about the object cannot be ascertained. He was also influenced by the teaching of Heraclitus. Heraclitus had taught that all permanence is illusion. Everything is a perpetual becoming; all things flow. What is at this moment, at the next moment is not. Even at one and the same moment, Heraclitus believed, a thing is and is not. If it is true to say that it is, it is equally true that it is not. And this is, in effect, the teaching of Protagoras.

The Protagorean philosophy thus amounts to a declaration that knowledge is impossible. If there is no objective truth, there cannot be any knowledge of it. The impossibility of knowledge is also the standpoint of Gorgias. The title of his book is characteristic of {117} the Sophistical love of paradox. It was called "On Nature, or the non-existent." In this book he attempted to prove three propositions, (1) that nothing exists: (2) that if anything exists, it cannot be known: (3) that if it can be known, the knowledge of it cannot be communicated.

For proof of the first proposition, "nothing exists," Gorgias attached himself to the school of the Eleatics, especially to Zeno. Zeno had taught that in all multiplicity and motion, that is to say, in all existence, there are irreconcilable contradictions. Zeno was in no sense a sceptic. He did not seek for contradictions in things for the sake of the contradictions, but in order to support the positive thesis of Parmenides, that only being is, and that becoming is not at all. Zeno, therefore, is to be regarded as a constructive, and not merely as a destructive, thinker. But it is obvious that by emphasizing only the negative element in his philosophy, it is possible to use his antinomies as powerful weapons in the cause of scepticism and nihilism. And it was in this way that Gorgias made use of the dialectic of Zeno. Since all existence is self-contradictory, it follows that nothing exists. He also made use of the famous argument of Parmenides regarding the origin of being. If anything is, said Gorgias, it must have had a beginning. Its being must have arisen either from being, or from not-being. If it arose from being, there is no beginning. If it arose from not-being, this is impossible, since something cannot arise out of nothing. Therefore nothing exists.

The second proposition of Gorgias, that if anything exists it cannot be known, is part and parcel of the whole Sophistic tendency of thought, which identifies knowledge with sense-perception, and ignores the rational element. Since sense-impressions differ in different people, and even in the same person, the object as it is in itself cannot be known. The third proposition follows from the same identification of knowledge with sensation, since sensation is what cannot be communicated.

The later Sophists went much further than Protagoras and Gorgias. It was their work to apply the teaching of Protagoras to the spheres of politics and morals. If there is no objective truth, and if what seems true to each individual is for him the truth, so also, there can be no objective moral code, and what seems right to each man is right for him. If we are to have anything worth calling morality, it is clear that it must be a law for all, and not merely a law for some. It must be valid for, and binding upon, all men. It must, therefore, be founded upon that which is universal in man, that is to say, his reason. To found it upon sense-impressions and feelings is to found it upon shifting quicksands. My feelings and sensations are binding upon no man but myself, and therefore a universally valid law cannot be founded upon them. Yet the Sophists identified morality with the feelings of the individual. Whatever I think right is right for me. Whatever you think right is right for you. Whatever each man, in his irrational self-will, chooses to do, that is, for him, legitimate. These conclusions were drawn by Polus, Thrasymachus, and Critias.

Now if there is, in this way, no such thing as objective right, it follows that the laws of the State can be founded upon nothing except force, custom, and convention. We often speak



of just laws, and good laws. But to speak in that way involves the existence of an objective standard of goodness and justice, with which we can compare the law, and see whether it agrees with that standard or not. To the Sophists, who denied any such standard, it was mere nonsense to speak of just and good laws. No law is in itself good or just, because there is no such thing as goodness or justice. Or if they used such a word as justice, they defined it as meaning the right of the stronger; or the right of the majority. Polus and Thrasymachus, consequently, drew the conclusion that the laws of the State were inventions of the weak, who were cunning enough, by means of this stratagem, to control the strong, and rob them of the natural fruits of their strength. The law of force is the only law which nature recognizes. If a man, therefore, is powerful enough to defy the law with impunity, he has a perfect right to do so. The Sophists were thus the first, but not the last, to preach the doctrine that might is right. And, in similar vein, Critias explained popular belief in the gods as the invention of some crafty statesman for controlling the mob through fear.

