

### Chapter 1 : A Preface to Morals - Walter Lippmann - Google Books

*A Preface To Morals by Walter Lippmann () The reader this book addresses is a skeptic of any theistic fundamentalist religion which prescribes morality. In Part I.*

A Preface to Morals, his most well-known and influential book, was first published in 1929. I was introduced to Lippmann in the late sixties when the Time Reading Program included this book in its offerings. In it Lippmann argues that in modern society traditional religious faith has lost its power to function as a source of moral authority. He asserts that ancient religious doctrine is no longer relevant to the conditions of modern life: Further, the democratic policy of the separation of church and state has created an atmosphere of religious tolerance, which suggests that religious faith is a matter of preference. In addition, the development of scientific method has created an atmosphere of doubt as to the claims made by religious doctrine. That doubt has grown larger over the last fifty years. Lippmann offers humanism as the philosophy best suited to replace the role of religion in modern life. He notes that the teachers of humanism are the wise men or sages, such as Aristotle, Buddha, Confucius, Plato, Socrates, and Spinoza, and that it is up to the individual to determine the value of their wisdom. He goes on to observe that one of the primary functions of religion is to teach the value of asceticism, or voluntary self-denial, as essential to human happiness. Disinterestedness, for Lippmann, is an approach to reality that puts objective thought before personal desire. He claims that the role of the moralist in modern society is not, as in traditional religions, to chastise and punish but to teach others a humanistic morality that can fulfill the human needs traditionally filled by religion. Oct 29, David Alexander rated it it was amazing "The unlovely quality of much modern religiosity is due to these doubts. It is forced, made, insisted upon, because it is no longer simple and inevitable. They are due to lack of confidence, to doubt resisted like an annoying tune which a man cannot shake out of his head. For if the militant fundamentalists were utter "The unlovely quality of much modern religiosity is due to these doubts. For if the militant fundamentalists were utterly sure they are right, they would exhibit some of that composure which the truly devout display. Did they really trust their God, they would trust laws, politicians, and policemen less. But because their whole field of consciousness is trembling with uncertainties they are in a state of fret and fuss; their preaching is frousy, like the seductions of an old coquette.

*"One of the finest qualities of this 'Preface to Morals' is a certain strain of literary self-conquest, wholly in keeping with the author's idea of asceticism, which saves the book from falling into the slough of cleverness, and gives it a lean literary vigor and sincerity.*

During the war, Lippmann was commissioned a captain in the Army on June 28, 1917, and was assigned to the intelligence section of the AEF headquarters in France. He was assigned to the staff of Edward House in October and attached to the American Commission to negotiate peace in December. He returned to the United States in February and was immediately discharged. He sharply criticized George Creel, whom the President appointed to head wartime propaganda efforts at the Committee on Public Information. While he was prepared to curb his liberal instincts because of the war saying he had "no doctrinaire belief in free speech," he nonetheless advised Wilson that censorship should "never be entrusted to anyone who is not himself tolerant, nor to anyone who is unacquainted with the long record of folly which is the history of suppression. In addition to his newspaper column "Today and Tomorrow", he wrote several books. Lippmann was the first to bring the phrase "cold war" to common currency, in his book by the same name. It was Lippmann who first identified the tendency of journalists to generalize about other people based on fixed ideas. Humans condense ideas into symbols, he wrote, and journalism, a force quickly becoming the mass media, is an ineffective method of educating the public. Even if journalists did better jobs of informing the public about important issues, Lippmann believed "the mass of the reading public is not interested in learning and assimilating the results of accurate investigation. Wallace in September, Lippmann became the leading public advocate of the need to respect a Soviet sphere of influence in Europe, as opposed to the containment strategy being advocated at the time by George F. Lippmann was an informal adviser to several presidents. For Lippmann, the "function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them in relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act. The news, therefore, is "imperfectly recorded" and too fragile to bear the charge as "an organ of direct democracy. In *Public Opinion*, Lippmann noted that modern realities threatened the stability that the government had achieved during the patronage era of the 19th century. He wrote that a "governing class" must rise to face the new challenges. The basic problem of democracy, he wrote, was the accuracy of news and protection of sources. He argued that distorted information was inherent in the human mind. People make up their minds before they define the facts, while the ideal would be to gather and analyze the facts before reaching conclusions. By seeing first, he argued, it is possible to sanitize polluted information. Lippmann argued that interpretation as stereotypes a word which he coined in that specific meaning subjected us to partial truths. Lippmann called the notion of a public competent to direct public affairs a "false ideal. Mass culture[ edit ] Lippmann was an early and influential commentator on mass culture, notable not for criticizing or rejecting mass culture entirely but discussing how it could be worked with by a government licensed "propaganda machine" to keep democracy functioning. In his first book on the subject, *Public Opinion*, Lippmann said that mass man functioned as a "bewildered herd" who must be governed by "a specialized class whose interests reach beyond the locality. This attitude was in line with contemporary capitalism, which was made stronger by greater consumption. Later, in *The Phantom Public*, Lippmann recognized that the class of experts were also, in most respects, outsiders to any particular problem, and hence not capable of effective action. In 1927, George Seldes described Lippmann as one of the two most influential columnists in the United States. The book was very poorly received in liberal circles. Mass beliefs early in the 20th century were "too pacifist in peace and too bellicose in war, too neutralist or appeasing in negotiations or too intransigent" [29] Public opinion is incoherent, lacking an organized or a consistent structure to such an extent that the views of US citizens could best be described as "nonattitudes" [30] Public opinion is irrelevant to the policymaking process. Political leaders ignore public opinion because most Americans can neither "understand nor influence the very events upon which their lives and happiness are known to depend. Neoliberalism A meeting of liberal intellectuals mainly from France and Germany organized in Paris in August by French philosopher Louis Rougier to discuss the ideas put forward by

