



The Abolition of Man





1943





**“Reflections on education with special
reference to the teaching of English in the
upper forms of schools”**

“I doubt whether we are sufficiently attentive to the importance of elementary text books.”

Opening line of *The Abolition of Man*



A Romantic-style landscape painting of a wide, powerful waterfall. The water is depicted with vibrant green and blue hues, cascading over a rocky ledge. A bright rainbow arches through the mist created by the falling water. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, and a small rainbow is visible on the far left. The foreground shows turbulent, dark water with white foam and a small, dark, rocky outcrop. The overall mood is one of natural grandeur and beauty.

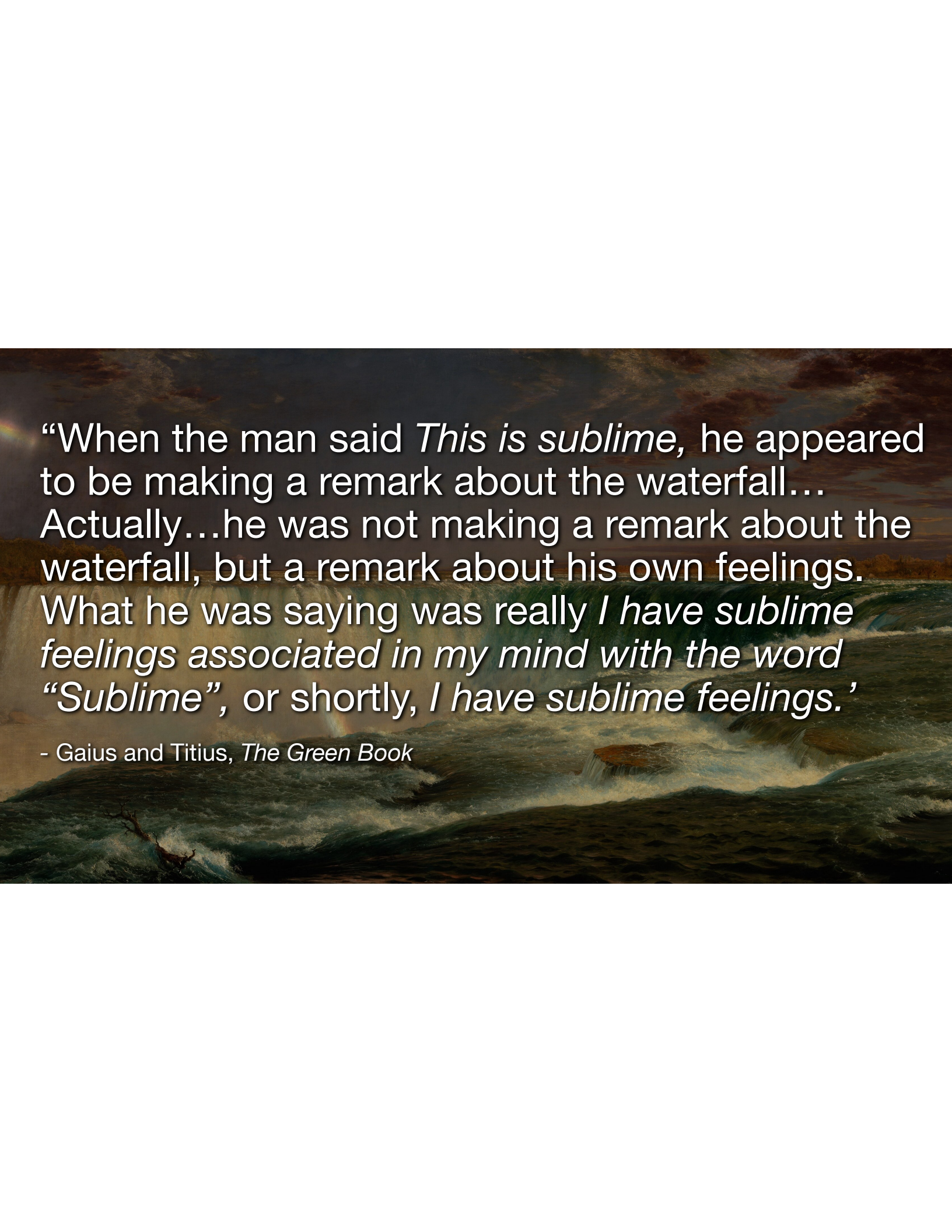
“Sublime”

“Pretty”

A Romantic-style landscape painting of a wide waterfall. The water is depicted with vibrant green and blue hues, cascading over a rocky ledge. A rainbow is visible in the mist at the base of the falls. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, and a small rainbow is also visible on the left side of the sky. The overall mood is sublime and majestic.

