

FLAWS

Greed is a flaw easy to adopt but almost impossible to extirpate. The adoption of greed does not follow automatically from the liking, even from the excessive liking, of this or that. I may like to eat ripe cherries, I may develop this liking into a passion, without developing—when it comes to cherries--into a greedy man. I may still, despite all this extravagant liking of cherries, be quite at ease sharing my cherries with you. While the greedy man will want to keep all the cherries to himself, and not share them with you, the great cherry lover will have no trouble sharing his cherries with you. Then what makes for the element of greed; what tips liking over into heavy possessiveness? The answer may lie in the two men's different relation to their pleasures. The greedy man turns his pleasures into private possessions, while the flawless delighter in cherries loves them as shareable parts of a common universe.

Have we stumbled on a broadly applicable etiology for the gravity of a human flaw? Will flaws typically set in where an individual's infatuation with a particular pleasure source excludes the feasibility of sharing, of universalizing his gratification? Or have we, in the case of greed, happened on a rare instance where pleasure and selfishness collude to generate a full blooded flaw?

What about jealousy? Does jealousy emerge from an intersection between powerful desire, and the hatred of sharing this desire? The jealous person is, yes, both in love with his cherries and of no mind to share them. Are we setting up a paradigm for the genesis of human flaws? Or have we just opened with lucky examples?

Check out other flaws: hostility, jealousy, pride, obsession, psychosis. Would those instances fit our loosely bagged set of flaw examples? Can't we say this much, that in each of these instances the genesis of flaw results from self-preoccupation given full flower without counterbalancing attention to the other, to community or counterclaim.