In 1814 one of the founding figures of European liberalism, Benjamin Constant, published what was to become his most influential book on politics, *De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation.*¹ In it he distinguished sharply between the “private existence” of members of a modern society and their “public existence.” “Private existence” referred to the family and the intimate circle of personal friends, the spheres of individual work and the consumption of goods, and the realm of individual beliefs and preferences; “public existence”² designated action in the world of politics. For a variety of historical, economic, and social reasons, Constant thought, the “private” sphere had come in the modern world to be the source of especially vivid pleasures, and the locus for the instantiation of especially deep and important human values. In the small self-governing city-states of antiquity the sphere of private production was tedious and laborious—an endless backbreaking round of agricul-
tural activity—and that of consumption underdeveloped. On the other hand, the political power of ancient democratic assemblies was virtually unlimited; in principle, such an assembly could regulate anything. All private actions, including even such things as how the citizens chose their occupation or their marriage partner, how they educated their children, or what type of crockery they had on their tables, could in principle be, and often in fact were, subject to severe public scrutiny and control. This power was also exercised by the citizens in assembly directly, and gave rise to a keen experience of pleasure (and pride) which surpassed any pleasure that could be found in private life. Under these circumstances it made some sense for individuals to be willing to “constitute themselves virtually the slaves of the nation” if that was the price to be paid for having a “public existence,” that is, being fully active citizens. Being a citizen in an ancient democracy meant, after all, directly wielding a real executive power, and was a full-time occupation. No modern population, Constant claims, is willing seriously and persistently to subordinate its private existence to the demands of politics in the way ancient democracy required; for such populations, private goods have, and ought to have, priority over the goods of the public realm. This is why the “fictive” form of the exercise of
popular sovereignty, representative government with limited and conditional powers of intervention in citizens’ private domains, is the appropriate one for modern conditions. Such a form of government is “fictive” compared with the direct and unmediated exercise of power in ancient politics, and it is desirable because it allows moderns to retain enough indirect supervision over the political sphere to prevent gross harm, while being sufficiently undemanding of time and energy to allow citizens to direct their main attention to what is really of value to them, the good private life. Understanding this split between private and public existence and the relative standing of the values associated with each of the two spheres was, Constant believed, a precondition for understanding politics in the modern world.

Two decades before the publication of Constant’s book, one of the other theoretical founders of liberalism, the German theorist von Humboldt, had written his radically antipaternalist political tract *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Gränzen der Wirk- samkeit des Staats zu bestimmen.* Because the highest human good, he claimed, is the self-activity and self-development of human individuals, and the state has no value in itself but is merely a necessary means to individual self-activity, any positive provision for individual welfare, whether spiritual,
moral, or material, on the part of the state is inappropriate and in fact actively harmful because it preempts individual action. The state therefore ought to limit its sphere of activity to maintaining security, and it should otherwise allow its members to get on with their own private lives in whatever way they choose.

Nowadays not everyone would accept the details of Constant’s account of the necessities of modern politics or his normative assessments of its possibilities. Many moderns have also been tempted to try to replace Humboldt’s naturalistic doctrine of the goal of human life with more deontological, especially Kantian, views, thinking these a firmer basis for antipaternalism; few would go as far in limiting the powers of the state as Humboldt suggested. Nevertheless much contemporary thinking about politics, especially self-consciously “liberal” forms of thinking, does seem to be following in the track of the tradition deriving from these two figures. The temptation to try to combine “private existence” (as the concept is understood in Constant’s historical sociology) with “private life” (in the quasi-moral sense in which Humboldt uses this term) into the idea of a politically and socially distinct and protected sphere of life within which each individual is and ought to be fully sovereign.
and to contrast this sphere with a public world of law, economics, and politics, is a strong one.