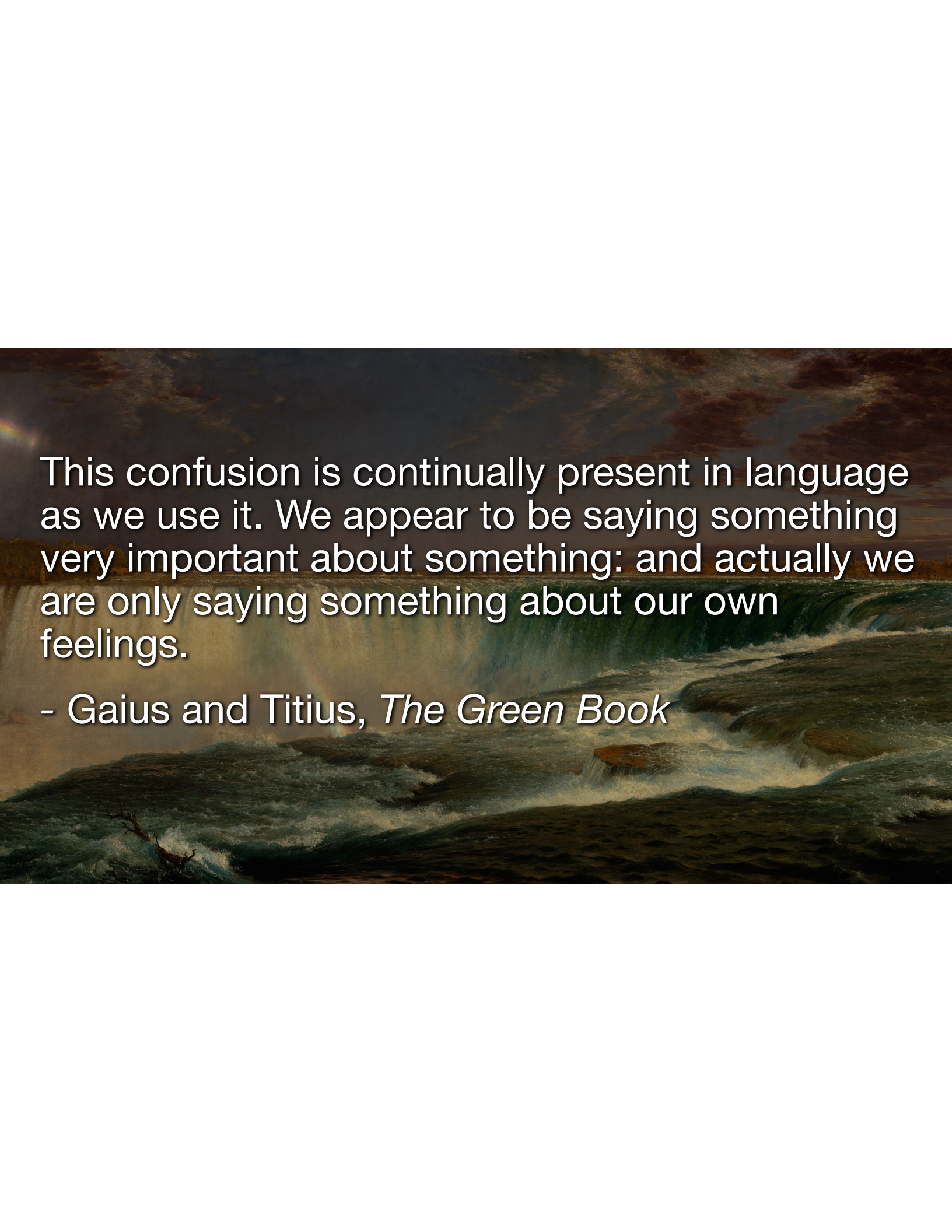
“Sublime”

“Pretty”

The background of the image is a painting of a powerful waterfall cascading over dark, jagged rocks. The water is depicted with dynamic, swirling brushstrokes in shades of dark green, blue, and white. In the upper left, a faint rainbow is visible against a dark, stormy sky with heavy, dark clouds. The overall mood is one of awe and the sublime.

