

Charmides

for Anupam.

*Tallyho – The Hunt for Virtue: Beauty, Truth and Goodness
Charmides*

“O Weib, vertraue auf mein Wort: Es kommt die Zeit, da ihr weder auf diesem Berge noch in Jerusalem dem Vater euren Dienst verrichten werdet. Eure Anbetung gilt einem Wesen, das sich eurem Bewußtsein entzieht. Unser gottesdienstliches Leben geht mit dem erkennenden Bewußtsein Hand in Hand. Deshalb mußte sich unter den Juden das wahre Heil der Menschheit vorbereiten. Einmal kommt eine Zeit, und die ist schon da, dann werden die wahren Gottesverehrer dem Vater mit der Kraft des Geistes und in der Erkenntnis der Wahrheit dienen. Und der Vater verlangt nach den Menschen, die ihm auf diese Weise dienen. Gott ist Geist, und die ihn anbeten, müssen es mit der Kraft des Geistes und in der Erkenntnis der Wahrheit tun.”

John IV – Emil Bock’s translation

O woman, have faith in my word: The time is drawing nigh when neither upon this mountain nor in Jerusalem – in no such a place shall your worship service for the Father be celebrated. Your prayers belong to an essence that is withdrawing from your consciousness. Our life service to the divine Will, this goes hand in hand with ego-consciousness that knows what it is doing. It is for this reason that the true salvation of mankind was prepared within the Jewish nation. There comes a time – and already it is at hand – when those who truly honor and serve the Father shall do so in the full power of the spirit and in knowledge of truth. And the Father is longing for such people, those who serve Him in this manner. God is spirit and those who offer up prayers unto Him have to do so in the spirit’s power, fully cognizant of truth.

Charmides – Sections:

1. *Socrates returns from battle and learns of the “new beauty” – Charmides, whom Socrates promises a cure for headache, one he learned from foreigners.* 153a
2. *Critias praises Charmides for his mindfulness, but Charmides notes the difficulty of claiming of himself that he would be mindful.* 157d
3. *Socrates begins his investigation into whether or not Charmides is mindful. Contradictions in being self-conscious and being quick to learn, etc.* 159a
4. *Mindfulness as shame. Mindfulness as “doing one’s own.”* 160d
5. *Critias takes over the defense of this proposition, that mindfulness is doing one’s own. The problem of being mindful without even knowing it yourself.* 162e
6. *Critias shifts to the thesis that ‘being mindful’ is the same as the Delphic oracle’s address: Know thyself: the dissimilarity between knowledge of knowledge and all other sorts of knowledge. Critias accuses Socrates of attacking him, not the argument.* 165b
7. *Mindfulness as knowledge of knowledge. Is this possible and, if so, is it advantageous. Problems of self-reference; Critias becomes perplexed.* 167a
8. *Socrates continues to push on with the investigation on the presumption that what has been maintained heretofore is true.* 169c
9. *The recognition that the knowledge of good and evil is superior to all other kinds of knowledge, even that of self-knowledge.* 172a
10. *Charmides doesn’t believe that Socrates is so inept as he claims and, together with Critias, insists upon continuing to meet together with Socrates.* 176a

Charmides

SOCRATES NARRATES

<1.~153a]

I had only just returned on the previous evening from the army encamped before Potidaea and, after having been away for such a long span of time, I was feeling really good now to be out walking and *en route* to one of the gymnasiums, my old hunting grounds. So it was that I arrived at the palaestra of Taureaus which stands across from the temple, Basile; and arriving there I met up with a gracious many – some, indeed, whom I didn't at all recognize, but being well acquainted with the majority. And as, then, they saw me walking in quite unexpectedly, so right off they called out their greetings to me from a distance: the one from here, another from over there. But Chaerephon, who's always so abrupt, he sprang up from his [b3] companions and ran right over to me, taking me by the hand and spoke: O Socrates, how is it that you have come back from the battle? Shortly before we rode off from there the fight began to rage about which everyone here has only just begun to hear tell. ~ I answered him: So, as you see. ~ At least, said he, a report has it that this battle would have been very fierce and that many notable men were left in the midst. ~ And very accurate, said I, is this report. ~ You too were there, weren't you? – he asked. ~ I was there. ~ But do come hither and take a seat here with us, that you tell us all about it as we've only heard rumors and nothing at all precise. ~ And with this he led me over to sit next to Critias, son of Callaeschrus. In taking my seat I gave greetings to Critias and to all of the others, and then I told them all about my stint in the army, answering whatever anyone asked me: the one would ask regarding this, another about something else. [d] As we finally had our fill of such topics, so I for my part inquired as to how matters might stand hereabouts in regard to *philosophia*, and also as regards the younger generation: Whether there might be any who stand out in their understanding or in beauty or both, whether any excelled since my lengthy absence? ~ Critias, whose eyes had been directed at the door through which a troupe of intrepid youngsters came, driving one another inside, and with yet an even [154a] larger group venturing in behind them – he spoke up: In regard to our newly hatched beauties, o Socrates, you shall, as it seems to me: you shall see for yourself soon enough. For even these who are entering in are his harbingers and, indeed, they all are enthralled in him, he who is held up as being the most beautiful of all, at least for now, and, certainly, he too must be nearby, on his way hither. ~ Who, I asked: who is he then? and of what family? ~ It's almost a

certitude that you're already acquainted, said he, but he wasn't yet amongst the youngsters before your departure – *Charmides*, my cousin, the son of my uncle, Glaucon. ~ Indeed, I do know him, [b] by Zeus, said I. Already back then he wasn't bad at all, although yet a child; but by now, I'd say, he must be a fully-grown young man. ~ Right away, said he – you shall see how big he's grown and how beautiful he's become. ~ And just as he said this Charmides also entered into the room. Now, as regards myself, friend, indeed it doesn't take a whole lot, for I am, when it comes to differentiating in beauty, like white chalk upon a white board: to me they all appear beautiful, anyone of this age. It follows: he also appeared to me as being totally worthy of wonder, both in his stature as well as for his beauty. But, then too, all of the others – it seemed to me that everyone had fallen for him, we all were taken aback by him and utterly befuddled as he entered. Likewise, he had many admirers amongst those following in after him. And that he would have made such an effect upon all of us older men, well *this* wasn't anything so astounding; singularly, though, I noted that also the exact same thing occurred amongst the other youngsters, that not a one of them was looking anywhere else! – not even the youngest amongst them, rather they all stared upon him as if he were a divine image. Then [154d] Chaerephon called out to me, saying: Now, Socrates, what's your impression of this youngster? Have you *ever* seen a prettier face? ~ Beyond all expectations, said I. ~ And yet, said he, if he were to remove his clothes, then you'd say that his face is nothing so through and through beautiful is his *Gestalt*. ~ And the others, too, they all said the same thing as Chaerephon. ~ *Heracles!* – I cried out, how irresistible is your description of this person, if only there be added a small bit. ~ And what's that? asked Critias. ~ If he, said I, also in his soul, that it also would be so well formed. And such wouldn't be in the least bit out of place, Critias, since he has been brought up in your home. ~ Also in this respect, said he, is he very beautiful and good. ~ But now, said I, why don't we disrobe him even in this: that we place his soul up for viewing rather than his body. For then, since he's come of age so there's no reason to exclude him from [155a] our conversation. ~ Most happily, said Critias. For he is very thoughtful and, then too, as some others and he too fancies it, quite the poet. ~ This fine trait, my dear Critias, said I, comes quite naturally into your family from long ago due to your ancestor, Solon. But what's holding you back from calling the young man over, that he might display himself? For even were it not the case that he's now full-grown, nonetheless there'd be nothing wrong in him partaking in our conversation in your presence as, then, you are his guardian

