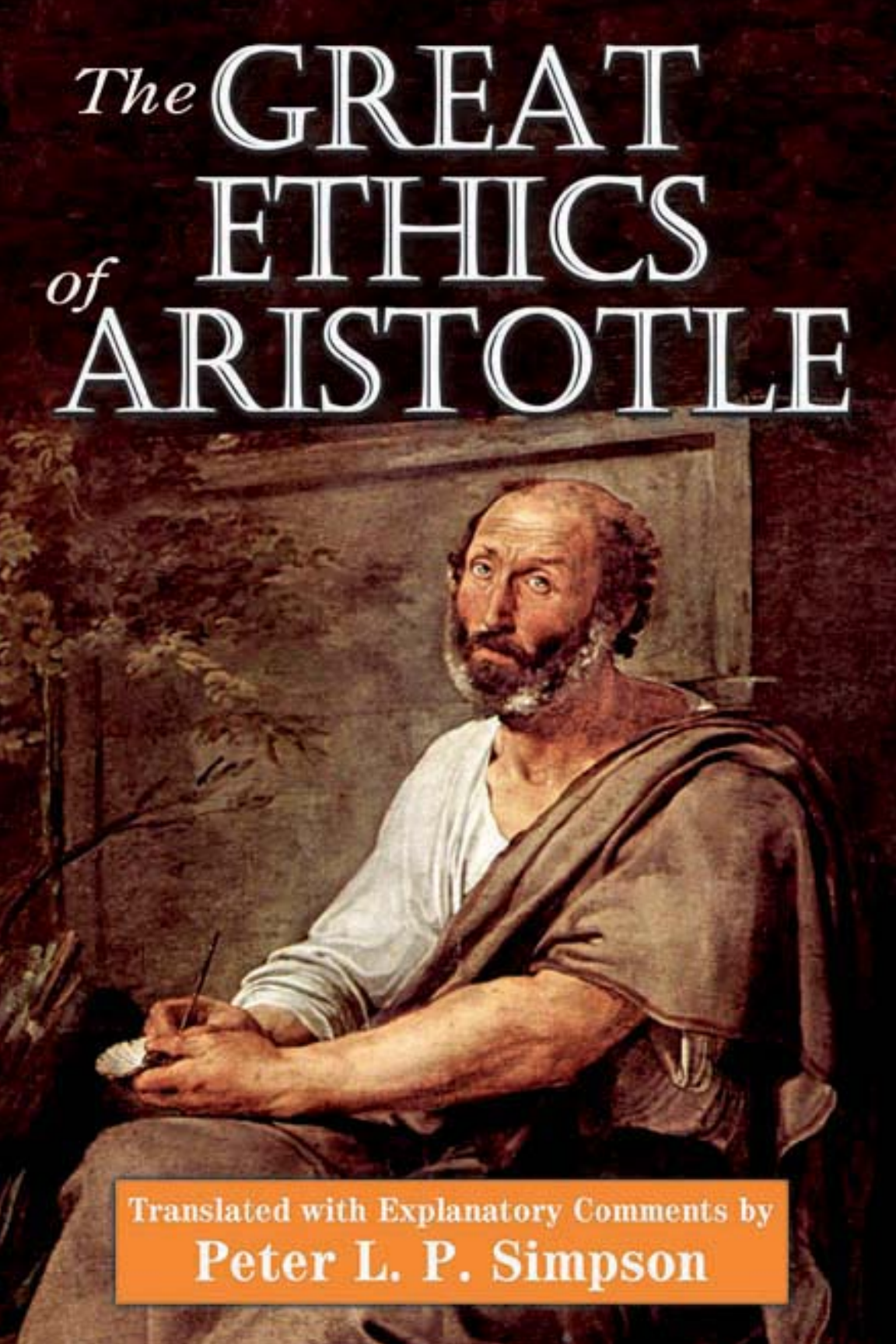
The GREAT ETHICS *of* ARISTOTLE



Translated with Explanatory Comments by

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To lovers of good character and of Aristotle everywhere

Contents

Introduction

The Great Ethics: Character and Value

In the Aristotelian corpus of works, as it has come down to us from antiquity, there are found four works on ethics: the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Great Ethics* (or *Magna Moralia*),[1] and the short *Virtues and Vices*. Of these the best known and most read and studied, by scholars as well as by general readers, is the first. The *Eudemian Ethics* has, at least in recent years, come to be read and used as a useful support and confirmation (and sometimes foil) for the *Nicomachean*, but the *Great Ethics* continues to languish in obscurity. The reason is not surprising. It seems to add nothing to what we know of Aristotle's theory from the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian*. In fact it lacks things that they have (such as an explicit and coherent account of intellectual virtues). Further it seems marred by confusions of doctrine, by a formalistic love of syllogisms, and by sometimes tedious repetition. If there are three ethics in the Aristotelian corpus, and if they say more or less the same thing, and if even the *Eudemian* is of secondary value and interest, why study one that is of even less value and interest?