The idea that there is a clear distinction between “public” and “private,” and that this distinction is of great and continuing philosophical and political significance, is not the preserve of a small number of philosophers but is well entrenched even in everyday political discussions. Around this general distinction a number of thoughts cluster. Thus some have thought that the evaluative conceptions that are appropriate for use in the public realm are different from those appropriate in the private realm. What is judged to be “good,” “right,” “valuable” (and, alternatively, “bad,” “wrong,” a “nuisance”) in the public sphere is to be evaluated by very different standards from what is “good” in the private sphere. The standards and procedures for justifying a particular course of action or choice, and the audience in whose eyes the justification must be convincing, are often thought to differ depending on whether what is at issue is a “private” act (e.g., individual purchase of food for one’s own consumption) or a public one (procurement of new trains for the municipal underground or new submarines for the navy). Finally there is often thought to be a series of characteristic differences between the kinds of methods and means that can
legitimately be employed: in certain kinds of ac-
tion in the public realm, duly constituted political
authorities may use direct physical coercion (re-
straint, incarceration, execution, etc.) or the threat
of such coercion to implement compliance with a
directive in ways that would be unacceptable if
used by individuals in private contexts.

I wish to argue that there is no single clear dis-
tinction between public and private but rather a
series of overlapping contrasts, and thus that the
distinction between the public and the private
should not be taken to have the significance often
attributed to it. One result of this, I think, should
be a change in the way we think about the good in
various public and private contexts. Although my
final interest is the good, the first immediate object
of my attention will be conceptions of the public
and the private.

In the contemporary world one might be par-
doned for assuming that the distinction between
“private” and “public” is relatively straightforward.
It concerns the modes of access, control, and own-
ership of property or information, with special re-
ference to the issue of whether this access, control,
and ownership is restricted or limited in any way.
Public property is property thought to be owned
in common by the unrestricted set of all the people
in some given society—or by the state as represen-
tative of all the people; private property is property owned by some restricted set of individuals or even by a single individual, not owned by all in common. Public information is information to which everyone has (or ought to have) access; private acts are those to which not everyone has or ought to have cognitive access. The shift in this formulation between a descriptive version (“information to which everyone has access”) and a normative version (“information to which everyone ought to have access”) adds a complication but is not in any sense deeply confusing or troubling. After all, many political concepts (e.g., democracy) exhibit this vacillation. To be sure, we know that some societies have not made the same kind of binary distinction to which we are accustomed. Thus the Romans at certain periods distinguished between public, private, and sacred law (ius) and public, private, and sacred property, but we are not terribly concerned with the gods’ property, and in any case this, too, seems a mere conservative extension of our normal usage which is made possible by the recognition of a different ontological type of agent (a god). Even in the modern world “private” is not the only opposite of “public.” Thus if one is thinking of information one can also contrast “public” with “secret,” which carries the connotation that the piece of knowledge in question ought to be
known and is being withheld by the conscious act of some agent. “Private,” however, has the connotation of something that ought not to be common knowledge. One can also contrast “public” with “arcane.” The “arcane,” in contemporary usage, offers limited cognitive access because of its nature, not because anyone is keeping it secret or because access to it ought to be restricted. A related distinction is that between “esoteric”—meant only for members of a select group—and “exoteric”—directed at those outside the group. The distinction between the public and the private, as usually understood, is not identical with that between social or collective and the individual: a meeting of friends is a social or collective phenomenon, but it can be a “private” occasion, and an individual can be a “public” figure. Similarly it is not identical with that between the altruistic and the egotistic: I can have altruistic or egotistical feelings in my relations with private friends or in the exercise of a public office. These last claims are familiar and do not, I assume, require elaboration here.

My title, *Public Goods, Private Goods*, is intentionally ambiguous. “Goods” can mean several things. First, it can designate concrete objects that have some use-value: a pen I own is a private good; a bridge built with governmental funds and usable
by all is a public good. Second, it can be taken abstractly as meaning “that which is, or is considered to be, good.” So the fact that the streets are secure and safe may be a public good; that I have spent an enjoyable evening in conversation with a friend might be an instance of a private good. In neither of these cases is the “good” in question an object. Third, “goods” can mean “conceptions of the good,” and the adjectives “public” and “private” can then be construed either as equivalent to what grammarians used to call “subjective” or to “objective” genitives, that is, as meaning “one conception (among a possible variety of conceptions) of the good held by the public” or “one conception (among a possible variety of conceptions) of that which is good for the public.”