as well as being cousins. ~ Very well spoken, said he, and that's just what we want to do – and at once he commanded his servant: Go, call for Charmides and tell him that I'd like to introduce him to a physician on account of his ailment {Übels}, that about which he recently spoke to me that he was suffering. He complained to me just recently, Critias explained to us, that his head would be pounding terribly when he arose in the morning. And then, where's the harm in your pretending as if you might know some remedy that's good for headaches? ~ Nothing at all, said I, if only he comes. ~ He won't disappoint us, said Critias. ~ And indeed, he came rather promptly. But his arrival was a scene of great comedy. For then each one of us, as we were all sitting together along a bench, each shoved the next one over to make room for Charmides so that he might take his seat next to him, and thus the two poor souls sitting on the ends, well – the first one had to stand up *pronto*, but the other fell plump upon the floor. As now he had arrived, so he took his seat between Critias and me. And already right from the start, friend, I became totally disoriented and my former pluck disserted me – *as if I* should be immune to him and able to speak lightly about this or that. But after this initial shock, as Critias explained to him that I would be the one who would know the cure, and then he turned toward me – I can't at all describe his expression and his eyes, and how he began to ask me, and all the while everyone in the Palaestra was converging around us, then, o dear God, somehow I caught a glimpse beneath his loose garments and I became enflamed, decimated and drawn out of myself – rather reflecting on Kydias, he who is so wise in respect to love and who painted poetic pictures regarding the lure of youth's beauty: *May some god help the fawn who wanders beneath the lion's gaze, that she not be devoured forthwith and rent asunder!* For I myself fancied to be torn into shreds, captured in the jaws of such a beast. All the same, as it was me whom he was questioning: Whether I might know of some remedy against headache? – so I, but only by the greatest exertion possible, I just managed in such an extremity to supply the answer: I know it. ~ What, then, he inquired of me, what is it? ~ To this I replied: Actually, it would be a leaf, but then there's also a word charm that belongs together with it: if one speaks the charm simultaneously with the application of the leaf, so this cure makes one totally healthy, through and through. But without the charm the leaf does nothing at all. ~ So then I shall, spoke [156a] he, write down this charm of yours. ~ Even though I haven't been persuaded to tell it to you? – I asked him – or only if I have? ~ Laughing at my question he replied: Indeed, Socrates, only once you've been persuaded. ~ How nice, said I: you also know my name?

~ That would be really bad, said he, not to know your name since we youngsters are always talking about you; and I also still remember you from when I was yet a child and you came to pay a visit with Critias here. ~ It's very good of you, said I, that you do so. This also sparks my courage, that I am able to speak openly to you about this *mantra* – how it is constituted. For earlier on I admit, I was [b] somewhat at a loss, in what manner should I clarify its power. It is, namely, o Charmides, of this sort: that not only does it promote health for one's head, rather too – as you perhaps have already heard from good physicians: if, say, someone comes to them complaining of some malaise with his eyes, that they might say: It wouldn't be possible to undertake a cure merely for the eyes alone, rather they also would have to undertake measures for one's head too if the proper functioning of the eyes is to be restored. And, then too, to believe that one might undertake to cure the head without simultaneously curing the entire body, this would be the greatest of follies. Accordingly, they now turn themselves and write up their prescriptions for the entire body, thus, both handling and healing the part right along with the whole. Or, haven't you taken any notice that this is how any decent physician speaks: that just this is the proper correlation. ~ Indeed, said he. ~ And would you fancy this as being well spoken and right? and do you accept this speech as stated? ~ Above everything else, said he. ~ Now I, since I heard him agreeing so readily to everything that I had said, so my courage was gaining ground and, little by little, my audacity returned as my powers grew. And so, I spoke: Even in this manner, now, o Charmides, the [156d] same thing applies with this maxim. But I've learned this out in the field from one of the physicians working amongst the Thracians from Zalmoxis – about whom, incidentally, it has also been said that they bestow immortality. Now, this Thracian spoke thus regarding what I said previously, that *in this* the Hellenic physicians are entirely right; but Zalmoxis our King, said he, He who is a God says: Just so as one wouldn't undertake healing the eyes unless the head also would be included, nor the head apart from the entire body, so too: not the body in exclusion from the soul; rather even this is the root cause why the Hellenic physicians are yet primitives in respect to their handling of the larger number of diseases, because, namely, they misconstrue the whole toward which their care should be directed and, then, due to this greater evil it's not possible that any of the other parts might truly be healthy. For then everything, said he, would spring forth from out of the soul – goodness and malignancy into the body and the entirety of man: it streams into him from out of the soul regions just as the eyes appear from out of the head. The former, then, would [a]

have to be attended to first of all and, indeed, with the utmost care if one should expect any improvement in relation to the head or to the body in its entirety. But the soul, my good man, said he, is to be taken care of by means of certain incantations, and these incantations would be the beautiful speeches. For it is through such speeches that mindfulness comes to be within the soul; and once this has been implanted and exists within, then matters become easy that one brings about health within the head and all of the rest of the body. As, thus, he was teaching me about his methods and the various incantations, he said that nobody should ever talk me into treating them – neither head nor toe – with his sort of medicine unless first off they have allowed an examination of their soul and only then, after the application of incantations for their soul, then only would I be allowed to proceed to heal with the other incantations. For even now, said he, this is the mistake for which mankind tends to fall: that they take on only one of these two sorts of doctoring totally cut off from the other. And with great severity did he command me forthwith that nobody at all, no matter how rich or admirable or beautiful he might be, from no one should I allow myself to be persuaded that I might do any other. Now, I gave him my oath, and, necessarily, I have to keep it, no matter what. And as for you – if you'd want that first off you deliver over to me your soul in accordance to this stranger's principles, that his incantations might be applied to it, so too, then, I shall also apply his methods upon your head. But if not, my dear Charmides, I really don't have a clue as to what I might do for you. ~

<2.~157d]

As now Critias heard me say this, so he spoke up saying: A good find, o Socrates, that's what these headaches would be for the young man if thereby it would be required that he improve his soul so that the state of his head might likewise be improved. Howsoever, I assure you that it's not only through his *Gestalt* that Charmides appears to stand out from all his schoolmates, rather too in even that element for which you claim the first incantation applies; but you claimed that it's for mindfulness? – isn't this true? ~ Just so, said I. ~ Well then you should know, said he, that he's considered as being the most prudent person by far amongst all of our youngsters – just as in regard to everything else, in as much as his age allows it, *he* doesn't play second fiddle to anyone! ~ *Indeed*, said I; and such is only to be expected, o Charmides, that you would stand out above all the rest in such things as these. For I don't believe that anyone here amongst us would easily be able to come up with an intersection in two family lines that would be the equal in its sparkling reputation and out of which a better and more noble offspring would be expected – as the

two are from which you draw your heritage. For the nobility on your father's side which, indeed, overlaps with that of Critias here, son of Dropidies, is praised as being particularly elevated containing, as it does, the *odes* composed by Anakreon as well as being directly related to Solon and his works, and many other fine poets and authors – due, I say, to the beauty and virtuousness found here, not to mention [a] everything else which tends to be calculated into one's happiness and well-being {*Glückseligkeit*}; and your mother's side is quite the same. For there's none who surpasses your Uncle Pylampes in beauty and noble stateliness – at least none whose feet tread upon *terra firma* – so that it's no surprise that he's been sent out as our Ambassador to the Great King or to wherever else royal matters are discussed. And so, the whole estate doesn't show any deficiencies, nowhere at all, and stands out above all others. Now, having sprung up out of such stock, well it's no surprise that you rank as first in everything. What strikes one right off in seeing your *Gestalt* is that from this aspect, well, obviously there's no possibility that you might bring shame upon any of your ancestors; but if it would also be so in relation to mindfulness and all of the rest of it about which Critias here just spoke, praising your upbringing and education – so then, it must be said, my dear Charmides, said I, that your mother was blessed, indeed, on the day that she delivered you. So, this being how matters stand, if mindfulness, as Critias says, suits your character so well and you are fully adept in your prudence, well then you are no longer in need of such incantations, whether they might stem from Zalmoxis or from Abaris, the Hyperborean, rather already right from the start the prescriptions for headache themselves might be delivered over to you. If you would fancy, though, that there still may be something lacking in this, so you would have to allow that the former incantations be given first, before using the cure given for headache. And so, tell me yourself whether you are in agreement with Critias' assertions and you make the claim to have a sufficiency in mindfulness, or whether there still may be some deficiency. ~ At this point Charmides blushed – and therewith our eyes beheld a beauty even more resplendent than previously! for shame at this age in life wears well. But hereafter he answered my question in a way lacking nothing in nobility. He said, namely: It wouldn't be an easy thing, so at the moment, that he might either deny or affirm what was being asked of him. For then, said he, [158d] if he would deny it, to be mindful, so in part this goes against one's own sensibilities⁸⁹ and, in part too, doing so would drag Critias into

⁸⁹ Cf. *Protagoras* 323bc (p. 124) – “otherwise he would be crazy not to subscribe to the principles of justice..”