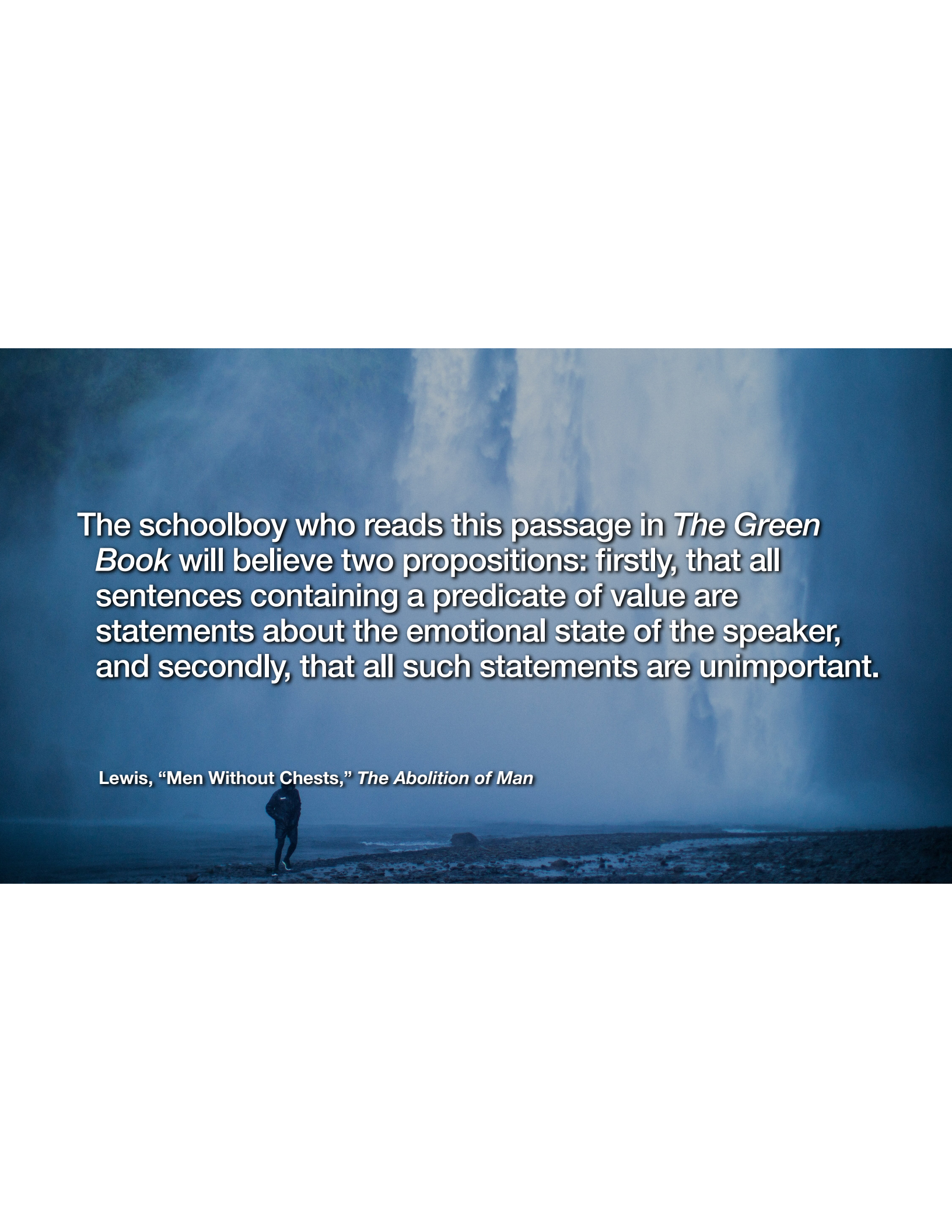
“When the man said *This is sublime*, he appeared to be making a remark about the waterfall... Actually...he was not making a remark about the waterfall, but a remark about his own feelings. What he was saying was really *I have sublime feelings associated in my mind with the word “Sublime”, or shortly, I have sublime feelings.*’