Argumentation is an important part of politics, moral reflection, and social life in general, and the philosophical study of politics has understandably focused on technical analysis of the stringency and plausibility of the arguments presented by theorists. Politics, however, also contains other elements that one could call rhetorical, motivational, or ideological; because of their practical importance, these elements do not deserve to be completely ignored. Thus there are perfectly good arguments that do not convince; arguments that, although they carry a kind of conviction, fail to
motivate; finally there are considerations, arguments, and ways of seeing the world that seem irresistibly plausible (and perhaps also motivationally compelling) at a certain time to members of certain groups, although outsiders can see in them only tissues of delusion or theoretically ad hoc constructions.

The public/private distinction is such an ideological concretion. Disparate components—conceptual fragments, theories, folk reactions, crude distinctions that are useful in highly specific practical contexts, tacit value assumptions—from different sources and belonging to different spheres have come together historically in an unclear way and have accumulated around themselves a kind of capital of self-evidence, plausibility, and motivational force. The unreflective use of distinctions such as this one restricts our possibilities of perceiving and understanding our world. It also can have the effect of casting a vague glow of approbation on highly undeserving features of our world or possible courses of action (or, alternatively, of shining the blinding light of unwarranted suspicion on possibilities we would do well to consider sympathetically). Unraveling the connections between different senses of “private” and “public” can help break the hold the public/private distinction has on our minds and allow us to see that po-
Political and moral options are available to us that might have been more difficult to see, or to evaluate positively, before.

The various senses in which the terms *public* and *private* are and have been used are numerous, much more numerous and varied than I could coherently discuss in a brief essay. Rather than proceeding either by trying to sketch fully the history of the various ways the terms *public* and *private* have been used or trying to draw further abstract distinctions between these senses, I would like instead to begin by discussing three more or less concrete instances of human behavior. Each instance is an action performed by a known historical figure who lived in the Mediterranean basin during the period we call “Antiquity,” and each illustrates an aspect of our conception of the public and the private. Since my point is precisely the lack of a single unitary intuition informing these varying conceptions, I need not (and do not) claim either historical or conceptual completeness for my account.
Diogenes of Sinope, who lived in the fourth century B.C., was in the habit of masturbating in the middle of the Athenian marketplace. He was not pathologically unaware of his surroundings, psychotic, or simple-minded. Nor was he living in a society that stood at the very beginning of what Elias calls “the process of civilization”; that is, he was not living in a society fairly low on what we take to be the scale of our cultural evolution, one in which such forms of behavior were not yet subject to systematic disapproval and socially regulated. Rather, we know that the Athenians objected to his mode of life in general and to this form of behavior in particular. They clearly considered him a kind of public nuisance and made their disapproval known to him. We know this because the
doxographic tradition specifically records Diogenes’ response to a criticism of his masturbating in public. He is said to have replied that he wished only that it were as easy to satisfy hunger by just rubbing one’s belly.\(^3\)