A first answer is that this judgment about the relative merits of the three works is not based on an equal knowledge of them all but on an already existing preference for the *Nicomachean* over the other two, since the *Eudemian* is still little read and the *Great Ethics* hardly read at all. Yet, second, if our aim is to understand the basics of Aristotelian moral doctrine, as the definition of happiness, the nature and kind of the virtues, pleasure, and friendship, the other two ethics would do just as well as the *Nicomachean*, and perhaps the *Great Ethics* would be best of all. For as a first introduction to Aristotelian ethical thinking it is has a number of distinct advantages. It is simpler and clearer in its formal argumentation (its notorious love of syllogistic presentation). Certain matters, for example, the intellectual virtues, it deals with briefly, such that these can be made suitably secondary in terms of the work's immediate practical utility, which is, perhaps, its most obvious value. The teaching about the moral virtues comes through with a simplicity and

directness that the other *Ethics* have dispensed with.[2] Its syllogistic formalism gives it a transparency and accessibility that the other *Ethics* almost entirely lack. That it is thus more repetitious, especially for scholars long familiar with Aristotelian ethical teaching, only makes it more suitable to beginners: *bis repetita docent*. It is, moreover, not without its own vigor and charm, being, in comparison with the other two, more open, transparent, and intelligible in the way it covers the same ethical ground. Without it scholars would lose little of substance from the Aristotelian theory, but they, and especially non-scholars, would lose another and more instructive way of approaching it and appreciating it. Even those already familiar with the theory, if they will not gain knowledge of new things from it, should gain new insight into old things.

For such reasons the *Great Ethics*, even if it is not by Aristotle himself, is deserving of study. Should it be by Aristotle, it will deserve study for that reason too and perhaps more so if its difference from the other *Ethics* is traceable to what things Aristotle thought it appropriate to say to which audiences. It would thus give us insight, not into Aristotle the theoretician, but into Aristotle the pedagogue. Perhaps, indeed, such insight into Aristotle the pedagogue may be the most important and necessary benefit that the *Great Ethics* can confer upon scholars. It may open up needed, fresh perspectives on the question of the character, provenance, and relationships of the Aristotelian ethical writings.

Such are the convictions with which the following translation and commentary or explanatory comments have been written. If the *Great Ethics* is to be appreciated for what it is, and if it is to make its contribution to the study of Aristotle and his ethics, a new presentation of it is desirable. The work has been relatively neglected by scholars, and less has been done to make its content plain or to clear up its obscurities or to expose its inner structure. Because it is so little known, the lack of well-marked pathways through it hinders exploration by hindering access. Some sort of map is required that lays out the terrain, traces its general character, shows the main points of interest, and marks any special or unique features. For this reason the translation that follows is prefaced by an analytic outline of the whole, and the several sections of it are prefaced by brief summaries. The separate explanatory comments are meant to supply fuller descriptions and analyses, to sort out puzzles, to remove misunderstandings, and to resolve doubts of meaning and intention; they are not meant to be critical. The *Great Ethics* is not well understood, and just getting right what it says, prior to critical comments, is in special need of being done first. Much of the critical commentary directed against it fails because it does not attack positions or arguments that the work really holds or endorses.[3] Criticism is wasted if it is not directed properly at the target. The aim of the explanatory comments is to help ensure as far as possible that the *Great Ethics* is accurately understood. The other and secondary task of criticizing what it says has been left to one side (except here and there).

The preface to the translation itself needs a preface. To resume the metaphor, is the *Great Ethics* even part of Aristotelian territory at all? Have not previous explorers marked its borders with signs saying "Warning: No Man's Land"? Such explorers have allowed that it is neighboring land, sharing features in common with the home country, even having some of the latter's streams flowing into it, but they have insisted nevertheless that it is foreign. Other explorers, by contrast, have declared it not foreign, though also not skillfully managed, betraying the immature workmanship of a youthful hand. Still others have said it is neither foreign nor poorly managed but rather a separate port of entry for visitors and immigrants, who must spend time there to get acclimatized and learn the customs before being allowed to progress further into the country. Something must first be said, therefore, about these rival accounts of the philosophical topography of the *Great Ethics* so as to reach, if possible, a fair adjudication between them.