[a state of] untruthfulness – and yet others as well who likewise vouchsafe me that I am prudent, just as Critias said. But then, should I make such a claim and, thus, bestow such praise upon myself, so doing this is a very good way to make the others all hate me. So that, I don't at all know what I should say in answer to your query. ~ To this I responded: It seems to me that your point is well taken, Charmides, and therefore I'd fancy that we might conduct an investigation together: whether or not you possess that about which I inquired so that neither will you be forced into saying what you don't want to say, nor will I proceed to make you healthy without the considerations that are due. If this is all right by you, so let's proceed on to the investigation; but if not let's just leave things be. ~ By all means, said he, this is all right by me – therefore do proceed with the investigation however you opine to be able to get the firmest grasp upon it. ~ In the following manner, said I, thus I fancy will we best be enabled to make rapid progress with our investigation. <3.~159a]

It is obvious, namely, that if mindfulness subsists within you, so too you'd have to know something to speak out about it. For it is necessary that its subsistence – if it does subsist within you – this brings forth a sensation upon the grounds of which, then, some notions of mindfulness arise: what it is and in what substantiated.⁹⁰ Or, do you opine it's not so? ~ No, the former is what I opine, said he. ~ And it's this, I continued on, that which you opine – since you are able to speak fluent Greek – indeed: you have to know to speak it. ~ Perhaps, said he. ~ So that, now, we shall be able to make a judgment, whether or not mindfulness does subsist within you. And so tell me, said I: What do you maintain that mindfulness is in accord to your notions? ~ At the beginning, now, he appeared to be lost in thought and he didn't want to answer this question properly; but after awhile he did, indeed, provide me with an answer: he fancied that mindfulness is this: If one does everything ethically and with forethought, whether it be walking along the street or talking, and everything else, just so. And I fancy it so, said he, principally it's a certain thoughtfulness: such is *the being* of that about which you asked. ~ Is that also, said I, a good clarification? Indeed, Charmides, they say this about those having forethought: that they are mindful. Thus, let's look into this, whether they are saying something [c] with this. Tell me, then, doesn't mindfulness belong amongst the beautiful? ~ Aye, indeed, said he. ~ Which of these, now, is more

⁹⁰ “*worin sie besteht*” – *bestehen* is generally translated as “to endure” (as opposed to things that change) – see e.g.: *Parmenides* 139b (p. 221).

beauteous when your language teacher gives you lessons – to write out the letters quickly or self-consciously, assuming they come out just as well? ~ Quickly. ~ And in reading – quickly or slowly? ~ Quickly. ~ And playing on the lyre, quick is good too; and thus also when ringing the bells, doing so with alacrity is much better than thoughtfully and slowly? ~ Yes. ~ And how about in boxing and wrestling, isn't it even so? ~ Quite. ~ And in running and jumping and all of the other activities of the body, isn't quickness and alacrity also more beauteous, but that which happens slowly and arduously and self-consciously, wouldn't these be worse? ~ That's how it [d] looks. ~ It has been shown, then, said I, that as far as the body is concerned, it's not what is done with the greatest amount of forethought, rather that which is done the fastest and with great alacrity, this is the most beauteous. Isn't it true? ~ Indeed. ~ But mindfulness was to be something of beauty? ~ Yes. ~ Thus it would be, at least in respect to the body, not self-conscious behavior that's mindful, rather what's fast – if, indeed, mindfulness is something beautiful. ~ That's how it looks, said he. ~ But how now, [159e] I continued right along, is erudition or illiteracy more beautiful? ~ Erudition. ~ But this is substantiated, said I, such intelligence, in that one reads and learns things quickly, but then the illiterate are slow learners and tend to be all too self-conscious. ~ Yes. ~ And teaching someone else, isn't this more beauteous if it's done quickly and powerfully rather than self-consciously and at a slow pace? ~ Indeed, very much so. ~ And how? – grasping something in your mind and facility in remembering whatever it may be, would this be more beautiful with forethought and slowly, or rapidly and with ease? ~ Rapidly and easily. ~ And presence of mind, isn't this an alacrity in the soul, but not a slowness? ~ Right. ~ But also grasping what your language teachers or your music teachers teach, and everything else, 'what and where ever it ever may be' {überhaupt}, all of this doesn't happen most beauteously if it's done with the greatest self-consciousness, rather when it's done as quickly as possible? ~ Yes. ~ But certainly too, if you're focused upon an investigation regarding the soul or getting serious advice about this or that, then too it's not the most self-conscious, I think, and he who only with exertion in giving his counsel and finding out something or other – it's [160b] not, I say, this one who is most respected and worthy of praise, but rather the one who does this easily and quickly. ~ So it is, said he. ~ In all things, thus, said I, Charmides, as well as that which effects the body as also the soul, it appears to us that that which shows itself with power and speed – *this* would be the more beauteous. ~ That's the way things have turned out, said he. ~ Therefore mindfulness would

not be self-consciousness, and the mindful life not overly pensive – in accord, namely, with this speech, since the mindful should be the more beautiful. For one out of these two, either not at all or else only in a very few instances, have we found that self-conscious activities in life would be more beautiful than those which are done quickly and with alacrity and power. And now, if also – my dear Charmides – to sum up: not less thoughtful activities are the more beautiful than fast, spirited and plucky ones, so too it wouldn't be, indeed, that self-conscious activities are more mindful than those that are quick and rapid: neither in walking, nor reading, and, likewise, everywhere else: nowhere would the self-conscious life somehow be more mindful than the un-self-conscious one since we made it our stipulation for this clarification that mindfulness belongs to the beautiful, and now the fast has shown itself as not being any less beautiful than that which is done slowly and self-consciously. ~ That's right, Socrates, said he, I fancy that your point is well taken. ~ <4.~160d2]

Thus once again, Charmides, said I, and with greater precision take note as you look within yourself and observe to what end does the mindfulness subsisting *{einwohnende}* within you direct you, and what must it well be that it makes you to that, that toward which it is directing. – And taking all of this together tell us straight-out and boldly: what does mindfulness appear to you to be. ~ At this he collected himself, and after valiant *{wacker}* considerations he said: Well, I'd fancy that mindfulness makes for shame, and that it bestows shame upon mankind – and that, therefore, mindfulness is what shame is. ~ Very well, said I. Didn't you admit awhile back that mindfulness would be something beautiful? ~ Indeed, said he. ~ Thus, mindful people are also good? ~ Yes. ~ Is it possible for something to be good that wouldn't promote goodness? ~ No, that's not well probable. ~ Not only, then, is mindfulness something beautiful, rather also something good? ~ So I'd fancy it. ~ How now, said I, don't you believe that Homer was right when he said: *For a man with dire needs, shame is not good* –? ~ Well yes, I do, said he. ~ Thus, as it seems: shame is good and also not good? ~ It appears so. ~ But mindfulness is good since it makes those who subsist within it become good, not bad. ~ That's totally certain, I'd fancy that it would be just as you now say. ~ Thus, mindfulness wouldn't be shame if everyone has a propensity toward goodness; but shame tends no more to goodness than it does toward badness. ~ It seems to me, Socrates, that what you say is totally right. But take a look at the following, how you'd fancy this about mindfulness.

[161b]

Namely, I'm just remembering what I've already heard someone say: Mindfulness would be if each does his own *{das Seinige tue}*. Reflect upon this and whether for you he's to be fancied as having clarified it properly, he who said this. ~ My, aren't you the sly one – you've heard this from Critias or from some other sage. ~ It would well have to be from someone other, said Critias – for, at least, it's not from me. ~ But Socrates, Charmides spoke up again: what [c2] difference does it make from whom it may be that I heard it? ~ None at all, said I. For whatever the goal it's never that pertinent to know who said what, rather *only* whether if what was said is right or not right. ~ Now you're speaking fittingly, said he, putting things just where they belong. ~ By Zeus, said I, but whether also we only shall find out what it is that actually was meant? – *I should be amazed* – for it has every appearance of being a riddle. ~ But indeed, how so? he asked. ~ Because, indeed, he who said it certainly didn't mean it so, just as the words ring out: Mindfulness would be this, that each does his own. Or do you believe that your language teacher wouldn't be doing anything if he were to be reading or writing? ~ I, said he, do believe that he is. ~ Now, do you opine that this language teacher is always only reading and writing his own name, and that this would be how he goes about teaching all you children? Or wouldn't you read and write about the names of your enemies not any less than you do of your own and of those who are your friends? ~ None the less. ~ Yet, you wouldn't be “doing your own” – if, then, reading and writing are what you are doing. ~ That's certainly true. ~ And healing, dear friend, and building and weaving and whatever profession it ever may be – that you'd want to accomplish this or that artistically,⁹¹ all of this, indeed, would be a “doing”? ~ Quite. ~ But how now, said I, do you think that any law such as this that commands: Each and every should weave his or her own clothes, and do their own laundry and washing, and cobble their own shoes, *und mit Ölschläuchen und Kratzeisen*⁹² and everything else having the same correlation, [162a] namely having *nothing to do with what's foreign*, never touching it; rather each makes his own and accomplishes things only for himself? ~ I wouldn't fancy that, no, not at all. ~ But still, such regulations are mindful, and ruling mindfully is good? ~ How else? said he. ~ Thus, it cannot be that things performed in this manner, that each does his own, this isn't the mindfulness that he had in mind? ~

⁹¹ See *Gorgias* – footnote #132 (p. 259).