Why, exactly, was this action offensive? I suggest three distinct reasons. First, it has been argued convincingly that many societies, including, notably, most contemporary Western European societies, are governed by a tacit principle about how one is to comport oneself in public places that has been called the principle of “civil inattention” or “disattendability.”\(^4\) A public place is a place where I can expect to be observed by “anyone who happens to be there,” that is, by people I do not know personally and who have not necessarily given their explicit consent to entering into close interaction with me. The marketplace in an ancient city is, par excellence, such a public environment: different people, who will not necessarily be known to one another, and who, at one level, have different, unpredictable, and perhaps incompatible purposes, preferences, and tastes, come into physical proximity with one another, each pursuing his or her own distinct business. The principle of disattendability states that in such contexts and places I am to be unobtrusive or, at any rate, to avoid being systematically obtrusive. In other words, I am to
allow the other whom I may encounter to disattend to me, to get on with whatever business he or she has without needing to take account of me. I am not to force myself on anyone’s attention. Masturbating is an action we would normally classify as voluntary, but the principle of disattendability extends to all features of me that might call attention to themselves, even those not at all subject to my control, such as lacking a nose; that is, it applies before or below the level at which we distinguish the voluntary from the involuntary. Thus a pair of Siamese twins joined at the head who appear in public by going shopping violate the rule of disattendability even though they are in no sense responsible for the condition that makes them violate the rule. They may be thought to violate the rules of behavior in public simply by being the way they are; their very existence can, as it were, be construed as an automatic affront. Violations of the principle of disattendability seem to fall into two groups: (a) stigmas in the strict sense, that is, “natural” (as we would call them) features that cannot be changed by those who have them (whether congenital, as with Siamese twins, or acquired, as with the loss of one’s nose in an accident) or social (being born in the wrong place, having the wrong kind of surname, etc.); and (b) failures of competence. The second group in turn
includes: (1) violations resulting from ignorance about what competence it is appropriate to exercise (not knowing that one genuflects in the direction of the altar in a particular church); (2) violations resulting from failure to acquire a competence (never having learned the complex “leg discipline” that governs behavior in public); (3) violations resulting from fatigue, momentary lapse of attention, etc.; (4) voluntary failure to exercise a competence that one has; and (5) willful violation with the intention of insulting those present. Diogenes violates this principle of disattendability, certainly voluntarily and probably willfully, and so acts in an offensive way.

The second reason why Diogenes’ action is offensive is that many societies hold not just to the principle of disattendability in public places but also to a principle of avoiding near occasions of envy; that is, it is thought to be inappropriate to exhibit the satisfaction of certain basic, imperative human needs in the presence of others if that satisfaction is problematic, precarious, or otherwise not to be taken for granted. Thus in many preindustrial societies one never eats in the presence of someone else who is not also eating, and I suggest that the reason for this, at least in part, is because food is a relatively scarce and uncertain good in some societies. Diogenes is also reported
to have been reproached for eating in the marketplace. Historically as food becomes more plentiful, this taboo also often relaxes. Sexual gratification can be seen to have a similar structure, given the way social and other factors restrict opportunities in many societies. Thus there is a taboo on showing that one is being or has recently been sexually satisfied in a public place where others are present who may not be, or may not have recently been, thus gratified. Diogenes violates this taboo, too.

To see the third reason for the offensiveness of Diogenes’ action, it is useful to recall another story told about him. One day, it is reported, he was discoursing in the marketplace, trying to instruct the Athenians on how one ought to live one’s life; when no one paid him any attention, he began to whistle. People gathered around, and he then berated them for paying attention to the senseless noise of someone whistling when they paid no attention to philosophical instruction. Whistling, because it is hard to ignore, violates the principle of disattendability, but under normal circumstances it generates no envy. Masturbating is presumably also hard to ignore, and sexual gratification is a possible object of envy, but Diogenes’ action offends in yet another way, and this further dimension is the third reason why Diogenes’ be-
behavior is offensive: the action that calls attention to itself is not simply an action that is in itself relatively innocuous, like speaking in an excessively loud voice, whistling, or eating, but it is an action that is inherently connected with the production of a substance thought by many to be dirty, disgusting, or polluting.\textsuperscript{11} Humans, that is, make a distinction between two broad categories of things: the pure, clean, or fair and the foul, polluted, or dirty.\textsuperscript{12} In response to the foul, polluted, or dirty, we have one of a series of possible negative reactions ranging from a mild disinclination through distaste and active avoidance to the extreme disgust that expresses itself in violent retching. If I involuntarily vomit up something presented to me as food, my body is unambiguously refusing it. Vomiting up something is somatically asserting in a very vivid way that that thing is “different” from me; it is drawing a barrier between myself and the “food.” In many societies I can spit as a similar expression of a slightly more intellectualized disgust, thereby distancing myself morally from a kind of behavior of which I disapprove.\textsuperscript{13} The objects of these negative reactions that are of interest to me in this context are certain human bodily activities, such as eating, drinking, excreting, or secreting; certain objects associated with these activities; and then, by extension, certain
sights, feels, smells, textures, and tastes that call to mind these bodily activities or their products and concomitants.  