Aristotle's Ethical Works Then and Now

Of the ethical works in the Aristotelian corpus mentioned at the beginning (the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Great Ethics*, and the *Virtues and Vices*) all four were accepted in the ancient and medieval worlds as being by Aristotle. Today only the first two are confidently agreed to be so, while the third is controverted, and the fourth is almost universally dismissed as spurious. How the transformation in scholarship from the past to the present came about is a curious and instructive story, and although it has been told many times,[4] a summary of its important points may usefully be given here.

The only doubts expressed about the authenticity of the ethical works in the ancient world were that the *Nicomachean Ethics* was attributed hesitantly to Aristotle's son Nicomachus by Cicero and positively by Diogenes Laertius, and that the *Eudemian Ethics* was hesitantly attributed to Eudemus by Aspasius.[5] The *Great Ethics*, by contrast, was never doubted but whenever mentioned was attributed to Aristotle.[6] Doubts first began again to be cast on the authorship of some of them during the Renaissance, when scholars puzzled over why Aristotle, notorious otherwise for his brevity, could have gone to the trouble of writing three major works on ethics that all covered pretty much the same ground in the same way. Their suggested solution was to say that one or two of them were written by someone else, and since by then the *Nicomachean Ethics* had achieved canonical status as *the* ethics of Aristotle, it was the *Eudemian* and *Great Ethics* that they cast into doubt.[7]

These doubts, while not altogether allayed, ceased to attract much attention until Schleiermacher raised them again in the early nineteenth century by propounding the controversial thesis that only the *Great Ethics* was by Aristotle. Schleiermacher argued for his thesis on the philosophical ground that only the *Great Ethics* was consistent and coherent because, unlike the

Nicomachean and the *Eudemian*, it downplayed or ignored the so called intellectual virtues and located morality where it properly belonged in the moral virtues.[8] Schleiermacher was challenged by Spengel, who responded with philological and historical arguments, such as references to the *Nicomachean Ethics* in other genuine works of Aristotle, that the *Nicomachean Ethics* was the only genuine ethics of Aristotle.[9] Spengel's view became the norm for most of the nineteenth century, though a few dissenting voices could be heard here and there.[10]

The next major stage in the controversy occurred in the early twentieth century when Jaeger popularized the developmental or chronological thesis about all Aristotle's works (and not just his ethical ones),[11] and this developmental thesis is still accepted by many scholars today. The thesis says that Aristotle's works as we have them are a compilation of disparate writings from different stages in Aristotle's career and reflect different stages in his intellectual development. About the ethical works, Jaeger held that the *Nicomachean Ethics* was Aristotle's mature ethics and that the *Eudemian* was a less mature version from his younger years. The *Great Ethics*, he thought, was a work by a later follower of Aristotle, dating from after Aristotle's death. Jaeger's thesis was immediately challenged by von Arnim, who said that the *Great Ethics* was also an early work of Aristotle's,[12] and the controversy between these two scholars was continued by their students.[13] Despite these differences in details, and despite the severe criticisms that Jaeger's work in particular has been subject to,[14] scholars are still inclined to think that Aristotle's writings reflect different periods of his career, and that, with respect to the ethical works, both the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics* are certainly by Aristotle (with doubt as to which is earlier), and the *Great Ethics* is perhaps not by Aristotle, but if it is by him, it is roughly contemporaneous, at least in its origin, with the *Eudemian*.[15]

Arguments about Authenticity

Passing on from this overview of scholarly opinions, the next thing to consider is the reasoning on either side about the authenticity of Aristotle's ethical writings, or rather of the *Great Ethics* in particular. These reasons are many and a full treatment of them would be a volume in itself. There are also two ways, at least, to approach them: either as a whole, according to the legitimacy of the method of reasoning adopted, or severally, according to the particular facts the arguments rely on. For instance, there are, in the case of the *Great Ethics*, certain uses of words that are said not to be Aristotelian, and to assess the truth of such claims, we need to examine both the relevant word use and the method of reasoning whereby it is deduced that such use is not something Aristotle could or did adopt. Both approaches will be pursued in what follows but primarily that to do with legitimacy of reasoning, since scholars have not paid much attention to it.