⁹² “and slathering on the oil and, then, scraping it off ...” – cf. *Protagoras*, footnote #81 (p. 136); another example of the interconnectedness of Plato's dialogues.

Obviously not. ~ Hence, he was speaking in riddles, as it seems, and as I already said this once, he who says: Doing one's own would be mindfulness? For so naïve, indeed, no one is so simple-minded? Or, was the person you heard saying this so asinine, Charmides? ~ *That* in no way, said he. Much more I'd fancy him as being exceptionally wise. ~ Then it's totally certain, as I'd fancy it, that he just threw this out like a riddle – since, namely, it is so difficult to know what this should be called: *to do one's own*. Are you able to tell me? ~ By Zeus, said he, I don't know... but what's stopping us, then, from assuming that he himself, he who said this, that he also didn't know what he was thinking? ~ And as he was saying this he broke out in a smile and looked toward Critias. But already it was plainly obvious to see by Critias' expression how painful the foregoing had been for him, and how glad he would have been to display himself before Charmides and all of those who were present {*den Anwesenden*}, and how before it had only been through forceful effort that he had managed to hold himself high and dry from the fray, but now, he couldn't keep it up any longer. For this reason I believe that it actually was so, as I had suspected at first, that Charmides had heard this answer regarding mindfulness from Critias. Now, as for Charmides, it was obvious that he wasn't particularly thrilled about defending this answer, but rather that Critias should do so, and he indicated as much and provoked him: that otherwise this, *his* answer, would be considered refuted. But Critias, now, couldn't remain aloof any longer, rather he seemed quite upset at Charmides, just like the poet can't stand by and see his poem poorly enunciated: *O' it offends me to the soul to see a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passage to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise* – and so, he looked right back at him and said: So do you mean this, Charmides? – just because *you* don't know what this person was thinking, he who said: Mindfulness would be if everyone does his own, that therefore he himself also wouldn't know?

<5.~162d3]

~ But I spoke up, best of men, that is nothing to marvel over, that Charmides doesn't know this, seeing how young he is; but one might well believe that you, at your age and having pondered over matters like these in your indagations, you do know. Thus, if you are [e] going to accept this, that this would be mindfulness, what he [our unnamed author] says, and you want to take over the defense of this proposition, so it's only so much the more in accord with my passion that I investigate into this together with you: whether what was said is true or not true. ~ Indeed, said he, I accept that and take this on.

~ Admirably done, said I. And so tell me whether that, what I even was asking earlier, whether you also admit as much, that all of the craftsmen, those who work with their hands, are they making something? ~ I do, certainly. ~ And do you opine that they are only making their own, or likewise that they are making things for others? ~ Also for their others. ~ Thus, people are mindful who, indeed, are not only making their own? ~ What's there to hinder it? – said he. ~ Nothing for me, said I; but take a look as to whether there may be a hindrance for him, he who has taken on the proposition: Mindfulness is to do your own – if hereafter he also says that there'd be no hindrance that also these who do [things] for their others, these also are quite able to be mindful. ~ Have I, then, said he, admitted as much, that those who are doing something for others are mindful? or haven't I only given in that they make things? ~ But do tell [163b] me, said I, isn't this for you the same: to do and to make? ~ In no manner, indeed – nor also to execute and to make. This, namely, I have learned from Hesiod, he who said: *No execution is shameful*. Do you then believe he would have made this assertion if he would have named *these* as being executions? and that to execute and to do were to be what you have put forth – that it wouldn't be shameful to be a mere shoemaker, or to be out on the street peddling one's wares and haggling about the price and, indeed, for those prostituting themselves, the price of themselves! One's not at all permitted to believe *this* – Socrates! – rather he too, I believe, holds making to be something other than executing and doing, and that from time to time making something might well be shameful, if the beautiful is not contained within, but no execution would ever be shameful. For only that which in its making is beautiful and useful, only such did he name works, and only such making executions and acts. And one would have to assert, only the like as these would he have held as being fitting for each one of us, that such belongs here; but everything that does damage wouldn't belong. So that one would have to believe that Hesiod and everyone else who only is reasonable considers him, he who does his own, as being mindful. ~ O Critias, said I, right [d] off from the start of your clarification I understood pretty much whither you were headed: what it is that you would understand beneath the words of “belonging for each of us” and “his good”; and then underneath the activities, what those who are good would make. For I have heard the likes a thousand times from Prodicus, how he differentiates amongst words. And I am nothing but glad to allow you all of this, to take each word as you want – if only you tell me that to which each word is connected, that is, for the words doing you service. Thus, determine now once again from the beginning onward

more clearly whether it's to be the act or the execution, or what have you, however you'd want to name it in respect to the good: whether this is that which you are naming mindfulness? ~ I'll do so, said he. ~ Hence, he is not mindful, he who does evil; rather [only] he who does good? ~ And you, best of men, said he, *wouldn't* fancy it so? ~ Indeed I may, I answered. For then, we're not investigating what it is that I think, rather just what you, now, have said. ~ I for my part, ever constant, said he, would deny that he who doesn't make good but evil – that he is mindful. For then, that doing good is mindfulness, this is a determination for you that is totally clear. ~ Perhaps [164a] there's no hindrance that you are in the right about this, said I; at the same time, though, this causes me to wonder: if you believe that it is possible for mindful people also not to know that they are mindful. ~ But I don't believe that either, said he. ~ Didn't you say a bit earlier, said I, that there wouldn't be anything standing in the way that artists and professionals, also when they are making things for others, they still are capable of being mindful? ~ That was said, said he; but what's the problem with this? ~ Nothing. But tell me this, would you fancy that a physician, in that he is making someone to be healthy – that he'd be making something useful for himself as well as for the other, the one whom he is healing? ~ I'd fancy that he is. ~ And he does, indeed, do what belongs to him and to his profession, he who does this? ~ Yes. ~ And he who does what is fitting, isn't he mindful? ~ You're not just whistling Dixie, he is mindful. ~ But does every physician necessarily have to know when his actions shall be useful in his work and when not? ~ Well, perhaps not. ~ Hence, from time to time, said I, in that he is acting usefully or with harm, so the doctor himself doesn't know how he is acting but, all the [c] same if he acts in a useful way – in accord with your speech – so he has acted in a mindful manner. Or, would you say it's not so? ~ Quite. ~ Hence, from time to time he indeed acts mindfully, in that his actions are useful, and so he is mindful – but doesn't even know it himself, that he is acting mindfully. ~ But this, o Socrates, said he, indeed this cannot be, there's no way at all; rather if you opine that something from that which I asserted earlier necessarily leads one to this, well then, I'd rather take something back from what I said earlier and I'll not be ashamed about admitting it, that I expressed myself a bit shy of what's right rather than that I should have to admit this, that anyone at all would be incapable of knowing it himself, that he is mindful.⁹³ Much more I would like to move in the direction of saying that even this would be what mindfulness is: that one is cognizant of

⁹³ Note – this is where things began with Charmides hedging on saying the same.

oneself {*das Sich selbst kennen*}, and that I whole-heartedly voice my approval for him, he who placed this aphorism up in Delphi. For this, it seems to me, is the sense of this dictum that was put there – as an address of the God upon anyone entering, instead of the [164e] *Be glad* – as if, namely, this wish to be glad wouldn't be quite right and that we wouldn't have to somehow find the courage to this, but rather that we be mindful. In this manner, thus, god greets those who are entering into his temple entirely different than mankind – in accord with the opinion of those who sanctified this tablet, at least as I'd fancy it, and speaks to each and every who enters in nothing other than *Be mindful* bespeaks, so he addresses one. Somewhat, indeed, as a riddle uttered by a soothsayer does he express himself. Thus the oracle – *Man, know thyself*, and *Be mindful* – these are quite the [a] same, as the former aphorism asserts and I also assert this; but it may easily be believed by many that the two would be different, and I'd fancy that this is what has occurred to those, the ones who have placed the following dictums there: *Everything in moderation* and *He who offers a pledge, he's halfway to perdition*. For then, these were of the belief that the *Know thyself* also would be good counsel, a piece of advice, but not the greeting of the god for those entering in – and, so, that they too might set up healing counsels that wouldn't be any less beneficial, that's why these were written down and placed alongside the others. But why it is, now, that I have said all of this, o Socrates, I shall tell you. <6.~165b]