Many of the basic bodily activities that call forth this reaction are ones that are central to our well-being but that are also associated with forms of human vulnerability. They often concern things on the boundary between the inside and the outside of the human body. For all these reasons they are a natural and understandable locus of feelings of anxiety.

Although reactions of avoidance and disgust seem to be rooted in basic facts of human biology and exist in all human societies, the particular form they take is culturally shaped and is acquired only through a long process of training. Children do not need to be taught to withdraw their hands when they put them in a fire, but they notoriously do need to be taught to have the proper reactions of disgust to their own excrement.

The way that this categorical distinction between the pure/clean, on the one hand, and the polluting/filthy, on the other, is drawn may differ from person to person and from society to society, and the intensity and exact nature of the reaction that the polluting elicits will also vary. What causes merely a mild avoidance reaction in one person may cause active retching in a more fastidious member of a society of a certain kind. Thus it is often said that
the taboos on urinating in public are less strict (for men at any rate) in Japan than in the West, but that Japanese find any touching or scratching of the nose highly disgusting. Nevertheless the variation does not seem to be fully and simply random (in the way that more strictly cultural variation is). Although taboos on urinating in public may be looser in Japan, they do exist; one would not urinate just anywhere. There does seem to be a set of humanly shared, more central phenomena that will be the objects of disgust if anything is, and will be the objects of the strongest disgust, and there also seems to be a kind of order of disgust. Almost anyone who is capable of being disgusted by anything is disgusted by feces or cannibalism; many people in many cultures (but not all people in all cultures) are disgusted by blood; and slightly fewer are repelled by rank smells, and so forth.

It is curious that although disgust almost surely has its basis in some deeply rooted biological reactions, it is not just culturally highly malleable as far as its object is concerned; it also has a peculiar transformative power and is symbolically highly transferable. If I give my neighbor poison, I harm her; if I give her a picture of poison, I do not (generally speaking) harm or even offend her. In stark contrast, while real feces directly provokes strong disgust, pictures of feces often evoke a milder ver-
sion of the same reaction, and in some societies even words for feces are to be used with care. Thus one can see that Diogenes might provoke disgust even were the semen he produced not visible—the very fact that bystanders knew he was masturbating might provoke in them at least a mild version of the full revulsion they would feel had they actually seen the semen. The structure of disgust, then, is like the structure of certain forms of primitive magic. Disgust can render its objects so magically contagious that they infect anything even indirectly or ideationally associated with them, causing mild reactions of revulsion even to representations of disgusting objects, even to the mere knowledge that something disgusting was taking place.

Finally, a strong interpersonal component seems to play a role in these reactions in that many things that would disgust me if someone else did them do not always disgust me when I do them. Even a person of great and delicate sensibility may, in some circumstances, pick her own nose without any visible signs of distress, although she would be deeply disgusted by such behavior in someone else.