There are two problems to consider with respect to legitimacy of reasoning: the first concerns what conclusions may rightly be drawn from what evidence, and the second concerns the way rival hypotheses about the evidence are accepted or rejected.[16] To take the first point first, there are, as a general rule, two basic kinds of evidence to use in arguments about authenticity: either (1) those intrinsic to the text or (2) those extrinsic to it. By the latter I mean information about the texts from other authors or from other works of the same author or from the actual material on which the original texts (or at least early copies thereof) are written (their archaeological date or location or their physical composition and the like, as in the case of Oxyrhynchus Papyri or the Dead Sea Scrolls). By the former, I mean evidence within the texts themselves, which will be either (1.1) those based on its matter or content or (1.2) those based on its words or its verbal form. By the matter or content, I mean either (1.1.1) the actual statements and arguments of the text or (1.1.2) the references present in these statements and arguments that go outside these statements and arguments, either to historical facts or to statements and arguments elsewhere in the same or other texts of the same or other authors. By the verbal form (1.2), I mean the style of the writing, such as its word use, its phraseology, its sentence structure, and so forth, although I should properly exclude from this division and add under 1.1.2 any verbal data, such as technical or novel or foreign vocabulary or meanings, that contain an implicit reference to external facts, say, of first invention or discovery. Arguments based on the matter we may call philosophical if they regard the statements and arguments, and historical if they regard the references. Arguments based on the verbal form we may call literary or philological.

So we have four kinds of argument, one extrinsic (2) and three intrinsic, namely the philosophical (1.1.1), the historical (1.1.2), and the literary (1.2). If we compare these kinds, it can be shown that no compelling argument about authenticity can be made on either philosophical or literary grounds alone. Such arguments, to be persuasive, must rely instead or additionally on extrinsic and historical grounds. The reason is as follows: Arguments about authenticity based on philosophical or literary grounds, in order to be successful, must say that the work said to be inauthentic contains philosophical statements or arguments or uses words or phrases or sentence structures that are foreign to the author whose work it is said to be. But in order to know that these statements or arguments or verbal forms are foreign to the author, we must first know which works the author actually wrote, since it is only from his works that we could know what was or was not foreign to him. But in order to know which works he actually wrote, we would have to know that the works said to be inauthentic are indeed inauthentic. In other words we would have to know that he did not write these works in order to be able to assert the premise on which the proof rests that he did not write these works—a manifest begging of the question.

In order to make this point as clear as possible, for it may seem too quick, we can illustrate it by means of the following argumentative schemata:

1. Author A could not have written any text with properties XYZ, say philosophical ones (like incoherence, contradictions, or falsehoods) or literary or philological ones (like certain words, sentences, phrases, and so forth).[17]
2. Text T (for example, the *Great Ethics*) has properties XYZ.[18]
3. Therefore author A could not have written text T.

Or, in another form (which includes reference also to questions of relative dating):

1. Author A could not have written both text S, which has properties ABC (sophistication, intelligence, and so forth), and text T, which has properties XYZ (the opposite or different qualities), either simply or at the same period of development.[19]
2. Author A wrote text S (for example, the *Nicomachean Ethics*).
3. Therefore author A could not have written text T (for example, the *Great Ethics*) either simply or at the same period of development.

The problem with both these argumentative schemata is the first premise. For that premise must be either an empirical claim or some sort of non-empirical or a priori claim. If it is an empirical claim, it presupposes the truth of the conclusion. For we could not know that author A could not write a text with properties XYZ or write both text T and text S, which have different or opposed qualities, if we did not already know that author A did not in fact write those texts. For if he did write them, which, if the claim is empirical, must at least be possible, then premise 1 is false. So, to rule out this possibility and to be able to assert premise 1, we would have to know in advance that he did not write them, which is to say we would have to know in advance that the conclusion was true, which is to beg the question. If, however, premise 1 is a non-empirical or a priori claim, then it is false. There is no telling, before the event, what texts a given author could or could not write. A clever writer, who was master of several styles (as we know Aristotle was), could, if he chose, write a bad book or a worse book than some other he also wrote, or he could write one book in one style and another in another style and do so at the same period.

An illustration of the force of this argument can be given from a remark by Rowe, who, while accepting the authenticity of the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*, rejects that of the *Great Ethics*. He writes: "It can fairly be said that if *MM* [the *Great Ethics*] is genuine, then no internal criterion, literary or philosophical, is valid for the judgment of any work."[20] We could accept, with Rowe, the truth of this conditional statement, but we would nevertheless

be free to accept the antecedent because, as the argument just given shows, we could accept the consequent (if we deny the consequent, we would have to deny the antecedent). Rowe, by contrast, has to deny the antecedent because he denies the consequent (his denial of it forms the basis of his approach to Aristotle's ethical writings). Note that this argument applies only to questions of authenticity and dating, to questions about whether the same author wrote certain texts, and whether, if he did, he wrote them at the same period. It does not apply to other features of such texts. On the contrary, the conclusions that scholars have reached through extensive and painstaking research about the literary and philosophical qualities of given works can stand as firmly as they did before.[21] They can still serve as guides to understanding those works and their authors. What they cannot do, which is all the argument insists on, is tell us anything *by themselves* about the authenticity or dating of those works.

Dating, as well as authenticity, is at issue because arguments about dating based on development and on style must beg the question in the same way. They will assume that no author, or at least not this author, could develop in this way rather than that or write in two styles at the same time or write in this style after writing in that or something else of the sort. But no such assumptions could be known without first knowing how in fact the author did develop, if he did, and which styles he used when, which would beg the question.

Perhaps, however, arguments of development and style are appealing for their conclusions about dating to extrinsic or historical features of the text. If so, then either these features tell us when the author wrote what and which style he used when or they do not. If they do, the arguments, being extrinsic or historical, will not fall foul of the criticism. If, on the other hand, the features do not tell us when the author wrote what in which style, then arguments of development and style are not in fact relying on these features for their conclusions about dating but are assuming on their own what the author could write when and how, which will beg the question. Or if those arguments are meant to be a priori, independent of empirical facts about what the author wrote when, and to hold as matters of principle about how any author must or can develop or how any author must use this or that style, then they will be false. There is no telling in advance how any author must develop or which styles he must use in what order. The human intelligence is too resourceful and the human psyche too unpredictable to be so pinned down.[22]

Such is the general form of the reasoning against arguments about authenticity based on literary and philosophical features. But there are objections we can make to it. A first and weak objection is that we know that a poor writer could not write a good book (except perhaps by some lucky chance), and the author of the *Great Ethics* was a poor writer, so he could not also be the author, say, of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Perhaps, but the question is not whether a poor writer could write a good book; it is whether a good writer

could write a poor book. Besides, we could not know before knowing what other books the author of the *Great Ethics* wrote whether he was just a poor writer, a good writer going through a bad patch, or a writer experimenting with a new style. We do know from texts universally acknowledged to be Aristotle's, and from ancient sources, that he was not a poor writer and that he was a master of several styles (Cicero uses phrases in praise of Aristotle's writing that can hardly fit the style of his surviving treatises).[23]

A second objection is that we could know from other sources that, say, a certain word use or grammatical construction or technical terminology or philosophical idea postdates the author in question, so that any work containing such words or constructions or terminology or idea could not be by the author.[24] True, but first, if this fact can be definitively known independently of the work in question, then it would fall under the heading of extrinsic or historical arguments (divisions 2 and 1.1.2), and these are not my current focus. For instance, it has been alleged that the *Great Ethics* betrays the influence or contains elements of Stoicism, which, if true, would definitely date the work to after Aristotle's death. This claim, then, is of the right sort for settling the question of authenticity, but it has been shown by scholars to be false (the supposed Stoic elements predate the rise of Stoicism proper and are already found in Aristotle's day).[25] If, second, the alleged fact cannot be thus definitively known independently of the work itself, then we would need to know that this work was not by the author so as to know that the said word usage or grammatical construction or terminology or idea was of later date, which would beg the question again.

A third and more compelling objection is that the conclusion of the reasoning is altogether too strong.[26] For even if it is true that no argument based on philosophical or literary criteria could show definitively that a given work was or was not by a given author, such arguments could surely show certain probabilities or likelihoods of authorship. For example, while Aristotle could write a poor work in a poor style, would he have kept it or would his friends have allowed him to keep it rather than persuading him to throw it out and start again? And if he did throw it out, could it have survived to be included among his works? We would be hard pressed to maintain such a thing. Accordingly, as this example shows, as well as others that might be constructed along the same lines, philosophical and literary criteria must be able to decide or help decide questions of authenticity.

There are two problems with this objection. First, it forces us back on matters where fineness of literary judgment and skill in interpretation become dominant. Such judgment and interpretation are necessary in assessing the quality of works, but where they are relied on wholly or predominantly, the room for mistake and for the subjectivities of taste is greatly increased. Consequently, as scholars have themselves sometimes complained,[27] decisions of dating and authenticity, instead of being based on what can be objectively

or independently assessed, get based on subjective impressions or personal predilections or failure to notice different interpretative possibilities.[28]

The second problem with this objection is that it also works the other way round. For if we can assume, had Aristotle written a poor work in a poor style, that he or his friends would have got rid of it (or something else of the sort), then this text, which we know from the extrinsic and historical criteria to be his, cannot, despite appearances, be a poor work in a poor style. On the contrary, it must really be a clever work in a clever style and we should look at it again, and with much more care, to find out what is really going on. This reverse way of taking the objection differs from the initial one because it does not accept that the apparent literary and philosophical evidence against the authenticity of the work in question could in fact be what it appears to be. The initial way, by contrast, does. Which way, then, is right or more reasonable? We cannot answer by appealing back to the apparent literary and philosophical evidence itself—by saying that the appearance is real or that it is not—because that would beg the question on one or the other side. So if we are going to say anything about authenticity, we will be forced to appeal to other or nonliterary and nonphilosophical evidence.