Lippmann in his work *The Good Society*, Colloque Walter Lippmann was named after him. At both meetings the discussions centered on what a new liberalism, or neoliberalism, should look like. Noam Chomsky and Edward S.

### Chapter 3 : A preface to morals. ( edition) | Open Library

*A Preface to Morals became an immediate bestseller, despite its philosophical subject matter, and was praised by a wide variety of writers and thinkers, as well as by the public, who were captivated by Lippmann's application of philosophy to ordinary modern life.*

Preface Commentary Michel Foucault, in his essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," notes that Nietzsche talks about origins in several different ways, using several different German words. On one hand, he attacks the idea of an origin as a starting point, a moment at which the essence of the matter is found, which then evolves or devolves into its present state. This is the kind of "origin" we might find in the story of Adam and Eve and their exile from Eden. It is an origin story that presents humanity as beginning in a state of godlike perfection, at an absolute distance from us in time. As such, the Adam and Eve "origin" also sees the origin of morality as something created at a particular moment in time, an edict that has come down from a perfect God. This kind of morality has an "origin" but no genealogy. It is the kind of morality that Nietzsche identified at the age of thirteen, positing God as the source of morality. Nietzsche remarks that he soon gave up looking for the origin of morality "behind the world;" that is, he began to see the origin not as an event but as a process. To explain the origin of morality by an appeal to God is to look "behind the world," to sidestep any factual information that we might find through historical or anthropological research. Instead of an Adam and Eve model for the origin of morality, we might appeal to a Darwinian model. Like human evolution, we might see the evolution of our morals as a gradual process, marked by accident and error, which has no driving reason or end goal. If we look at morality the way we look at human evolution, it loses its sacredness. What we call "good" may not be some absolute rule of behavior, but rather what a series of haphazard developments in our society has led us to approve of. From this perspective, morality no longer seems sacred: It makes sense to question the value of morality if we no longer have any divine guarantee that what we call "good" is in fact good for us. This demands not just careful scholarship, but also careful self-scrutiny. If our judgments and decisions are based on a moral code, how can we question that moral code from outside the bounds of that moral code? The difficulty of his inquiry is set for him by the fact that it demands a whole new kind of scrutiny, a skepticism that questions even the values upon which the inquiry is based. At the same time, Nietzsche recognizes that a total abandonment of any kind of moral standard can be dangerous, a modern illness he identifies as "nihilism. In other works, Nietzsche identifies this "cheerful" perspective with the "overman," or "superman."

### Chapter 4 : A Preface to Morals | calendrierdelascience.com

*A Preface to Morals, his most well-known and influential book, was first published in In A Preface to Morals, Lippmann argues that in modern society traditional religious faith has lost its power to function as a source of moral authority.*

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Chapter 5 : SparkNotes: Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: Preface

*"One of the finest qualities of this 'Preface to Morals' is a certain strain of literary self-conquest, wholly in keeping with the author's idea of asceticism, which.*

