

VI. Laws of Divine Establishment and the Royal Family Honor Code: Dorian Gray;

diastrepho - “make crooked; to pervert”

Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, s.v. “diastrepho”:

Refers to objects that turn out as failures in the hands of a clumsy workman, and whose shape is therefore distorted; a vessel on the potter's wheel.

fig. Perverted in a moral sense, depraved.

Matthew 17:17 - And Jesus answered and said, “O unbelieving and perverted generation ...” To teach perversions of truth.

Acts 20:29 - “I [Paul] know that after my departure [from the church at Ephesus] savage wolves will come in among you [false teachers from without], not sparing the flock;

Acts 20:30 - “and from among your own selves’ men will arise [false teachers from within], speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “diastrepho”:

twisted, warped, distorted.

There are many good English words which could be used to translate this word but in order to choose one we will first analyze the verb *diastrepho*:

It is a perfect passive participle. A participle is an adjective which functions as a verb, taking on both voice and tense.

It is used to limit or qualify a noun and assigns it to a general class.

The noun being qualified is *genea*, translated into your English Bibles as “nation” in the KJV, and “generation” in both the NIV and NAS.

It is describing, along with “crooked,” the condition of soul possessed by inhabitants of the first-century Roman Empire.

perfect - (*diastrepho*) Intensive; The perfect is the tense of completed action. It connotes the progress of an act or status to a point of culmination and the existence of its finished results.

It implies a process, but views that process as having reached its consummation and existing in a finished state. Thus, the perversion has advanced to the point that it has crystallized in the souls of the Roman people.

passive - The subjects—citizens of the Roman Empire—receive the action of the verb.

They have become distorted by outside adversities which they were unable to withstand. This created internal stress which led to the finished result: distortion of their souls.

participle - Indicates a past perversion that has left its victims in a distorted position.

Diastrepho literally means “to make a complete turn,” “to change completely.”

The citizens of Rome had been under the assault of outside adversities which in this negative sense are best described as perversions.

Being unable to defend their souls with either establishment morality or Biblical problem-solving devices, they, over time, became distorted and twisted in their thoughts, decisions, and actions.

This is the idea behind the passive voice—they received the action of the verb.

Faculty members of the Cosmic Academy have taught the cosmic curriculum in Rome for so long that the majority of the population has suffered an inversion of thought.

Remember, Arndt and Gingrich define the word as referring to “*an object that turns out as a failure in the hands of a clumsy workman and whose shape is therefore distorted.*”

They give as an example “*a vessel on the potter’s wheel.*”

Our Lord indicated that the people of Israel had been twisted by the perversion of truth taught by the false teachers of that day.

The translation “*perverted*” is an acceptable translation, but it fails to bring into view the passive voice.

Perversion is a process which is imposed upon another which produces a result. The end result is what needs to be emphasized.

There are two words in the English which best bring out this idea:

Distort. **Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “distort”:**

1. *To put out of shape by twisting or drawing awry; to change to an unnatural shape; to render crooked, unshapely, or deformed.*
2. *fig. To give a twist or erroneous turn to the mind, thoughts, views; to pervert or misrepresent statements [or] facts.*

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “distort”:

To twist out of a natural, normal, or original shape or condition.

Contort: **Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “contort”:**

To twist; to draw awry; to distort greatly.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “contort”:

To twist in a violent manner. distort and contort both imply a wrenching from the natural, normal, or justly proportioned, but contort suggests a more involved twisting and a more grotesque and painful result.

Thus, in order to bring out the full meaning of the idea behind the perfect passive participle, we are going to translate *diastrepho* by both “*perverted and contorted.*”

“*Crooked, perverted, and contorted*” is the horrible description of the present condition of the Roman people, indicated by the genitive of description from the singular noun: *genea* - “*generation; age.*”

It is impossible to look into a fellow human’s soul. In every generation there are those who learn to maintain an acceptable outward appearance but which only conceals a contorted soul within.

In late twentieth-century America, we have learned to shroud our perverted passions and our contorted souls behind very sophisticated facades of politically-correct speech and a values-neutral philosophy.

There is a classic motion picture which demonstrates the contortions of a soul that is exposed to the influence of the doctrines of demons. The movie is entitled, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Dorian is a highly moral man who falls under the influence of the evil Lord Henry Wotton. Although Dorian's physical appearance never changes, his picture, actually a portrait done of him by his friend, Basil Hallward, does. It becomes a visible chronicle of the contortions suffered by Dorian's soul following his every act of decadence. Should you rent the movie, be sure to get the black-and-white, 1945 version starring George Sanders as Lord Henry, Hurd Hatfield as Dorian, and Lowell Gilmore as Basil Hallward.

Interestingly, the movie is based on the only novel of Oscar Wilde who was a proponent of a movement in England called Aestheticism. This philosophy was the product of French writer Theophile \The-af-i-lee\ Gautier \Go-tya\ who coined the phrase, "*art for art's sake*." This viewpoint disregarded conventional morality and insisted on the sovereignty of the beautiful. Gautier felt that art should be impersonal, free from the obligation of teaching moral lessons. What has become 20th-century art finds its origins in aestheticism.

Oscar Wilde believed that "*there is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all.*"

Slyly combine this attitude with our nation's First Amendment and you can see how the art and entertainment industry is able to justify the display of any perversion as protected speech. Art is for art's sake. There is no requirement to measure up to a moral standard nor is art to be concerned with reflecting moral standards.

In England those who subscribed to this movement were called the Decadents while in France the term was fin- de-siècle \fan-de-see-ekl\, which means literally "*end of the century*." It identified the last decade of the 19th century as a period of world-weariness—boredom with life and especially with material pleasures. The arts community—writers, entertainers, actors, artists—developed a decadent attitude toward morality which was reflected in both their work and their lifestyle.

The viewpoint "*art for art's sake*" thus describes the motivation behind the decadence we see today within the American entertainment industry. The "*end-of-the-century decadence*" implied by the term fin-de-siecle has been prolonged throughout the 20th-century's entertainment and arts communities and has indeed intensified to new levels in this final decade of the second millennium.

Poor decisions based on self-indulgence without reference to moral standards is self-destructive. When a faculty member of the Cosmic Academy, Lord Henry Wotton, introduces immoral principles to the soul of a moral unbeliever, Dorian Gray, and Gray reluctantly puts them into practice and likes the results, his decisions begin to contort his soul into a grotesque monster which is reflected in his portrait.

Faculty members of the Cosmic Academy are today perverting the souls of our children in every possible way. The fact that their souls have been contorted into grotesque monsters is reflected in the astronomical increase in crime, violence, promiscuity, and disease.

Interestingly, the morality which the Aesthetic Movement sought to ignore in 1890's England was established by Queen Victoria. In 1990s America, we have come to discover that Queen Victoria was right.

Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Queen Victoria Was Right," USA Today, Monday, 13 March 1995, 15A: