

such activities from our lives and identify the work in which we are seriously invested—the things we would still want to study even if we had already achieved the psychological portion of the power process.

These are the truly important pursuits, the “real goals” as opposed to surrogate goals, which we would chase no matter what our situation or present level of security. The existence of surrogate goals creates an artificial source of dissatisfaction that is stressful and unnecessary, yet continual and convincing. There is no reason why we need to define happiness in terms of the fulfillment of such arbitrary tasks. It is far more noble and productive to devote our energy to real goals rather than to run after those fleeting feelings of achievement that come with completing worthless activities. If we did what the Stoics proposed and accepted everything with indifference, we could avoid the kind of suffering that comes with failure or boredom, and hence no longer feel pressured to entertain the hamster wheel that is the power process. This is why even though many of Seneca’s basic theological claims are faulty, there is actually a great benefit to be found by following his mentality of indifference.

Kaczynski’s explanation of surrogate goals demonstrates that despite the flaws in Seneca’s treatment of Providence

and determinism, the Stoic approach to hardship in life is a dependable one, uncomplicated to follow and timeless in its applications. Even in the context of our modern society as shown above, it is true that the best way to react to difficult situations is to deliberately practice indifference and avoid entertaining our desires. There is no objective standard with which to measure success or accomplishment over a lifetime. Rather, the only accomplishment there is to be made is the realization that we do not actually need to accomplish or possess all those things we desire to feel fulfilled in the first place. The more people realize this, the more steps we can take towards living ultimately more fulfilling lives.

Notes

1. Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca: Essays and Letters*, trans. Moses Hadas (New York: Norton, 1958), 28.
2. *Ibid.*, 44.
3. “Industrial Society and Its Future,” *The Washington Post*, accessed January 15, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/unabomber/manifesto.text.htm>.

Can a Conscience Be a Guide as a Way to Obtain a Civil Society?

Jotham Koneri, El Paso, TX

Allow me to save you from the suspense that you may be going through right now. Because of the fact that a conscience is dishonest, unequal, and corruptible, a conscience (although popularly believed to be reliable) is not capable nor reliable enough to be a guide to a civil society. Let me explain . . .

All consciences may not all be the same, they may in fact be dishonest. A person’s conscience may in fact be telling a person to do something wrong. So what is a conscience’s motivation, why should it tell a person to do right, why doesn’t it tell a person to do wrong? There is no actual proof that a conscience is always right, because if it were, all people would have to do is listen to their internal or external voice that tells them what to do and where to go.

Another reason as to why a conscience is not reliable is that a conscience can be unequal. A conscience can in fact change its definition of right, by being influenced by different factors. This shows that (like a person) a conscience can be corrupted by society, family, friends, government, religion and success as well, making it change its position based off an act. As stated in the previous point, if a conscience is influenced by society it is only logical that two consciences from two different societies be different because they have

learned and matured differently in their thinking of what is right. Meaning that the phrase “always let your conscience be your guide” can result in two very different things in two very different societies.

My last point is that a conscience can be corrupted. A conscience triggers shame or guilt and sometimes both to signify that a recent action was a wrong. When people get this feeling they are taught to say “I’m sorry” as a way of righting the wrong doing. However what the conscience “forgets” to mention is that an action should follow this response to right the wrong. However now days people say “I’m sorry” but do not follow through on the action part. This has happened so much lately that sorry has become meaningless and valueless and has become a desensitized word. People treat the word sorry as a way of avoiding further punishment, taking away its actual meaning. “I’m sorry” is treated like an unlimited supply of “get out of trouble” free cards. Even a child will say I’m sorry as a way to simply get out of trouble; or another common phrase children use when they find out that they are in trouble is the phrase “But I said I was sorry.” Clearly showing that even today children believe that sorry

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is enough to right a wrong. Because the word sorry is used as a way to avoid punishment and not as an actual expression of remorse, this desensitized word has taken away from the credibility of the conscience making it corrupt.

In conclusion a conscience cannot work to obtain a civil society because it is dishonest, unequal, and corruptible.

People should not listen to their consciences, because your conscience may not be looking in your best interest. It may instead just be your subconscious telling you what to do, or it could simply be a rushed unreliable judgment.

An Appeal to Pardon Billy Budd

Cal Klyman, Areté Preparatory Academy, Los Angeles, CA

To The Commanding Officers of the *Bellipotent*—An Appeal to Pardon Billy Budd:

I am aware that a certain foretopman, Billy Budd, was found guilty for the murder of John Claggart, the master-at-arms aboard the *Bellipotent*. As a concerned citizen, I urge the jury to grant Billy Budd a full pardon of his offense, effective immediately. I wish for this outcome for two reasons. First, Budd deserves clemency from a moral perspective. Second, Budd merits clemency from a *legal* perspective as well. I will do my best to answer any objections you may have to my position throughout this letter, and I am certain that you will come around to my way of thinking by the time you are finished.

For my first argument, Budd morally deserves clemency, because Budd is undeserving of any of the three most rele-

vant reasons for punishment: retribution, deterrence, or societal protection. However, before I can properly address any of these forms of punishment, I must paint a picture of the moral characters of both Billy Budd and John Claggart. Billy Budd, by all accounts, is the living embodiment of goodness and innocence in this world. He is repeatedly described as such, being called “essentially good-natured” (331) and a “creature innocent before God” (361), for example. Conversely, Claggart is known as an embodiment of evil, considered the possessor of “the mania of an evil nature” (326) and “[powerless] to annul the evil element in him” (328). Knowing the natures of both Budd and Claggart will be necessary when discussing the basis for punishing Budd.

Now, I will demonstrate why Budd is deserving of clemency under each basis of punishment, starting with retri-