In the interpersonal realm, a rough correlation exists between certain forms of disgust and shame. Diogenes should be ashamed of doing what he does in a place where others can see him. In our society, the generation of intimacy is often con-
nected with overcoming the normal boundaries of disgust, so that intimate friends do things in one another’s presence without shame (on the one hand) and disgust/offense (on the other) that they would not do in the presence even of good acquaintances, that is, of people who are not simply anonymous others but persons whom they know, and perhaps even like, but who are not special and intimate friends. This can be connected with the notion that an intimate friend becomes, as it were, a “part” of me, and so I extend my lack of disgust from my own bodily smells, secretions, and so on, to encompass those of the intimate friend. I do not think this is a precisely correct account of intimacy, at least between adults, because it overlooks a crucial distinction, namely, the distinction between things for which I never develop feelings of shame and disgust—unless I am extremely disturbed, I will never have developed a reaction of disgust to my own urinating—and the process of overcoming a barrier that is established between people. It is part of the pleasure that a devotee of “high” game or of strong cheeses experiences to overcome the ever so slight revulsion that could be caused by the smell. The existence of the barrier itself is part of the attraction and contributes to the pleasure experienced in overcoming it.
Since others, however, may generally be more fastidious than I am, and even those who are no more fastidious may find things I do offensive, although I find them unobjectionable (when I do them), we classify many actions as the kinds of things that ought to be performed only where they are not noticeable to others, that is, where others cannot see, hear, touch, or smell them. That is what is meant by performing things “only in private.” As a decent person, in other words, I take account of the fear others may have of being sullied or disgusted by my actions and therefore do not force them to observe certain things I do. I may have a concern for another’s possible reactions even if I think them ungrounded or excessive. This is one point at which this discussion is connected with the issue of tolerance. I do not simply tolerate that others behave differently, smell bad, and so on, but I also actively accept that sociability imposes on me a requirement of self-restraint which I might myself find superfluous. Being myself of a relatively robust and insouciant constitution, I would probably not be much bothered if we all stank like goats, but still I wash. Note that toleration here will probably have a rather different structure from the toleration of divergent opinions which has been central to much liberal think-
Usually I am thought to have better or less good grounds for my opinions, but I do not always have “grounds” in any analogous sense for simple reactions of disgust.

Diogenes’ conscious flouting of this principle of decency and consideration for others is connected with his pursuit of an ideal of individual self-sufficiency. There are, of course, in principle, at least three distinct ways of trying to attain self-sufficiency, first by reducing one’s needs and desires so as to make them easily attainable by one’s own efforts, and, second, by increasing one’s powers. The third possibility is to combine both of these in some way. Diogenes adopted this third approach but gave pride of place within the synthesis to the first. The mere unvarnished advice, however, to try to reduce one’s desires and needs is not really sufficiently determinate and informative to be a useful guide on how to live one’s life. It is self-defeating to try to reduce one’s desire for food below a certain minimal level, and how then do I know which of my desires and needs I should try to reduce and to what level? On this issue Diogenes is a rationalist. He believes that “right reason” (δικὴ λογικὴ) will show us that some needs and desires are unavoidable, necessary, and imperative, like the basic human bodily needs that must be satisfied if
CHAPTER II

human life is to be maintained. It makes no sense to try to get rid of these, although, of course, it might make good sense to consider in what way and to what extent some bodily needs, such as hunger, are to be satisfied. Diogenes calls these needs and desires that can be seen as rationally necessary “natural” (needs, desires, etc.). Such natural needs (and desires), he thought, were relatively easy to satisfy and were to be strictly distinguished from the needs and desires that arise by convention, that is, that are engendered in us by forces in human society. Hunger is a natural need and can be satisfied with a wide variety of things that come to hand; the desire to dine off porcelain is conventional. Conventional or artificial needs are overwhelmingly those that we cannot easily satisfy by ourselves. If we then can learn to restrict ourselves to natural needs, we will end up with a budget of needs that is as close as we can get to one that will allow us to be self-sufficient. Precisely because artificial or conventional needs are not imposed on us by natural necessity, one might think it should be relatively easy to rid ourselves of them, but Diogenes does not think that we can attain the ideal of self-sufficiency without effort or training (askesis). We can distinguish three parts to Diogenes’ “askesis.” First, Diogenes subjected himself to the usual training in bearing with the natural rig-
ors and inconveniences of human life, that is, in controlling natural reactions to changes in the surrounding environment. Thus as humans we suffer from extremes of temperature, but with some practice, it is claimed, we can make ourselves less bothered by such external states of temperature. So Diogenes is reported to have practiced embracing statues in the winter to accustom himself to bearing the cold. Second, we can try to overcome socially inculcated, but merely conventional, reactions to possible ways of satisfying our natural needs. Thus many societies inculcate in their members an aversion to eating human flesh, even the flesh of healthy young people who die in accidents. Overcoming socially generated prejudices like these is, Diogenes thinks, an integral part of the philosopher’s task. Third, and finally, there are socially generated needs strictly so called, like the need for a good reputation, that is, for the good opinion of one’s fellows. One important way that one maintains the good opinion of others is precisely by observing the usual rules of decent behavior. These rules will be of the form that one “ought to be ashamed to . . . (e.g., eat human flesh, defecate in public).” In Diogenes’ view, if human flesh is nourishing and easily available, I should, if I am trying to lead a good life, try to overcome my aversion to eating it, but if I am living in a society
like those in which most of us have grown up, overcoming my own aversion will not be the end of the story. Even if I have no reaction of disgust or revulsion, others might have such a reaction. We often take this as a reason not to do certain things in public. Actually there might be two slightly different reasons: (a) decency demands that I not subject others to situations that will arouse their disgust—even if that disgust is based on a false view, such as that cannibalism is contrary to divine law, or, within limits, on a personal fastidiousness slightly more excessive than my own; and (b) prudence demands that I be concerned with what others think of me, because if they hold me in contempt because of my personal habits or public behavior, they may not come to my aid in moments of need. The first of these is a demand to have positive consideration for others, the second a demand that arises out of fear that I will fail to get assistance I might need. Diogenes rejects both these reasons. Canons of decency are artificial and thus irrational, and the truly self-reliant person has no need of others, so the argument from prudence fails.