Introduction Walter Lippmann was an influential journalist and political theorist of the twentieth century. A Preface to Morals, his most well-known and influential book, was first published in 1914. In A Preface to Morals, Lippmann argues that in modern society traditional religious faith has lost its power to function as a source of moral authority. He asserts that ancient religious doctrine is no longer relevant to the conditions of modern life: Further, the democratic policy of the separation of church and state has created an atmosphere of religious tolerance, which suggests that religious faith is a matter of preference. In addition, the development of scientific method has created an atmosphere of doubt as to the claims made by religious doctrine. Lippmann offers humanism as the philosophy best suited to replace the role of religion in modern life. He notes that the teachers of humanism are the wise men or sages, such as Aristotle, Buddha, Confucius, Plato, Socrates, and Spinoza, and that it is up to the individual to determine the value of their wisdom. He goes on to observe that one of the primary functions of religion is to teach the value of asceticism, or voluntary self-denial, as essential to human happiness. Lippmann describes an attitude of "disinterestedness" as essential to the development of a humanistic morality. Disinterestedness, for Lippmann, is an approach to reality that puts objective thought before personal desire. He claims that the role of the moralist in modern society is not, as in traditional religions, to chastise and punish but to teach others a humanistic morality that can fulfill the human needs traditionally filled by religion. From 1898 to 1900, he was enrolled in Sachs school for boys. In 1900, he entered Harvard University, completing his degree in only three years. At Harvard, he found that he was excluded from the popular social clubs because he was Jewish. While still in college, he organized the Harvard Socialist Club. In 1901, Lippmann began graduate study at Harvard, working as a teaching assistant for George Santayana in the philosophy department. In 1902, Lippmann had a short-lived stint in political life when he served as executive secretary to George R. Lunn, the socialist mayor of Schenectady, New York. Disillusioned with politics, he resigned his post after several months. His political concerns, however, were not abated, and soon afterward he joined the Socialist party of New York County. His first book, A Preface to Politics, was published in 1903. In 1904, he was invited to join the founding editors of the New Republic magazine. In 1905, he married Faye Albertson. When the United States entered World War I in 1914, Lippmann was recruited to serve in various capacities, formulating war and peace policy. That year he left the New Republic to serve an appointment as assistant to Newton D. Baker, United States Secretary of War. He was then appointed to serve as secretary of the Inquiry, a think tank secretly organized by the United States government to conduct research in preparation for the Paris Peace Conference. In 1916, he was commissioned as a captain in Army Military Intelligence and appointed a member of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace. In 1917, he was included in a delegation that accompanied President Wilson to the Paris Peace Conference. However, Lippmann quickly became disillusioned with the terms of the peace negotiations and resigned with an honorable discharge from military service. Lippmann returned to his position as editor of the New Republic in 1918. In 1920, he started a regular column in Vanity Fair. In 1921, he started working as an editorial writer for the New York World and in 1922 became the editor of the New York World. In 1923, the New York World published its last issue, and Lippmann began a regular column, "Today and Tomorrow," for the New York Herald-Tribune, which remained a regular feature until 1928. In 1929, after he was caught having an affair with Helen Byrne, a married woman, he divorced Faye, and Helen divorced her husband. In 1930, Lippmann and Byrne were married and moved to Washington, D. He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for editorial comment in 1931 and a Pulitzer Prize for reporting of international affairs in 1932. In the early 1930s, he began to appear in television interviews. He was honored by Lyndon B. Johnson with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963. Helen died in February of 1934, and Lippmann died on December 14 of that year. Summary Religion in the Modern World Lippmann addresses what he sees as a crisis facing modern society due to the increasing number of people whose lives are no longer ordered by religious conviction. He asserts that modern humanity in increasingly democratic secular societies needs to look to some form of "new

orthodoxy" by which to live. He notes that it is certainly true that many in the modern world still believe in God. However, he argues, the nature of this belief, even among the clergy, is of a different nature from what it once was so that now people make a distinction between the factual world and the spiritual world. Lippmann observes that fundamentalism in religion is the exception that proves this rule: He notes that this "loss of certainty" regarding religion had led to a change in how the Bible is understood. Whereas it was once understood by most as literal yet also symbolic, it has come to be interpreted as literary analogy. Further, it is only in modern history that the concept of a conflict between religion and reason evolved. He argues that, even among the faithful, there is a seed of doubt, based upon the conception of faith as less certain than rational, scientific knowledge. Lippmann thus notes that in a modern democratic society, conceptions of God have lost the image of all-powerful, patriarchal authority. Further, he asserts that the modern crisis in faith is due to the fact that, over the past four hundred years, daily life has resembled less and less the conception of the universe put forth by religion.

**Faith and Tradition in Modern America** Lippmann focuses on the particular character of America by pointing out a variety of reasons for the loss of religious faith that characterizes modernity. The rapid pace of change in modern society has left people without permanent landmarks by which to make sense of a religion that is based on an ancient society. Further, because America is a nation of immigrants, socially and geographically mobile, the old religions no longer resemble anything in modern life. In addition, he argues, whereas agrarian life, dependent on tradition and subject to the forces of nature, is in keeping with religious tradition and conviction, urban life dispenses with tradition and is beholden to technology rather than the natural world. Finally, Lippmann puts forth, figures of authority in American society are merely a class of wealthy socialites who possess no moral high ground in the eyes of the masses.