All of the above you may consider a present, from me to you. For perhaps you said a few things earlier that were more right, perhaps too, I did; but nothing at all was precisely determined as being right in all of it, what was spoken. But now I am willing to stand up for my speech – if it should be that you don't accept this: that mindfulness would be self-recognition, *das sich selbst kennen*. ~ But Critias, said I, you are dealing with me now as if it were I who had asserted to know it, that about which I am questioning, and as if I would be able, if only I wanted, to determine this like you have. But that's not the proper correlation, rather I'm only just entering into the search for it with you – that which we have taken on – because even I myself do not know. Thus, once I've investigated into this, then and then only do I well want to say as to whether I accept your answer or not. But please have some patience with me until I have investigated. ~ So, said he, then make your investigation. ~ I'm already underway, said I. If, then, mindfulness consists in and is substantiated in this, that one recognizes something, so, obviously, it is a cognition? and a cognition of something. Or, not? ~ Indeed, mindfulness is this as

well, said he, namely, of itself. ~ And isn't medicine or the art of healing, said I, isn't it cognizant of something? namely of that which is healthy? ~ Quite. ~ If, now, you were to question me, said I, the art of healing as the recognition of all of that which is healthy, to what purpose is this useful and how does it achieve its effect⁹⁴ upon us, so I would answer you: It's no small advantage, health namely – an utterly beautiful work is the effect she has upon us – if, then, [165d] you are willing to accept this answer. ~ I do accept it. ~ And if you were to question me further as regards the art of construction, as the cognitions needed to make buildings: Essentially what do I assert that it is? and what effects does construction have? – so I would say: Dwellings, places to live. And so too with all of the other arts and professions. And, even so, something like this, now, you also have to know about mindfulness, since you have asserted that it would be a knowledge of itself. If you shall be queried: Critias, mindfulness as self-recognition – essentially what, then, is the beautiful and, in accord with its name, worthy effect which it produces as its work for us? So come now and tell me. ~ But Socrates, said he, you are not investigating this in the right manner. For this knowledge, in accordance with its nature, is dissimilar to all of the others; as also the others, too, show differences amongst themselves. But then, you are conducting your investigation as if they would all be similar, each one to the others. For you tell me, he said, with mathematics or geometry, the art of measuring distances – where is there such a work just as the house is the end product of construction, or a dress being the work completed as a result of the art of weaving, or other works that are like these of which there is no end to the examples that [a] could be given. Do you have, perhaps, also from these such a work, that you might show it to me? Certainly, you don't. ~ To this I responded, you are quite right. But I am able to show you “of what” each of these cognitions is cognitive – something that, again, is different from the cognition itself. So mathematics is the cognition of the even and the odd, how these relate amongst themselves and one to the other, in every collection, big or small. Isn't it true? ~ Indeed. ~ And are not the even and the odd themselves something different from mathematics itself? ~ How else? how shouldn't they be different? ~ And physics has to do with the heavy and the light in terms of weight and mass; but heavy and light are themselves different from physics itself? Do you admit as much? ~ Oh, yes. ~ Thus tell me also: of what, then, is mindfulness the cognition – something that is other than mindfulness itself. ~ But that's even the

⁹⁴ “was bewirkt sie uns” – wirken und leiden, cf: footnote #52, (p. 31).

crux of this matter, Socrates, said he; now you are right on the trail and have the spoor of that wherein mindfulness itself differs from all of the other cognitions; but you are searching for some similarity [c] to all of the others. But that's not the way it is, rather all of the others are cognitions of an other; but only mindfulness, it alone is as well the cognition of the other cognitions as also that of itself. Also there is a good deal lacking that this should have escaped you. But I'm beginning to believe, that which earlier on you denied, that you would do such a thing, indeed, *this is* what you are doing – namely your prime interest is in contradicting me and you are not particularly concerned about that about which we are speaking. ~ Don't make a stew, said I, that you'd think, even if I actually do refute you, [166d] that I'd do so for the sake of some other cause than the one for which I'd also cross-examine myself, just the same – whether I'd well be saying something that's right – out of my earnest concern, namely, that unawares I might imagine to know something that, indeed, I do not know. And now too I do assert that this is all that I am doing, namely investigating for clarification and, indeed, primarily for myself, though perhaps also for the sake of other good friends. Or don't you share in this opinion, that this is a common good and, indeed, for practically all mankind – if each and every thing shall be made apparent, how all of this correlates? ~ Certainly, said he, I do believe this, Socrates. ~ Thus, be consoled, intimate friend, said I; and now answer my questions just as matters appear to you and letting it all be the same, whether it may be Critias or Socrates who shall be refuted, that rather your attentions are simply focused on the clarification, how it may be that the investigation shall run its course right to the end. ~ Very well, said he, I will do so, for I fancy what you have said is totally acceptable. ~ So tell me then, said I, how do you actually mean this with mindfulness? ~ <7.~166e4]

Well then, I say, spoke he, that it alone underneath all cognitions⁹⁵ {*Erkennissen*} is the cognition of itself as well as of all the rest. ~ And wouldn't it also, said I, have to recognize its absence, non-cognizance, if it recognizes its presence? ~ Indeed, said he. ~ Only someone who is mindful, he alone shall achieve self-recognition and, so, be in a position to lay the groundwork for that which he really knows and what he doesn't – and, even so too, be enabled to make judgments of others: what someone else knows and likewise believes that he knows, since he does know it; and also, again, what someone

⁹⁵ Cf. *Theaetetus*, footnote #155 (p. 364). Note that the question of mistaken notions is a critical, if not *the* critical issue, that concerns Socrates in the dialogue, *Theaetetus*.

merely believes to know but doesn't really know; but aside from him, no one at all. And, thus, this is being mindful and mindfulness and knowledge of one's self: to know what one knows and what one doesn't know. Is it this? that which you opine? ~ That it is, said he. ~ Hence, once more, said I, the third of these three good things, let's weigh this in our considerations again, and beginning at the [b] beginning: firstly, whether this is possible or not – what one knows and doesn't know, to know that he knows it and that he doesn't know it; and after this, if this is possible, also this: essentially what advantage it would be and what usefulness would it have, that we know all of this. ~ Indeed, said he, all of this needs to be considered. ~ So come now, Critias, said I, take a look and see whether you might have better counsel regarding all of this than I do – for I don't have any, none at all. But how it is that I'm so totally in the dark, should I tell you? ~ Yes, please do. ~ Isn't it so, said I, all of this takes place if – as you even said – there exists⁹⁶ {*es gibt*} a certain cognition which is a cognition of nothing other than of itself and of the other cognitions and, simultaneously, the same also as regards that of which we are not cognizant, the non-cognitions. ~ Quite. ~ But do look at this, friend, what marvelous assertions we have taken upon ourselves! For if you were to search amongst all of the other things looking for the same, you would have to fancy that it's quite impossible. ~ But, how's that, and *where*? ~ This is how I mean it. Just reflect upon this, whether you are capable of believing that there might be a seeing which, utterly, is not a seeing of things, that which other seeing sees, rather only a seeing of itself and of the other seeings, and likewise of not-seeing; but then it does see itself and the other seeings. Do you believe it, that such exists? ~ By Zeus, not I. ~ And how about this, a hearing that doesn't hear any voices, but hears itself and, then too, other hearings and silence? ~ No, not that either. ~ And so, go on to weigh and consider utterly all the sorts of perceptions and sensations – whether you fancy that there exists any one from amongst them that senses its own sensing and other sensings, but that senses nothing of that which the other senses sense? ~ I'd fancy not. ~ But perhaps you believe that there exists a longing, but not a longing for any sort of pleasure, rather just a [e] longing for itself and for other longings? ~ No, not probable. ~ Nor probably not too, I think, a willing that doesn't will any particular good, that rather it only wills itself and the willings of other willings. ~ No, indeed not. ~ Or would you like to assert that there exists a love which is not a love of some beauty, rather only of its self and of

⁹⁶ Cf. *Parmenides* footnote #109 (p. 212).