Now it is obvious that the whole tendency of this sophistical teaching is destructive and anti-social. It is destructive of religion, of morality, of the foundations of the State, and of all established institutions. And we can now see that the doctrines of the Sophists were, in fact, simply the crystallization into abstract thought of the practical tendencies of the age. The people in practice, the Sophists in theory, decried and trod under foot the restrictions of law, authority, and custom, leaving nothing but the deification of the individual in his crude self-will and egotism. It was in fact an age of "aufklärung," which means enlightenment or illumination. Such periods of illumination, it seems, recur periodically in the history of thought, and in the history of civilization. This is the first, but not the last, such period with which the history of philosophy deals. This is the Greek illumination. Such periods present certain characteristic features. They follow, as a rule, upon an era of constructive thought. In the present instance the Greek illumination followed closely upon the heels of the great development of science and philosophy from Thales to Anaxagoras. In such a constructive period the great thinkers bring to birth new principles, which, in the course of time, filter down to the masses of the people and cause popular, if shallow, science, and a wide-spread culture. Popular education becomes a feature of the time. The new ideas, fermenting among the people, break up old prejudices and established ideas, and thus thought, at first constructive, becomes, among the masses, destructive in character. Hence the popular thought, in a period of enlightenment, issues in denial, scepticism, and disbelief. It is merely negative in its activities and results. Authority, tradition, and custom are wholly or partially destroyed. And since authority, tradition, and custom are the cement of the social structure, there results a general dissolution of that structure into its component individuals. All emphasis is now laid on the individual. Thought becomes egocentric. Individualism is the dominant note. Extreme subjectivity is the principle of the age. All these features make their appearance in the Greek aufklärung. The Sophistical doctrine that the truth is what I think, the good what I choose to do, is the extreme application of the subjective and egocentric principles.

The early eighteenth century in England and France was likewise a period of enlightenment, and the era from which we are now, perhaps, just emerging, bears many of the characteristics of aufklärung. It is sceptical and destructive. All established institutions, marriage, the family, the state, the law, come in for much destructive criticism. It followed immediately upon the close of a great period of constructive thought, the scientific development of the nineteenth century. And lastly, the age has produced its own Protagorean philosophy, which it calls pragmatism. If pragmatism is not egocentric, it is at least anthropocentric. Truth is no longer thought of as an objective reality, to which mankind must conform. On the contrary, the truth must conform itself

to mankind. Whatever it is useful to believe, whatever belief “works” in practice, is declared to be true. But since what “works” in one age and country does not “work” in another, since what it is useful to believe to-day will be useless to-morrow, it follows that there is no objective truth independent of mankind at all. Truth is not now defined as dependent on the sensations of man, as it was with Protagoras, but as dependent on the volition of man. In either case it is not the universal in man, his reason, which is made the basis of truth and morals, but the subjective, individual, particular element in him.

We must not forget the many merits of the Sophists. Individually, they were often estimable men. Nothing is known against the character of Protagoras, and Prodicus was proverbial for his wisdom and the genuine probity and uprightness of his principles. Moreover the Sophists contributed much to the advance of learning. They were the first to direct attention to the study of words, sentences, style, prosody, and rhythm. They were the founders of the science of rhetoric. They spread education and culture far and wide in Greece, they gave a great impulse to the study of ethical ideas, which made possible the teaching of Socrates, and they stirred up a ferment of ideas without which the great period of Plato and Aristotle could never have seen the light. But, from the philosophical point of view, their merit is for the first time to have brought into general recognition *the right of the subject*. For there is, after all, much reason in these attacks made by the Sophists upon authority, upon established things, upon tradition, custom and dogma. Man, as a rational being, ought not to be tyrannized over by authority, dogma, and tradition. He cannot be subjected, thus violently, to the imposition of beliefs from an external source. No man has the right to say to me, “you *shall* think this,” or “you *shall* think that.” I, as a rational being, have the right to use my reason, and judge for myself. If a man would convince me, he must not appeal to force, but to reason. In doing so, he is not imposing his opinions externally upon me; he is educing his opinions from the internal sources of my own thought; he is showing me that his opinions are in reality my own opinions, if I only knew it. But the mistake of the Sophists was that, in thus recognizing the right of the subject, they wholly ignored and forgot *the right of the object*. For the truth has objective existence, and is what it is, whether I think it or not. Their mistake was that though they rightly saw that for truth and morality to be valid for me, they must be assented to by, and developed out of, me myself, not imposed from the outside, yet they laid the emphasis on my merely accidental and particular characteristics, my impulses, feelings, and sensations, and made these the source of truth and morality, instead of emphasizing as the source of truth and right the universal part of me, my reason. “Man is the measure of all things”; certainly, but man as a rational being, not man as a bundle of particular sensations, subjective impressions, impulses, irrational prejudices, self-will, mere eccentricities, oddities, foibles, and fancies.