The point deserves further emphasis. Suppose we found that a text attributed to Aristotle, as the *Great Ethics*, was not only very different in style and content from other works known independently to be his, but also that it was similar in style and content to the work of some much later author, as Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus or Sextus Empiricus. The example is fanciful, for the differences between the *Great Ethics* and the known works of Aristotle are not of such kind or degree. But it is an example worth considering because, were it true, would we would not thereby be forced to deny that work to Aristotle? The answer of course is yes, but then the evidence relied on would not be simply literary and philosophical but also extrinsic and historical. For we would have the extrinsic and historical facts about Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus and Sextus Empiricus to rely on, together with the equally extrinsic and historical facts that such and such a style, or such and such a philosophical position, belongs to this date and school of thinking and not to some other and earlier one. If we did not have such extrinsic facts to hand, if all we had were facts about style and content and no independent way of determining when and by whom such style and content were adopted and also when and by whom they could *not* have been adopted, we would be in no position to say, on these grounds *alone*, that the work in question could not have been written by Aristotle.

This example naturally introduces the second problem with the legitimacy of reasoning in arguments about authenticity: the exclusion of rival hypotheses. Suppose that certain writings attributed to the same author show significant divergence in terms of literary and philosophical features, and further suppose that this divergence is sufficient to call for special explanation. In

order to know which explanation to adopt, we would need first to consider which explanations are possible or plausible (for we need not consider outlandish possibilities, such as that the author wrote one of the works while under hypnosis by Martians). In the case of the *Great Ethics*, there are several possibilities (briefly mentioned in the cartographical metaphor earlier). The first and most obvious, if not indeed the most popular, is that the divergences between it and known works of Aristotle are to be explained on the hypothesis that it is not by Aristotle but by a different (and inferior) author. Another and perhaps equally popular one is that it is by the same author but at an earlier stage of development. A third and related one is that it is by the same author but as mediated through some editor or redactor or student reporter. A fourth, and least popular, is that it is by the same author but as directed to a different audience.[29]

The question arises about how to decide between the truth or likelihood of these options (or of any others that might plausibly be suggested). Scholars have devoted very little attention to this question, and not surprisingly because, if we confine ourselves to the literary and philosophical evidence, it has no answer. For either each of the options explains this evidence or it does not. If it does not, the option is not an option but a mistake. It purports to explain but fails to do so. We must confine our attention to those options only that do explain. But among options that do explain there can be no good reason, on these grounds, to prefer any as more true or likely than another. For *ex hypothesi* they do explain, and since explanation is the only criterion we are supposed to be using here to judge between them, all are successful. Therefore all are, to this extent, equally true or likely. One of these options might be simpler than another or more elegant or easier to handle or more in accord with our tastes, but it would not, on that account, be shown to be truer. The choice of one option over another, which is supposed to be a choosing of the true account over false accounts, cannot, if made on literary or philosophical grounds alone, be anything of the kind. The evidence is *ex hypothesi* not historical or extrinsic and so cannot contain any indication of facts outside the text (as time of writing or manner of transmission), but it is only by reference to such facts that we could determine, as regards options all presumed successful as explanations, which of them was truer or more likely than which other.

This conclusion is again very strong, but it is also very limited. It concerns only one sort of evidence (literary and philosophical evidence) and only one set of options (those that do explain this evidence). If some of this evidence contains, whether implicitly or explicitly, extrinsic or historical data, or if some of these options turn out not to be very good at explaining, then this conclusion will no longer apply. There will now be good reason, reason based on *further* evidence, to prefer one or more options as truer or more likely, namely those that do a better job of explaining and that better save the extrinsic or historical data. Scholars do typically rely on such further data

when making a judgment of authenticity. But no less typically they slide, sometimes unconsciously, from such data to literary and philosophical data and think that their preferred explanation of this latter data provides *independent* support for their judgment, when in fact it does not. All their preferred explanation can do is show that the judgment about authenticity is compatible with such data and not that it is required by it or favored over others by it.

The Authenticity of the Great Ethics: Intrinsic Evidence

The argument so far has been to the effect that we must rule out, or at any rate be very suspicious of, the drawing of conclusions about authenticity or dating on philosophical and literary grounds. But it does not rule out the drawing of such conclusions altogether. It specifically allows that we may do so if we use other grounds, namely those referred to above as extrinsic and historical grounds (numbered 2 and 1.1.2). All those grounds in the case of Aristotle's ethical writings (as mentioned at the beginning and referenced in the notes) speak in favor of authenticity and none of them against it.[30] The point is of some importance, so it deserves direct treatment. In addition, since the argument against basing judgments of authenticity on considerations of literary and philosophical data is so strong, there is need to review such data in the case of the *Great Ethics* (more detailed examination is given in the commentary), so that the correctness of the argument as applied to the *Great Ethics* can be properly assessed.