other loves. ~ I, said he, no. ~ Or have you taken notice of a fear that only fears itself and other fears but doesn't fear anything [168a] that's fearful? ~ Nothing of the like, said he. ~ But a notion of notional itself and of other notions which, however, of that of which the other notions are notions, of this it hasn't the slightest notion. ~ Never. ~ But such a cognition, as it seems, we do want to assert that this does exist, this which isn't the cognition of any cognitive object, rather only of itself and of the cognitions of other cognitions. ~ Indeed, this is what we assert. ~ Isn't this uniquely rare – if it is at all? For let's not yet assert that it isn't, rather only investigate into whether it is. ~ Rightly stated. ~ Then tallyho, this cognition is, indeed, a cognition of something, and it has such a unique quality {*Eigenschaft*} by the power or capacity of which it is connected to something. Isn't it true? ~ Quite. ~ For also "bigness," we assert, has such a unique quality, namely, that it is bigger than something? ~ It has such. ~ Isn't it true, from something that is smaller if, indeed, it should be bigger. ~ That's necessary. ~ If only, now, we might find a [sort of] bigness that would be bigger than other bignesses and of itself, but utterly not from something lying beneath it, that in respect to which the other bignesses are big – wouldn't it, in every manner, have to be an attribute of this, if it is bigger [168c] than itself, that it also would be smaller than itself? – or not? ~ That's entirely necessary, Socrates, said he. ~ Not also, if something is double to all of the other doubles, as well as the double of itself, so it can do so only if it's also half of itself and of the others, only so can it simultaneously be double? For there isn't anything else of which a double is double other than of a half. ~ Right. ~ And that which is more than itself, shall not this, likewise, be less; and what's heavier, also lighter; what is older, also younger – and even so in all of the other things, that which has its quality in relation to its own self, shall this not also have to have that upon which this quality is related? Namely, this is what I'm meaning: hearing – we did indeed say that it's solely of that which is voiced and of nothing other? – isn't this true? ~ Yes. ~ Hence, if it should hear itself, so, likewise, it would have to hear its own voice, for otherwise it cannot hear. ~ There's no way around that, it's entirely so. ~ And also with sight, best of men, if it itself should see itself, so it has to have some coloration, for sight is incapable of seeing that which lacks coloration. ~ Yes, no. ~ You see it, thus, o Critias, from the little that we've gone through, just from this: so it has been shown in part that it's wholly impossible and in part as highly improbable and very hard to believe that something might ever be able to have its own unique quality in reference upon itself. For with that which is big or many, and the like, it was totally

and utterly impossible, wasn't it? ~ Quite. ~ And of hearing and seeing and, further, as regards movement, that something moves itself, and of warmth, that something might warm itself, and from everything of this type it may appear to quite a few as very [169a] unbelievable though others might accept it. No small personality, indeed, friend, would have the sufficiency that belongs here: that this be decided in all generality whether utterly nothing is of this type, that its own unique quality of relating itself upon itself, rather than everything relates only upon an other; or whether a few would be so-qualified and others aren't; and, then again, if a few do relate so to themselves, and whether also cognition and knowledge belong underneath these – from which, then, we asserted that it [such self-reference] would be mindfulness. Now, I don't trust myself to this, that I am in a position to make a decision on this, wherefore I also am not able to assert with certainty that this is possible, that something such as this exists [call it what you will]: a cognition of cognition or knowledge of knowledge; nor also – if such as this would exist – am I able to accept that this is mindfulness, at least not until I have investigated when it should be possible that it would be as stated and whether this would be something that would be useful or not. For that mindfulness would have to be something good and useful, this is my intimation, that of which I have a premonition. So you, dear son of Callaeschrus, for you do affirm it, that this is what mindfulness would be: the knowledge of knowledge and, hence, also of ignorance – so show me this firstly, that this is possible and all that I've even said just now; and then after it being possible, that such also is useful, and so you might perhaps satisfy me that you have clarified mindfulness correctly and spoken what's right: *what it is*.

<8.~169c]

As, now, Critias heard me out and saw how I was clueless and totally in the dark, it seemed to me that exactly as this tends to happen – if someone observes another yawning, so he too might start yawning – so he too was overpowered by the futility of the wild-goose chase and he too became ensnared in my helplessness. Now, since he always tended to harvest praise so now he became shamed before all who were present, and neither did he want to admit to me that he would be incapable of delivering that which I had urged of him, nor too would he say anything definite, rather he only attempted to hide his perplexity. But so that, indeed, we might yet make some progress in this matter, so I spoke up: Good, Critias, if this is all right with you, so for now anyway we want to make room for this conjecture, that it may actually be possible that knowledge of knowledge exists and that we leave this for some other time: to investigate into whether or not

it correlates so. But do come now and tell me if, indeed, this also is possible – what therefore is easier to know, what one knows and what one doesn't know? For we asserted that this, affirmatively, would really have been the *Know thyself* and such is being mindful? Isn't it true? ~ Quite, said he; and this does follow, too, Socrates. For if one has the knowledge that self-recognition provides, so he also has to be just as that is which he has – just as one who is quick has quickness, and is beautiful if one possesses beauty – and so too if cognizing knowledge, that anyone having the knowledge of himself [or herself], so one would have to have self-knowledge. ~ Upon this, said I, I too don't have any doubts, that whoever has self-knowledge shall not also be cognizant of themselves, rather only whether he who has this necessarily would have to know what he knows and what he doesn't know. ~ Because that is one and the same, Socrates, the [170a] latter and the former. ~ Perhaps, said I. But, unfortunately, I'm always the laggard. For already once again I don't understand how this can be one and the same: to know what one knows or doesn't know and whether one knows [himself]. ~ How do you mean this? said he. ~ So, said I. There exists a knowledge of knowledge. Now, shall this be able to differentiate anything more than this, that of two 'knowledges' the one is knowledge but the other isn't? ~ No, rather precisely so much. ~ Is it with this the same as with knowledge or ignorance of what's healthy, or knowledge or the lack thereof in regard to what's just? ~ No, not at all. ~ Rather these latter would be, I believe, for the first, medical lore, and, for the second, jurisprudence. But the former which is something other is nothing more or less than [pure] knowledge? ~ How else? ~ Hence, if someone isn't also informed as regards to health and justice, that rather he'd only be cognizant regarding knowledge itself – in that it is this alone of which he has cognizance – so shall he, indeed, that he does know something and does have some sort of cognition, he shall know, presumably, about his own self and of others – isn't this true? ~ Yes. ~ But what he recognizes, how should he know it through the power of such cognition? For that which is healthy he recognizes [c] through the faculty of the healing arts and not through the power of mindfulness; and what rings out harmonically, this is recognized through the faculty acquired by musicians and, again, not through mindfulness; and what belongs to *building* through the various construction arts and, again, not through mindfulness; and, so too with all of the rest. Or not? ~ Obviously. ~ But through the power of mindfulness, if this is only the knowledge of knowledge, how should he ever know that he's cognizant of that which is healthy? or that he'd be cognizant of that which essentially belongs to builders? ~

There's no way. ~ And he who doesn't know this, indeed: he won't know what he knows, rather only *that* he knows? ~ So it seems. [e] ~ Hence, that wouldn't be mindfulness and being mindful – to know what one knows and doesn't know; rather, as it now seems, only *that* one knows and *that* one doesn't know. ~ That's how it looks. ~ Nor too shall such a one be in a position to test anyone other, whoever asserts that he knows something, whether he actually knows it, that which he pretends to know, or whether he doesn't know it; rather, as it seems, only this much shall he recognize: that someone has some sort of cognition – but that of which the cognition is cognizant, this he won't be enabled to know. ~ Obviously not. ~ And, thus too, whoever gives himself out as being a physician but who isn't one, so he shall not be in a position to differentiate him from somebody who actually is one, nor too shall he be positioned to differentiate in all of the other things – between those who are informed and those who aren't. Let's visualize this for ourselves to make it crystal clear. If an enlightened person, or whoever else it might be, wants to recognize the true physician and also the pretender, shall he not proceed as follows? He won't speak to him about medicine. For the doctor, as we said, understands nothing more than what is healthy and what isn't. Or, isn't this what we said? ~ Yes, quite so. ~ But about cognition itself, he doesn't know anything about this, rather this [a] knowledge has been ascribed to mindfulness. ~ Yes. ~ Hence, even the astute doctor doesn't know anything about the healing lore *qua* knowledge, since medicine is made up of cognitions? ~ Right. ~ That, now, the doctor has some sort of cognition, this is something, indeed, into which an enlightened individual would have insight; but if he undertakes to probe more deeply into essentially which sort – so, necessarily, he doesn't see “of what” the cognition would be. Or, isn't it precisely through this that each and every cognition is a determinate cognition – not merely that it is a cognition but essentially such a one, that it would be a cognition of *something*? ~ Precisely. ~ Thus, also the healing lore is determined as being different from all of the other cognitions through this, that it is of what is healthy and not healthy. ~ Yes. ~ And, thus, it's even in this – if somebody wants to make a study into medicine, this is what would be studied, that in which it consists and is substantiated. And, indeed, certainly not into something outside of this in which it wouldn't consist? ~ No, indeed not. ~ Thus, in that which is healthy and unhealthy, it has to be in this that the physician would be tested, if he is to be tested in the right way – to what extent he's informed as regards healing. ~ So it has shown itself. ~ Namely, to be sure, in this: in everything that he says or does, this is tested – whether what