Self-sufficiency requires, then, both the “positive” development of my powers and at the same time the “negative” reduction of my needs to those
that are “natural.” Further it requires the elimination of all needs merely social in origin. Since the inculcation of a sense of shame, the uncomfortable feeling I have when I am seen, or imagine myself to be seen, to violate a principle of social decency is the main mechanism by which I become bound to the artificial needs that society generates in me, true self-sufficiency requires complete shamelessness. The model for the second, negative part of my task as an incipient philosopher is the dog, which ignores human social conventions and is completely free of any form of shame. From the dog (κόνων) the followers of Diogenes acquired their name: Cynics. Complete shamelessness—learning to ignore others’ negative reactions of disgust at one’s appearance and behavior—is the only true road to the self-sufficiency that is the distinguishing characteristic of the good human life. The Cynics considered Herakles to be a kind of precursor and patron saint of their mode of life, because they saw him as the archetype of the self-sufficiency they sought. There are, however, two marked differences between Herakles and Diogenes. First, Herakles made no attempt to reduce his needs and desires. He was, on the contrary, notorious for his crude and unbridled passions, especially for his monstrous gluttony, and, given his great
strength, he could easily afford to indulge himself. Second, Herakles was dependent on no one because of his great power, but, in the standard versions at any rate, his life was devoted to “Kulturarbeit” of an altruistic, even if not strictly political, kind. His characteristic “labor” is freeing a community from the scourge of a monster that ravages it, thereby conferring on the population a distinct communal benefit. The Cynics adopted the goal of self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) without the altruism.

To follow the Cynic path is to be deeply unpolitical in two senses. First, by aspiring to complete self-sufficiency one tries to remove oneself from the state of mutual dependence on other humans, which is one of the basic preconditions of politics. Second, to assume an attitude of complete indifference to others’ opinions, and especially to behave in ways one knows others will find disgusting, is consciously to produce in others the experience of a barrier and tacitly to give them to understand that one expects to be able to do without their assistance, an assumption they might, justifiably or not, find insulting. To act with calculated indifference to particular others in particular circumstances is a political ploy that may succeed or fail in its effect, but to erect such barriers consciously,
系统地，普遍地对所有他人在所有情况下，要想把自己置于政治之外，必须PosX
地表达为‘市民于世界’——但他的‘世界公民’身份是纯粹的消极意
识。当一个愤世嫉俗者声称自己不是任何一个特殊城市的市民时，他
并不是因为他设想了一个能够包容这一切的城市，他在其中是公民；
而是因为他认为没有这样一个能具体体现的、甚至可想象的政治组
织，它能为他本应理性地成为其公民。愤世嫉俗者的‘世界公民’主
义”仅仅意味着拒绝任何形式的具体政治参与或与他周围世界的
接触。当然，完全有可能采取愤世嫉俗者克服羞耻的意向，即不感
觉羞耻地做那些被传统认为羞耻的事情，而同时又不以公共行为
的方式把这种主观上的羞耻感强加于他人，使他们感到反感。不过，
看来有一个非常重要的教育因素影响了Diogenes将这种无耻感强加
到他人的身上。