- Gaius and Titius, *The Green Book*

A dramatic painting of a waterfall with a rainbow in the background. The scene is dark and moody, with a large waterfall cascading over rocks. A rainbow is visible in the misty spray of the water. The sky is dark and cloudy, with a hint of light on the left side. The overall tone is somber and contemplative.

This confusion is continually present in language as we use it. We appear to be saying something very important about something: and actually we are only saying something about our own feelings.

- Gaius and Titius, *The Green Book*

A person in dark clothing stands on a dark, rocky shore, looking out at a massive, towering waterfall. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, and the overall scene is in a cool, blue-toned color palette.

The schoolboy who reads this passage in *The Green Book* will believe two propositions: firstly, that all sentences containing a predicate of value are statements about the emotional state of the speaker, and secondly, that all such statements are unimportant.

Lewis, "Men Without Chests," *The Abolition of Man*

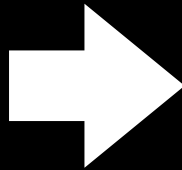
- “That cake is delicious.”
- “That waterfall is sublime.”
- “The song was beautiful.”

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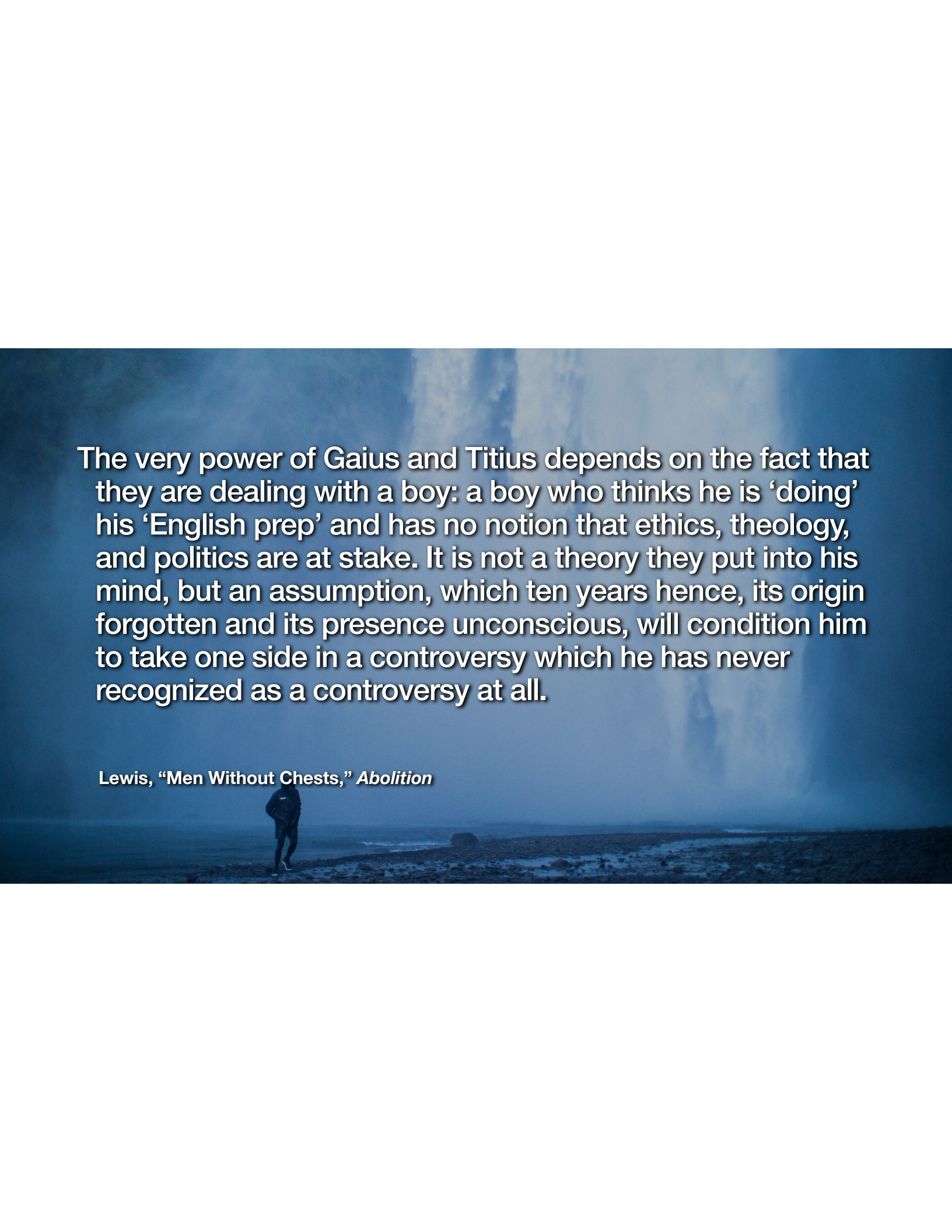
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Subjective feelings, not
objective reality