The sort of literary or stylistic features that distinguish the *Great Ethics* from the rest of the Aristotelian corpus and are said to show that it cannot be authentic are the following:[31] the extensive use of *hyper* instead of *peri* to mean "about" or "on"; the use of non-Attic forms of verbs, as in the case of *eidenai* (to know); the exclusive use of *hopōs*, and never also *hina*, to mean "so that"; frequent use of plural verbs with neuter plural subjects (classical or Attic Greek normally has a singular verb for a neutral plural subject); the use of *holon* or *to d' holon* to mean "in general"; the use of *phēsi* "it says" without specification of subject; the frequent use of the "you" and "I" forms of verbs and the more dialogical or question and answer style of several passages of argument; the absence of any use of the dual (the form of words when the subject is two things or persons); the infrequency of the use of the optative mood of verbs; a whole list of words, or special meanings for words, that appear for the first time in the *Great Ethics* and are otherwise known only from authors later than Aristotle; the frequent and repetitious syllogistic form of much of the reasoning; the illogicality or incompleteness of several of these syllogisms; the frequent use of words of inference, as "therefore," "thus," "so," and of other particles (as *nun* "now," *ēdē* "already" or "precisely," *ouketi* "no longer," *oupō* "not yet") in their logical and not temporal meanings; tedious pleonasm or unnecessary repetition of words and phrases; the adoption of

philosophical positions that are in tension with, if not outright opposition to, positions adopted in Aristotle's other works;[32] open contradictions of the author with himself (notoriously over whether prudence and wisdom are praiseworthy and virtues); and the fragmentary nature and disordered presentation of much of the content.[33]

In addition to these literary and philosophical features, there are also historical references in the *Great Ethics* that have attracted attention. The following personages are mentioned: a certain Mentor (1197b21), most likely as already dead, and the likely Mentor died about 337 BC; a tyrant called Clearchus (1203a23), who ruled from about 364–352 BC; a certain Neleus (1205a19–23), who is most likely the Neleus who inherited Theophrastus' library on the latter's death in 285 BC; Darius of Persia (1212a4), most likely Darius III who was defeated by Alexander and died in 330 BC; a certain Archicles (1189b20–21), and the best known Archicles was a trierarch who fought in a battle in 334/3 BC.[34]

So much, then, for the data; the question is what to make of them. The historical references, if they are correct,[35] require a dating of the *Great Ethics* in the form we now have it to a period not much earlier than the 330s or 320s, or toward the end of Aristotle's life (he died in 322 BC). Since those scholars who favor the authenticity of the *Great Ethics* judge it to be an early or juvenile work (because of its relative lack of philosophical sophistication), they are forced to suppose that the *Great Ethics* underwent some revision or reworking by an editor or student near or after the time of Aristotle's death.[36] Such a supposition is not impossible, but it complicates rather than simplifies the theory that the work is authentic. There is, on the other hand, one reference in the *Great Ethics* that embarrasses partisans of the view that it is not authentic, namely the assertion by its author that he is also the author of the *Analytics* (1201b25), a reference almost certainly to the *Analytics* of Aristotle,[37] and there are few more direct ways an author could indicate to readers his own identity.

The historical references of the text are compatible with Aristotelian authorship, if of relatively late Aristotelian authorship. The literary or philosophical elements are also compatible with Aristotelian authorship, if untypical Aristotelian authorship (they all appear, though not with the same frequency, in others of his writings).[38] For those elements show that the *Great Ethics* has marked differences of style and content from Aristotle's other known works. The question is what to make of those differences. Some explanation is necessary, but more than one explanation is possible. The hypothesis of difference of author is only one such explanation, and there are others, namely those mentioned before, that hypothesize difference of time of writing or medium of transmission or audience addressed. It is necessary to show with respect to these explanations that they do each succeed as explanations, for if any do not, they can be dismissed on that ground alone. Do they succeed? Scholars

over the years have argued for or against all of them except the last mentioned, which while often briefly noted, is as often briefly dismissed. Its plausibility as an explanation, since it has been so little attended to, needs elaboration.