was spoken by him is true, and whether what he has done was done properly, the right way? ~ That's necessary. ~ Now, would someone be able to follow the ins and outs of all that belongs to this without also being informed as regards medicine? ~ Certainly not. ~ [171c] Hence, no one else other than a physician, not even the Buddha himself? Unless, of course, the Buddha had graduated from medical school. ~ That's the way it is. ~ Thus, from every vantage, if mindfulness is only the knowledge of knowledge and of ignorance, so it also is not in a position to differentiate between the physician who has understanding of this art and the charlatan, the one who only makes out as if he'd know and who has phantasies – nor also anyone else, whether whoever it may be really knows his profession whatever it ever may be – outside, of course, of another who shares in the profession, his colleague, just as it is with all of the arts and crafts. ~ That's obvious, said he. ~ So where's the usefulness, Critias, said I, that we would gain from mindfulness so construed? For if then, as we had assumed at the start, if a mindful person would know what he knows and also know what he doesn't know – of the first, that he knows it, and of the second that he doesn't know it – and thus too with the others, to be in a position to judge them just like he judges himself, then it would be for us – we are able to assert this – highly useful and advantageous to be mindful. For then we might press on with our lives without falling into error and being mistaken in anything, possessing such mindfulness, and so too with all of the others who would be ruled by us. For neither would we undertake to do something that we didn't understand, rather we'd locate those having the understanding and then we'd leave this in their capable hands; and so too with all of the others, those over whom we ruled, that we wouldn't allow them to do anything other than that which, if they would do it, they'd do it properly. But this would be that of which they would have knowledge. And, thus, a household that is administered through mindfulness would be well governed, and so too with a city or a state – and everything else over which [172a] mindfulness might rule. For when an end is made to falling into error and when everything is done in the right way with righteousness prevailing in all things, so those who exist underneath such a state of affairs and being a part of such a constitution, these, by necessity, would have to lead a beautiful and a good life; and such who live so well would have to be blessed. Isn't it this, said I, isn't this what we would say of mindfulness, o Critias, if we wanted to describe how great a good it would be: to know what you know and what you don't know? ~ Quite, this. ~ But now you do see, don't you, said I, that such knowledge hasn't been demonstrated by us anywhere at all? ~

I see it, said he. ~ Does perhaps, said I, mindfulness as we now have discovered it – namely [only] *that* one recognizes knowledge and is cognizant of ignorance – doesn't it have this bonus {*Gute*}: that [b] whoever possesses it shall learn whatever he learns more easily, and that everything shall gain somewhat in clarity – because aside from what he learns he also sees his knowledge of it? and, then too, that he shall be better in his judgments of others, namely in that which he also has learned; but those who want to pass judgment upon others without mindfulness, these would be worse off as they do so in an ungrounded manner? Is it, perhaps, in something like this, friend, that we yet shall give preference to those having mindfulness? and that we had something more in mind in our earlier search for it than it truly would be? ~ Perhaps, said he, perhaps this is how it correlates. ~ But perhaps, said I, we have only been searching after something that's utterly useless. I'm only thinking this because all sorts of wonderful things come to me in regards to mindfulness if it would be something along the lines of what we were saying.

<9.~172cd]

Indeed, if you want, let's take a look and see. Under the presumption that it would be possible to recognize knowledge – and let's no longer make a fuss about the other proposition but give in and admit this as well, that which was proposed as the being of mindfulness: the knowledge of what one knows and of what one doesn't know; and having supposed all of this, let's reflect upon this even better than we did previously – whether it shall be some help for us, now, if its reach extends as circumscribed. For what we were saying a bit earlier, that mindfulness would be such a great good if it would be this and that it had such pre-eminence in the administration of the home and of the state, I'd fancy that all of this, Critias, wasn't so praiseworthy. ~ *What?* – how's that, said he. ~ Because we, said I, like those climbing up high upon the mountains, we were terribly dizzy when we said that it would be such a great good for mankind if everyone would do what he knows and, then, what he doesn't know, this he'd leave for the others to do, others who would know. ~ And this, he asked me, wasn't declared by us as being praiseworthy? ~ No, not as I fancy it. ~ Wonderful things, in all actuality, said he, do you speak, Socrates. ~ By the dog, said I, and I'm fancying it even so myself. For this is just what I was meaning earlier on when I said that wonderful things were coming to me and that I was fearful that our investigation wasn't being conducted in the right manner. For, in all actuality, if [173a] mindfulness really is everything that we said so I fancy that it's not in the least bit clear that its effect is in any way salutary, that any good comes to us. ~ But, how so? said he – do tell us so that we might

know what you are meaning. ~ I'm ready to believe, said I, that I'm beginning to rave; but still, all the same, one has to speak one's mind whatever dances into view, that one pulls this into consideration and not act absent-mindedly by passing by unawares if, then, one should only be in the least bit considerate of oneself. ~ Well said. ~ So then hear it, *my dream*, whether it be the delusions of a raving maniac or a bit of the whitest ivory. If mindfulness, namely, insofar as it is this, that which we have firmly set down – also still should rule over us so verily, wouldn't we guide our behavior everywhere and in every manner in accordance to the dictates of knowledge? and no one would assert to be a helmsman if he wouldn't be one, and nobody else would make any claims about this or that which wouldn't be substantiated, and all of this would be obvious and nothing would remain in doubt or undiscovered? But, even if it does correlate so, would anything else arise from out of this other than that we would be healthier in our bodies than we are currently, and better able to be rescued whether dashing off upon the high seas or into some battle in war; and that all of our household utensils and our clothing and shoes and everything that belongs together here with this, all of these [173c] would be artfully constructed because in all cases the true artist would be in our service? And, yes, if you'd like we also want to give in as regards the fortune tellers and inspired prophets, that here we'd have knowledge of what shall come, all of the future; and this too should be at the disposal of mindfulness so that false prophets would easily be swept aside and that the true ones would be installed as diviners and interpreters of the future. That, now, the human race would act and be tended to in accord with understanding and so live out our lives – this is something upon which I have a firm grasp. For mindfulness, ever diligent, wouldn't allow that those lacking understanding might ever be able to sneak in. But that living so, in accordance with understanding and knowledge, that this also would be living well and blessedness, this still is something into which we don't have any insight, my dear Critias. ~ But, said he, indeed you won't very easily find some other goal of what "living well" would be if living in one accord with knowledge isn't good enough for you. ~ Teach me only yet this small bit, said I: according to which piece of knowledge would you be meaning? Perhaps, in accordance to that knowledge the shoemaker uses when he cuts leather for shoes? ~ [e] By Zeus, said he, that's not what I mean. ~ Or from the skills of the metallurgic arts? ~ In no way. ~ Or spinning wool or woodworking or anything like this? ~ No, not that either. ~ Hence, said I, let's not remain stuck any longer on this clarification, that he lives a blessed life, he who lives in accordance to knowledge – for these, although