Logical Positivism

- Only statements that can be verified through direct observation or logical proof are meaningful.
- For instance:
 - It can be empirically verified (e.g. “Water boils at 100°C”)
 - It can be logically or mathematically true (e.g. “ $2+2 = 4$ ”)
- Thus, value judgements (“Murder is wrong”) are meaningless. They only express the emotions of the one holding the value (e.g. “Murder is wrong” demonstrates that the person *feels* that murder is wrong)
- This creates the ethical theory of Emotivism

A person in dark clothing stands on a dark, rocky beach, looking out at a turbulent sea under a dark, stormy sky. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

The very power of Gaius and Titius depends on the fact that they are dealing with a boy: a boy who thinks he is 'doing' his 'English prep' and has no notion that ethics, theology, and politics are at stake. It is not a theory they put into his mind, but an assumption, which ten years hence, its origin forgotten and its presence unconscious, will condition him to take one side in a controversy which he has never recognized as a controversy at all.

Lewis, "Men Without Chests," *Abolition*

“Live your truth”

“Who am I to judge?”

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”

“The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts. The right defence against false sentiments is to inculcate just sentiments. By starving the sensibility of our pupils we only make them easier prey to the propagandist when he comes. For famished nature will be avenged and a hard heart is no infallible protection against a soft head.”





Until quite modern times all teachers and even all men believed the universe to be such that certain emotional reactions on our part could be either congruous or incongruous to it—believed, in fact, that objects did not merely receive, but could merit, our approval or disapproval, our reverence or our contempt.