Good examples of the right and wrong principles of the Sophists are to be found in modern Protestantism and modern democracy. Protestantism, it is often said, is founded upon the right of private judgment, and this is simply the right of the subject, the right of the individual to exercise his own reason. But if this is interpreted to mean that each individual is entitled to set up his mere whims and fancies as the law in religious matters, then we have the bad sort of Protestantism. Again, democracy is simply political protestantism, and democratic ideas are the direct offspring of the protestant Reformation. The democratic principle is that no rational being can be asked to obey a law to which his own reason has not assented. But the law must be founded upon reason, upon the universal in man. I, as an individual, as a mere ego, have no rights whatever. It is only as a rational being, as a potentially universal being, as a member of the commonwealth of reason, that I have any rights, that I can claim to legislate for myself and others. But if each individual’s capricious self-will, his mere whims and fancies, are erected

into a law, then democracy turns into anarchism and bolshevism.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the doctrines of the Sophists are merely antiquated ideas, dead and fossilized thoughts, of interest only to historians, but of no importance to us. On the contrary, modern popular thought positively reeks with the ideas and tendencies of the Sophists. It is often said that a man ought to have strong convictions, and some people even go so far as to say that it does not much matter what a man believes, so long as what he believes he believes strongly and firmly. Now certainly it is quite true that a man with strong convictions is more interesting than a man without any opinions. The former is at least a force in the world, while the latter is colourless and ineffectual. But to put exclusive emphasis on the mere fact of having convictions is wrong. After all, the final test of worth must be whether the man's convictions are true or false. There must be an objective standard of truth, and to forget this, to talk of the mere fact of having strong opinions as in itself a merit, is to fall into the error of the Sophists.

Another common saying is that everyone has a right to his own opinions. This is quite true, and it merely expresses the right of the subject to use his own reason. But it is sometimes interpreted in a different way. If a man holds a totally irrational opinion, and if every weapon is beaten out of his hands, if he is driven from every position he takes up--so that there is nothing left for him to do, except to admit that he is wrong, such a man will sometimes take refuge in the saying, that, after all, argue as you may, he has a right to his own opinion. But we cannot allow the claim. No man has a right to wrong opinions. There cannot be any right in wrong opinions. You have no right to an opinion unless it is founded upon that which is universal in man, his reason. You cannot claim this right on behalf of your subjective impressions, and irrational whims. To do so is to make the mistake of the Sophists.

The tendencies of the more shallow type of modern rationalism exhibit a similar Sophistical thought. It is pointed out that moral ideas vary very much in different countries and ages, that in Japan, for example, prostitution is condoned, and that in ancient Egypt incest was not condemned. Now it is important to know these facts. They should serve as a warning to us against dogmatic narrow-mindedness in moral matters. But some people draw from these facts the conclusion that there is no universally valid and objectively real moral law. The conclusion does not follow from the premises, and the conclusion is false. People's opinions differ, not only on moral questions, but upon every subject under the sun. Because men, a few hundred years ago, believed that the earth was flat, whereas now we believe it is round, it does not follow that it has in reality no shape at all, that there is no objective truth in the matter. And because men's opinions differ, in different ages and countries, as to what the true moral law is, it does not follow that there is no objective moral law.

We will take as our last example the current talk about the importance of developing one's personality. A man, it is said, should "be himself," and the expression of his own individuality must be his leading idea. Now certainly it is good to be oneself in the sense that it is hypocritical to pretend to be what one is not. Moreover, it is no doubt true that each man has certain special gifts, which he ought to develop, so that all, in their diverse ways, may contribute as much as possible to the spiritual and material wealth of the world. But this ideal of individuality often leads to false developments, as we see in the spheres of art and of education. Such a man as Oscar Wilde, whose personality is essentially evil, defends his artistic principles on the ground that he must needs express his personality, that art is nothing but such personal expression, and that it is subject to no standard save the individuality of the artist. Some writers on education, among them Mr. Bernard Shaw, who has many points in common with the Sophists, tell us that to attempt to mould the character of a child by discipline, is to sin against its personality, and that the child should be allowed to develop its individuality unchecked in its own way. But



against this we have to protest that to make the cultivation of individuality an end in itself, and to put exclusive emphasis on this, is wrong. The cultivation of an individuality is not in itself a good thing; it is not a good thing if the individuality be a worthless one. If a child exhibits savage or selfish tendencies, it must be subjected to discipline, and it is ridiculous to make a fetish of its personality to such an extent as to allow it to develop as it likes. In a similar way, the ideal of individuality is often interpreted to mean that the cultivation of the mere eccentricities and oddities of the individual is something good. But the personal peculiarities of a man are just what is worthless about him. That alone which entitles him to the sacred rights of a "person" is his rational and universal nature.

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