

# Summaries of at least 4 chapters of the perfection by michael hyde

[Philosophy](#)



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Introduction

“ Perfection: Coming to Terms with Being Human” by Michael Hyde is an insightful journey through the captivating arenas of the Western philosophy, science, art and religion. Published by Baylor University Press on 1st February, 2010, the book focuses on the comprehension of our concept of perfection which depends on the understanding of our culture, society, politics and religion. By the means of philosophical lens, Hyde tries to explore the perception of society regarding perfection and how it manifests and alters our comprehension of life experiences.

Thesis Statement

This essay intends to explore the contents and subtle ideas captivated within the insightful chapters bearing the titles ‘ Coming to Terms with Perfection’, ‘ God on Good Day’, and ‘ Beauty’ and ‘ Reason’.

Summary

Coming to Terms with Perfection

This is the first chapter of the book. At the outset of the book itself, Hyde tries to explore the way the philosophers like Edmund Burke and David Hume have delineated with the idea of perfection and through the general

comprehension of the terms like “ proper”, “ beauty” and “ eloquent” one can easily find the way perfection is related with the requirement for the wishes, desires, hopes and dreams of life (Hyde 1-18). Hyde explicitly tries to draw that the term ‘ perfection’ is a relative concept and how it varies with our notions of understanding and requiring the language to speak flawlessly, to raise the children in a proper way or to have a ideal sleep at night is all depending upon how one perceive the notion of perfection (Peel, “ A History of Perfection through a Philosophical Lens”).

Hyde also tries to make us comprehend that the idea of perfection plays within the notions of ambition, fear, hope and desire. Understanding of the term ‘ perfection’ by Hyde is to that extent that it intrudes the phrase of “ rotten with imperfection” in the concept in which some of the events are beyond the mundane periphery of comprehending perception to the extent that it takes the shape of something pathetic, cynical and impossible (Hyde 4). On the other hand, Hyde also throws light on the alternative concept of “ rotten with imperfection” which tentamounts to “ rotten with perfection” and it is used for explaining the medical disorders like OCD or obsessive compulsive disorder and anorexia nervosa where the desire to achieve perfect state starts controlling one’s lifestyle (Hyde 6).

#### God on a Good Day

The second chapter of the book, “ God on a Good Day” focuses on the fact that often the Greek and the Roman Gods are portrayed as the epitome of goodness or perfection. Whereas the reality is something very different from what is perceived in general. In reality, the concept of perfection is mostly flawed, changeable and flexible. Stemming from the notions like god-like

qualities inherent in the term 'goodness' or *arête* which stands again for the ideals like excellence, virtue and living life to one's optimum potentials (Hyde 19-38). Hyde manifests the notion of goodness to explain that the study or belief in goodness deforms one's perception resulting in a life that is invested in the quest for one's own goodness without even fulfilling one's desires. Hyde draws the point that Greek sophists also taught the concepts of rhetoric as well as philosophy by means of the principles of *arête* and this concept itself posits the notions of truth, self-importance and power on their students (Peel, "A History of Perfection through a Philosophical Lens").

### Beauty

The sixth chapter of the book is 'Beauty'. In this chapter, Hyde explores the idea of beauty which is often made synonymous with perfection and in order to explain this concept, Hyde draws the examples from the works of Henry Petroski, Immanuel Kant and Plato. Hyde also explicitly discusses the relationship between aesthetic mechanical beauty and mathematical and scientific beauty. And by the end of the chapter, beauty becomes analogous with the concept of truth and perfection and in comprehending the concepts like human behavior, experience, and the concept of disability, the phrase "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" takes a very strong ground (Hyde 108). Hyde presents the realistic theory that what is true, beautiful and acceptable in one case might be void from another. The perception of beauty and its analysis forms an opinion regarding the ideas concerned with genetics or genomics and is finally related to our comprehension regarding the innate perception of perfection and beauty.

### Reason

The fifth chapter of the book 'Reason' occurs just before the chapter titled 'Beauty'. Here Hyde remarks quite insightfully that "Science is reason at its best" (Hyde 77). This statement is conceived in a complete rational paradigm. According to Hyde, reasoning lies at the core of the medical, scientific and philosophical development (Peel, "A History of Perfection through a Philosophical Lens").

#### Works Cited

Hyde, Michael J. *Perfection: Coming To Terms with Being Human*. United States: Baylor University Press, 2010.

Peel, Kristina. *A History of Perfection through a Philosophical Lens*. Humanities & Social Sciences Online, Jul. 2010. Web. 23 Jun. 2012.