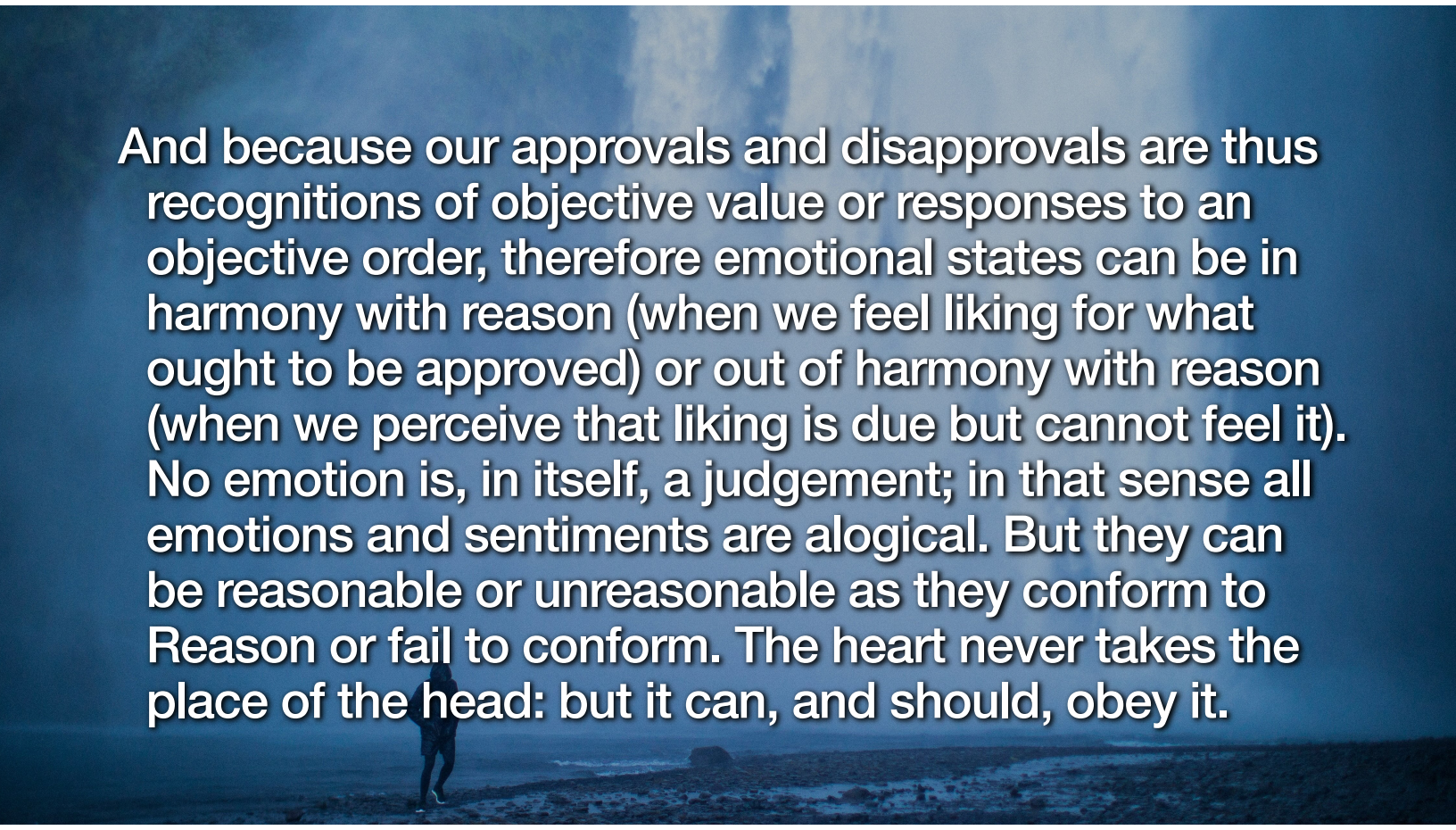
Aristotle says that the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought.

Plato before him had said the same. The little human animal will not at first have the right responses. It must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust, and hatred at those things which really are pleasant, likeable, disgusting and hateful...All this before he is of an age to reason; so that when Reason at length comes to him, then, bred as he has been, he will hold out his hands in welcome and recognize her because of the affinity he bears to her.