Socrates could have been construed as doing something similar in living the kind of life
he did. Unsympathetic observers saw him as an idle, interfering busybody; such hyperactive meddling (πολυπραγμοσύνη)\textsuperscript{29} was itself a violation of the canons of polite behavior that are a refinement of the principle of civil inattention. Socrates, however, although in the heat of an argument he is sometimes accused of being disgusting,\textsuperscript{30} is not really shameless. In Plato’s *Apology* Socrates asserts that he is so busy obeying the god’s injunction to investigate claims to wisdom that he has no time for the affairs of the city or his own,\textsuperscript{31} so he takes no part in the everyday politics of Athens,\textsuperscript{32} but he is also the opposite of a cosmopolitan. He was well known for never leaving Athens, never even going outside the city walls,\textsuperscript{33} except when on military service, and Plato has him refuse, on the grounds of his attachment and loyalty to the city, either to propose exile from Athens as a punishment in place of execution or to escape from prison, even though this was possible.\textsuperscript{34} Plato’s Socrates claims that he is a public benefactor who deserves to be given free dinners by the πόλις because of the good he has done the city,\textsuperscript{35} and in the *Gorgias*\textsuperscript{36} Socrates is made to describe himself as the only true politician Athens has. His mode of life is as a series of political acts par excellence, because his action is aimed not at filling the city with new harbors, new
theaters, and new stadia, or gaining Olympic victories, but at improving the souls of the Athenians. It is hard to see how Diogenes could have made a similar claim for his behavior. In this, too, Diogenes seems to be an exaggeration of a trait the germ of which can be found in Socrates, in this case a didacticism about the good life for the individual that can lead toward an exit from the world of politics altogether. As Plato (according to Diogenes Laertius) said, Diogenes of Sinope was “Socrates gone mad.”

We can truly say that Diogenes did “in public” what we (and the Athenians) think ought to be done only “in private,” despite the fact that the Athenians did not have individual words for our concepts of “public” or “private.” When we say Diogenes did something “in public,” they said he did it “in the ἅγορά.” Once we have the concepts of “public” and “private” we can retrospectively apply them even to cases involving agents who had no analogous concepts, provided there is sufficient similarity in the situations in question and provided the agents have sufficiently similar reactions and attitudes. In this particular case we have ample evidence that the Athenians did have a reaction similar to one familiar to us from our own time and that they connected it with similar properties
of the situation—that Diogenes’ action took place in conditions where it could hardly fail to be noticed by people who were not intimate friends of his (that is, in the αγορά).

In conclusion, then, there seem to be two slightly different notions of “public/private” here, corresponding to the two reasons why Diogenes’ behavior is offensive. In sense (a), the “public” space is the area “anyone” can enter and to which the principle of disattendability applies, and “the public” are those people whom I allow to get on with their affairs without disturbing them; a “private space” is one where I need not worry about violating the principle of disattendability, and a “private friend” (to use a somewhat old-fashioned phrase) is someone who is not just an anonymous “anyone” but someone with whom my relations go beyond those governed solely by the principle of civil inattention—I may stop to chat with this friend even if doing so calls attention to myself. In fact, if I encounter someone I know in the marketplace and treat that person as a stranger—fail to greet him or her—that action may in this case count as insulting. Two principles seem to be operating concurrently here: that I acknowledge friends and acquaintances, and that I allow strangers to disattend to me. In sense (b), “the public” are those whom I take special care not to offend by
potentially polluting actions, even if I know them personally (but not intimately); the “private sphere” encompasses my intimate friends. Thus at a dinner party among professional colleagues a parent may say to a child, who has used an especially rude or vulgar expression or launched into a detailed description of certain bodily functions: “We don’t say that (or, don’t discuss that) in public.” In sense (a) a dinner party is not a public occasion, but in sense (b) it is.