**Separation of Church and State** Lippmann goes on to observe that the crisis of faith in modern society is partly due to changes in the relationship between church and state. The separation of church and state results in a society in which the church is no longer the overarching societal authority. Particularly, the policy of "tolerance" among religions implies that no one religion can assert supreme authority over all citizens. As a result, the individual citizen, even while faithful to his or her own religion, does not consider it to be the dominant authority in civil life. Lippmann suggests that patriotism, particularly in time of war, has to some extent supplanted the all-encompassing religious faith once exerted by the church. Further, in a capitalist society, that which represents authority in the realm of business is considered separate from religious authority. Modern society thus lacks the sense of an all-encompassing meaning and direction to human life, which was once provided by religious doctrines of destiny. Lippmann further claims that the separation of church and state has led to a separation within the individual self, in which daily human activities have no sense of one great overarching meaning. In this context, there is no "moral certitude," and no all-encompassing system of values has emerged to take its place.

**Science and Religion** Lippmann observes that the role of miracles in traditional religion has been used as a source of concrete physical evidence of the existence of God. However, the development of modern science has outmoded religion in its capacity to provide concrete evidence in support of claims to truth. He notes that attempts to develop religious beliefs based on scientific discovery have failed on two counts: **Humanism** Lippmann explains that, in traditional religious practice, morality was based on "divine authority," and the believer strove to act in accordance with the will of God. Since "divine authority" no longer holds the power it once did in the human mind, he asserts, modern society must find some alternative basis for morality. He puts forth that humanism is the ideal basis for moral authority in the modern world. Lippmann offers the wisdom of such figures as Aristotle, Buddha, Confucius, Plato, Socrates, and Spinoza, whose teachings form the basis of humanism. However, he points out that those who espouse humanism "have no credentials" on the order of the moral authority of God. Rather, the sages of humanism derive their authority from the self-government of the individual, who is required to take full responsibility for adhering to humanist teachings.

**Desire and Asceticism** Lippmann discusses the persistent concern, among the "popular" religions as he calls them, as well as the sages, with the need to place restrictions upon human desire. He asserts that asceticism the self-imposed denial of basic human desires is central to human happiness and "the good life. He explains that religion has always played the part in society of imposing external standards of asceticism and self-denial on the general public. The sages, however, have confined their advice regarding asceticism to a

small circle of pupils. Because, according to Lippmann, religion has ceased to serve the function of disciplining desire in modern society, there is no generalized societal code designed to enforce the curbing of individual human desires. Evil, Disinterestedness, and the Moralists in the Modern Age Lippmann observes that the concept of evil has been altered in the age of modernity. He explains that, traditionally, evil is seen as a matter of the judgment of God, whereas in modern society, evil is seen as a phenomenon that is created by humanity and can thus be eradicated by human action. He asserts that in the modern world it is necessary to cultivate an attitude of "disinterestedness" in matters of moral concern. By "disinterest," Lippmann means an ability to judge matters from an objective perspective not necessarily in keeping with the personal interests of the individual. He cites scientific method as the epitome of "disinterested" endeavor. For Lippmann, "disinterestedness" is the key to formulating standards of morality in the modern world. Particularly in business, government, and sexual relations, the "three great phases of human interest," an attitude of "disinterest" is all-important. Lippmann observes that the role of the moralist in modern society has been misconstrued. It is no longer the place of the moralist to control and punish the populace to elicit moral behavior. Rather, the role of the moralist in modern society is to teach others how to place limits on their own desires for the sake of "the good life. Aristotle is one of the sages Lippmann regards as a source of "well-tested truths," the wisdom of which may serve the function once filled by religious doctrine. He mentions Aristotle as one among many sages who have advocated asceticism as essential to happiness. He explains that, in contrast to the commandments of traditional religion, the ideals of human behavior espoused by Aristotle are a matter of the education and discipline of the "human will. Buddha is one of the sages Lippmann regards as a source of "well-tested truths," the wisdom of which may serve the function once filled by religious doctrine. Buddha is among the wise men who taught the value of asceticism for the achievement of "the good life. Lippmann cites Buddha as an example of a sage who did not expect more than a small number of men to live according to the ideals that he taught. Confucius Confucius b. Confucius is one of the sages Lippmann regards as a source of "well-tested truths," the wisdom of which may serve the function once filled by religious doctrine.

### Chapter 6 : A Preface to Morals

*A Preface to Morals Summary. Walter Lippmann was an influential journalist and political theorist of the twentieth century. A Preface to Morals, his most well-known and influential book, was first published in*

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