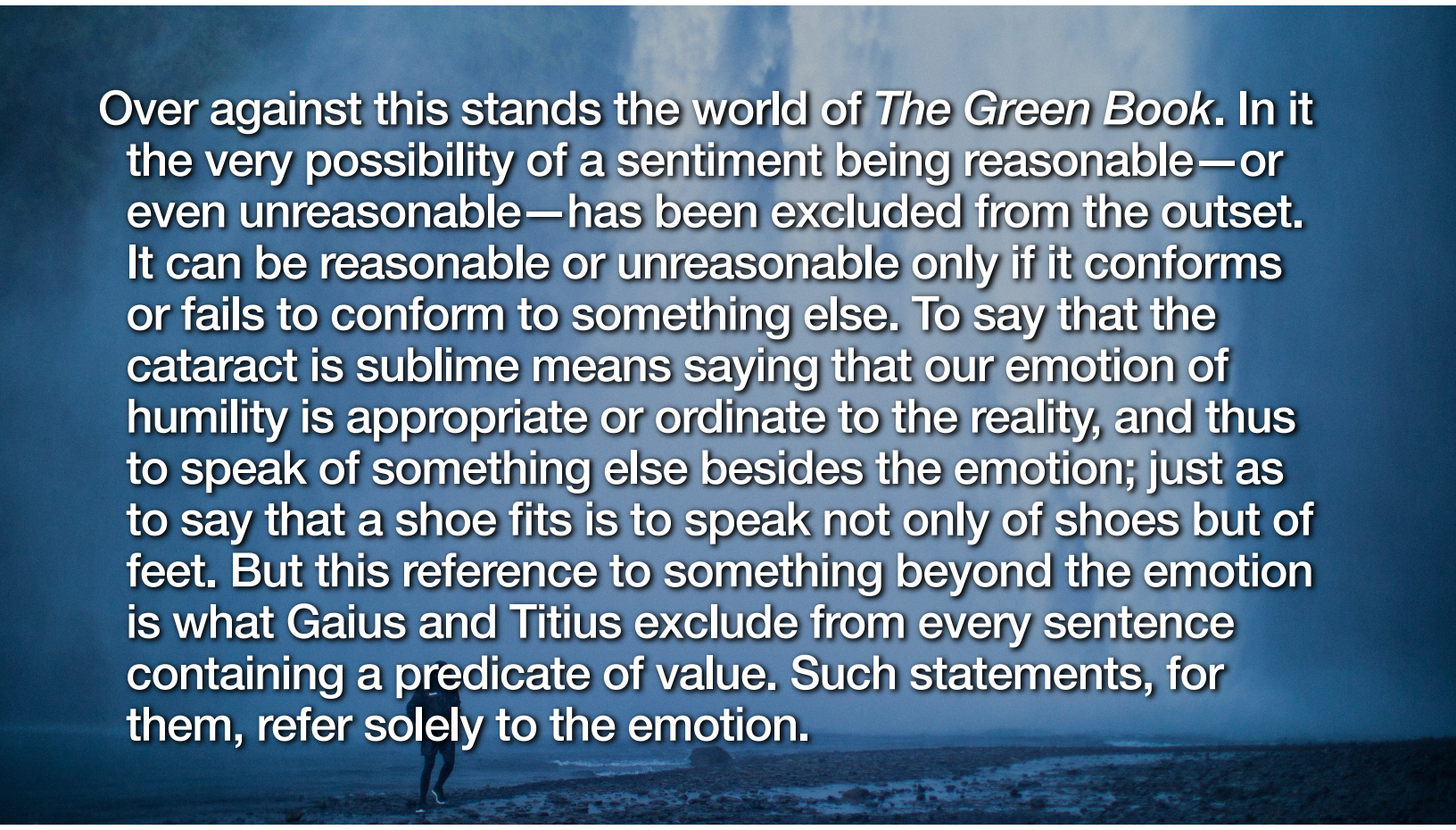


But what is common to them all is something we cannot neglect. It is the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are. Those who know the Tao can hold that to call children delightful or old men venerable is not simply to record a psychological fact about our own parental or filial emotions at the moment, but to recognize a quality which demands a certain response from us whether we make it or not.



A person is standing on a dark, rocky shore, looking out at the ocean. The sky is a deep blue with some white clouds. The text is overlaid on the image.

And because our approvals and disapprovals are thus recognitions of objective value or responses to an objective order, therefore emotional states can be in harmony with reason (when we feel liking for what ought to be approved) or out of harmony with reason (when we perceive that liking is due but cannot feel it). No emotion is, in itself, a judgement; in that sense all emotions and sentiments are alogical. But they can be reasonable or unreasonable as they conform to Reason or fail to conform. The heart never takes the place of the head: but it can, and should, obey it.

A person is standing on a dark, rocky shore, looking out at the ocean. The sky is a deep blue with some white clouds. The text is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

Over against this stands the world of *The Green Book*. In it the very possibility of a sentiment being reasonable—or even unreasonable—has been excluded from the outset. It can be reasonable or unreasonable only if it conforms or fails to conform to something else. To say that the cataract is sublime means saying that our emotion of humility is appropriate or ordinate to the reality, and thus to speak of something else besides the emotion; just as to say that a shoe fits is to speak not only of shoes but of feet. But this reference to something beyond the emotion is what Gaius and Titius exclude from every sentence containing a predicate of value. Such statements, for them, refer solely to the emotion.

