

Chapter 7 - Assignment 1: Heraclitus the Ethicist

1. Heraclitus had strong opinions about certain cardinal virtues.
(See pages 13—18 in Chapter 7.)
 - (i) Heraclitus had strong opinions about the cardinal virtue of wisdom (σοφία).
 - (a) According to Heraclitus, who was the wisest Greek of all?

 - (b) How did Heraclitus describe the difference between godly wisdom and human wisdom?

 - (ii) According to legend, the Delphic Maxims were words of wisdom that had been authored by the Seven Sages of Greece, and three of the Delphic Maxims were the entrance maxims. What were the three entrance maxims? (Note: If you don't remember them, see Chapter 4.)
 - _____.
 - _____.
 - _____.

 - (iii) According to Heraclitus, which one of those three entrance maxims promotes the cardinal virtue of temperance (σωφροσύνη)?

2. According to Heraclitus, character is fate. He said, “ἦθος ἀνθρώπων δαίμων.” The word “character” is being used to translate the word «ἦθος», which is the etymon of the English words “*ethos*” and “ethics”. Yet interestingly, the word “fate” is being used to translate the word «δαίμων», which usually translates as “deity” or “guardian spirit”, and it’s the etymon of the English words “*daemon*” and “demon”. The idea of translating «δαίμων» as “fate” (or “destiny”) has to do with the idea of a divine guide acting as a moral compass that should be followed as matter of habit (ἔθος). (See pages 14 in Chapter 7.)

(i) What is a moral compass?

(ii) What is a conscience?

(iii) What is the relationship between a moral compass and a conscience?

(iv) The word «εὐδαιμονία» (“*eudaemonia*”) comes from the words «εὖ» (“well”) and «δαίμων» (“*daemon*”). In your opinion, what does someone’s moral compass have to do with their happiness? Explain your answer.

3. According to Heraclitus, humans and God have very different understandings of what counts as justice (*δίκη*),

(i) The opposite of justice is injustice. (See page 16 in Chapter 7.)

(a) According to Heraclitus, does God believe that injustice exists in the world? Why or why not? Explain.

(b) According to Heraclitus, do humans *agree* with God about whether or not injustice exists? *Why* or *why not*? Explain.

(ii) According to Heraclitus, what are the two kinds of law (*νόμος*)? (See page 16 in Chapter 7.)

(iii) According to Heraclitus, one kind of law depends on the other kind of law. According to him, which depends on which? (See page 16 in Chapter 7.)