they live with all of the fruits that such knowledge provides, you don't want to admit it, that they are living happily and are blessed; rather you seem to me to ascribe a blessed existence only to those who in one certain respect live in accordance with knowledge – and perhaps you'd be meaning the one whom I brought up previously, he who has foreknowledge of everything that's in the future, the soothsayer. [a] Is he the one whom you mean or some other? ~ Him too, but others as well. ~ But, which ones? I questioned. Is it not perhaps him, he who not only would know the future but likewise everything from the past as well as the present, he to whom utterly nothing at all would remain unknown? For let us assume that such a person might exist. And I do think that you shall not assert that anyone would live in better accord to knowledge than he. ~ No, indeed not. ~ But, even now – I'm still missing which of his insights into all of this knowledge, which would make him blessed, or would it be all of them in the same manner? ~ That's easy, all in the same way. ~ But which takes precedence? Indeed, what from everything in the past, present and future, what does he know from knowing all of this? Perhaps something belonging to the recreation found in board games? ~ Say *what!* – boardgames? ~ Or from calculating? ~ No, not by any means. ~ Or, something pertaining to health? ~ Now you're getting warm. ~ But, of what I'm looking for, which goes deepest? – said I, this is what I'm meaning – and what does he know through it? ~ The good, said he, and the evil. ~ Oh you devil, you! said I, for so long you have pulled me about in circles and all the while hiding this from me: that it's not living in accordance to knowledge that makes one live well and find blessedness, and not even if you take all the other sorts of knowledge and add them all up together, rather only this one alone that is related to good and evil! [174c] For Critias, when you take this knowledge away from all of the others – shall the healing arts be any less healthful, the art of cobbling shoes make fewer shoes, the art of weaving produce fewer garments, the art of navigation protect us one whit the less when we're out on the high seas – just like the insights of the major general wouldn't protect us any the less when in war – that we wouldn't all perish? ~ Not one whit the less. ~ But, my dear Critias, that all of this would be good and that it happens to our benefit, this is something that we shall have sacrificed if the former knowledge is taken away. ~ That's right. ~ But, indeed, *this* knowledge isn't mindfulness, as it seems, rather it's the knowledge whose business it is to look out for our benefit. For then, it's not the knowledge of knowledge and ignorance, rather the knowledge of what's good and what's evil – so that if this is the knowledge that benefits us, mindfulness must be something other

than what is beneficial. ~ How's that? – said he; mindfulness shouldn't be beneficial? For if, indeed, mindfulness is the knowledge of knowledge and, so, takes precedence above all other [174e] knowledge, so it also has to take precedence over the knowledge that is related to good and evil and, thus, does indeed benefit us. ~ And is it, perhaps, mindfulness that makes us healthy and not the healing lore? – and so too with all of the other arts and professions; does mindfulness accomplish the business that these do accomplish – or isn't it much more the case that each accomplishes its own? Or haven't we already admitted as much long ago, that it would only be the knowledge of knowledge and of ignorance, that such alone is its subject matter? Isn't it so? ~ Well, indeed. ~ Thus, it doesn't bring about good health? ~ No, I wouldn't say that it does. ~ Because health, namely, belongs to some other profession. Not so? ~ [175a] Yes, to an other. ~ Thus too, nothing pertaining to what's beneficial for us, it wouldn't bring about any such effects. For we have attributed this business to a different “art.” Isn't this true? ~ Indeed. ~ How can mindfulness be useful for us if, utterly, it doesn't have any beneficial use? ~ In no manner, Socrates, as it seems. ~ Thus you do see, Critias, don't you – how very much I was right to be harboring such concerns, and most probably had sound grounds for accusing myself: that I wouldn't have anything useful that I might bring forth in respect to mindfulness. For certainly it would never come out so that that which everyone is unified in agreeing to – that [b] mindfulness shall be the most admirable of all – for such to appear to us as being useless, this should never have happened if I were the least bit useful in guiding the investigation through in a good manner. But now we've been clobbered from every side and we don't have a thing to show as regards what, then, this is: that which the genius of language has placed inside of this name. And this despite the fact that we've given in and admitted a great deal that was never substantiated in our speech. For first off we made room for the supposition that there is such a thing as knowledge of knowledge, and this contrary to everything that came out from our earlier [c2] investigation which neither asserted this, or even allowed for such a supposition, that such exists; and then even further in respect to this knowledge we supposed that it should be cognizant of the works that the other knowledges accomplish – since our speech also didn't allow us this either – and all of this was admitted so as to bring the mindful person to the point that he would be cognizant of what he knows and that he knows it, and also what he doesn't know and that he doesn't know it. And, in all actuality, all of this was liberally agreed to and without even looking into how impossible it is, what somebody wholly

and utterly doesn't know, nonetheless to know it to a certain extent. For what he did not know we still, indeed, admitted of him that he does know – although, as I believe, this is obviously more unrational than anything else. And, all the same, despite our liberal generosity and willingness not to be in the least bit strict with our admissions, still our investigation came to naught and we were quite incapable of discovering the truth, rather it all turned back upon us in the form of jeering satire: that that which by endless supposition and poetic fancy we had set up as being the essence of mindfulness, so this itself displayed itself as being something totally useless despite all the extremity of our zeal. Admittedly, in regard to myself I am not so much irked by this – not so much as I am for your sake, o Charmides, as indeed I am distressed very much for you, what with your having so fine a *Gestalt* and, beyond this, possessing a disposition that is so mindful; and yet that you wouldn't have any benefits from this and that it won't be any help for you in your life – none at all! And even more irksome is this in relation to the incantations that I learned from the Thracians, that I exerted so much time and effort in learning something that turns out as having utterly no value at all. But, then too, I don't really believe it, that this is how it all correlates, rather only that I'm a devilishly bad investigator and that, indeed, [a] mindfulness is certainly a great good – and that you, if you do possess it, are very much blessed. Hence, do look within – whether somehow it does subsist within you and that you're not really in need of these incantations. For if you do possess it, so I'd rather advise you that you simply count me amongst the windbags, someone overly full of hot air who is quite incapable of searching for anything whatever in an orderly manner in my speech;⁹⁷ but, as for you, the ever more mindful, so the ever more blessed. ~ <10.~176]

To this Charmides replied: But *by Zeus*, Socrates, I don't really know as to whether I have it or not. And how mightn't I well know this since you two aren't even in a position that you might find out what it is – just as you've said. But, all the same, for myself I don't actually believe you all that much, Socrates, but I do believe myself to be in need of these incantations, very much so. And from my side there is nothing that would hinder it, that I am willing to listen to you each and every day until you would say that it would be enough. ~ Good, said Critias, and if you do do this, Charmides, so this shall be a proof for me that you are mindful, that you should give yourself over to Socrates and let him perform all of his mantras with you, and

⁹⁷ Cf. *Theaetetus* – Socrates' art of midwifery 150c (pp. 371–372) and 161b (p. 386).

that you'd never let up from him, neither in matters big nor small. ~ Certainly, said he, I shall follow him and remain always by him. It would indeed be falsehearted of me if I didn't obey you, you who [c] are my guardian, and that I wouldn't do just as you command. ~ And very firmly, said he, do I command this. ~ So – I shall do it, Charmides answered, from this day onward. ~ *Hey there!* – said I, what are you two counseling one another about doing? ~ Nothing, said Charmides, we're all done in our deliberations. ~ Force, then, said I – this is what you intend to use upon me and not even once offer me any choice in this matter? ~ Yes, force, said he – should I need it, particularly as this is what my guardian has commanded. So, now you take counsel with yourself, what you think that you are going to do about it. ~ Against such advice, indeed, there's nothing that might be done. For you, if you take this on, following through with such a plan and, indeed, even to the point of using force if needs be,⁹⁸ so there is no person who might ever stand in your way and [176d] prevent it. ~ So, don't you attempt to prevent this either, said he. ~ I won't, said I, not at all.

⁹⁸ ‘ Socrates: I went down to the Pireaeus yesterday with Glaucon, son of Ariston, to pray to the goddess; and, at the same time, I wanted to observe how they would put on the festival, since they were now holding it for the first time. Now, in my opinion, the procession of the native inhabitants was fine; but the one the Thracians conducted was no less fitting a show. After we had prayed and looked on, we went off toward town.

Catching sight of us from afar as we were pressing homewards, Polemarchus, son of Cephalus, ordered his slaveboy to run after us and order us to wait for him. The boy took hold of my cloak from behind and said, “Polemarchus orders you to wait.” ~ And I turned around and asked him where his master was. ~ “He is coming up behind,” he said, “just wait.” ~ “Of course we'll wait,” said Glaucon. ~ A moment later Polemarchus came along with Adeimantus, Glaucon's brother, Niceratus, son of Nicias, and some others – apparently from the procession. Polemarchus said, “Socrates, I guess you two are hurrying to get to town.” ~ “That's not a bad guess,” I said. ~ “Well,” he said, “do you see how many of us there are?” ~ “Of course.” ~ “Well then,” he said, “either prove stronger than these men or stay here.” ~ “Isn't there still one other possibility . . . ,” I said, “our persuading you that you must let us go?” ~ “Could you really persuade,” he said, “if we don't listen?” ~ “There's no way,” said Glaucon. ~ “Well, then, think it over, bearing in mind that we won't listen.” ~ Then Adeimantus said, “Is it possible you don't know that at sunset there will be a torch race on horseback for the Goddess?” ~ “On horseback?” I said. “That is novel.”

(Note: spacing altered by using tilde ~ rather than line-feed.)