The hypothesis of difference of audience has, first, no problem explaining any of the literary or philosophical features of the *Great Ethics*. The hypothesis is that the work is an exoteric one directed to a popular audience outside the school. We would not expect it, therefore, to display all the philosophical elaboration or sophistication of a work intended for those within the school (such as the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics* are). We would not expect it to contain all the doctrines of a work of the school. We would even expect it, where necessary, to hide such doctrines if, for some reason, an exoteric audience would be puzzled by them or have an instinctive, if unfounded, prejudice against them. We would also expect it to follow the speech patterns and terminology common and familiar to an exoteric audience, and not, say, the more careful and nuanced style that an author might prefer in a formal work of philosophy; hence in particular we should not be surprised to find, as we do find, many Hellenistic elements in the language of the *Great Ethics*, for these would reflect the speech of its intended audience.[39] We would, further, expect it to make its arguments and process of reasoning easy to note and follow for an exoteric audience that would be unlikely to be practiced in argumentative subtleties[40] (so, for instance, it would be more likely, where it gives lists, to make the lists simple and without much elaboration or nuance).[41]

The hypothesis also explains the division among scholars about the quality of the *Great Ethics*, which some think is a poor work,[42] while others think it a fine or at least respectable work.[43] Both views can be correct. The work is indeed simple and heavy handed and undeveloped,[44] but it is also subtle and sophisticated and provocative (as is discussed more fully in the commentary); indeed even the simplicity has an imposing vigor and the serried arguments a compelling directness.[45] That the same book could have such divergent characteristics is readily explicable on the hypothesis that the *Great Ethics* is an exoteric work, written for the wider public outside Aristotle's school. The other ethics, the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian*, will be meant for those within the school. The *Great Ethics*, therefore, will not display the philosophical qualities of the other ethics, which would be too much for a general audience, but it will, besides the expected simplicity and directness, contain invitations and hints (the subtlety and sophistication and provocation of the work) to pique the interest of the more curious and intelligent so as to attract them, if they prove themselves otherwise worthy, into joining the school.[46] The hypothesis is thus in principle better qua explanation. The other explanations, even those that accept authenticity, account well for one side only of the character of the *Great Ethics*, the side of unsophisticated directness and repetition. They do not explain, or not as well, the side of obliqueness and subtle indirection. The former side is what has been almost universally

noted and stressed by scholars, while the latter has been almost universally missed.[47] But an explanation, if it is to be successful, must explain both. The hypotheses of a younger Aristotle or of an author later than Aristotle, if this other author and younger Aristotle are judged, as they always are judged, to be philosophically inferior or immature, only explain well one side of the *Great Ethics*: the directness and repetition. The hypothesis that the *Great Ethics* is an exoteric work by a mature Aristotle successfully explains both sides.

The same hypothesis has no trouble dealing with any of the historical references. For it posits no special date within Aristotle's life for the work's composition. Whether Aristotle was writing it in his last years, or whether he wrote it first in his younger years and continually updated it, makes no difference to the hypothesis qua explanation. By contrast the hypothesis that it is a juvenile work is embarrassed by the historical references, and the hypothesis that it is not a work of Aristotle's at all is embarrassed by the claim the author makes to be Aristotle, as well as by the universal witness of the ancient tradition, noted earlier, that Aristotle is the author. There are shifts we can make, as have been noted, for saving the hypotheses from such embarrassment, but those shifts do have to be made.

There is another consideration, which favors all hypotheses that say the *Great Ethics* is authentic. It is taken again from Rowe, a prominent opponent of Aristotelian authorship, who writes: "the onus lies with the opponents of authenticity, since it is only reasonable to accept the tradition if no case can be made against it."[48] This statement is correct and, taken with what has just been said, should require us to conclude that the *Great Ethics* is authentic. Rowe himself, however, does not entirely follow his own counsel; for speaking of von Arnim and Dirlmeier, perhaps the two most distinguished proponents of the authenticity of the *Great Ethics*, he writes that "they have not made their case."[49] But if we are to follow Rowe's counsel, they did not need to make their case. All that they or anyone needed to do was show that no case, or at least no sufficient case, can be made against the authenticity of the *Great Ethics*, which has assuredly been done, for they at least have shown that none of the arguments against the *Great Ethics* (as its language, its thought, its style, its references, and so forth) is at all compelling.[50]

The upshot, then, is that the hypothesis that the *Great Ethics* has the features it has because it is an exoteric work of Aristotle's is at least as good as an *explanation*, if it is not also better, than the others that scholars have offered. It deserves at least to take its place besides those other explanations as one of the live or viable options about what the *Great Ethics* is and who wrote it.

The Authenticity of the Great Ethics: Extrinsic Evidence

So far only the intrinsic evidence for the authenticity of the *Great Ethics* has been considered. But there is the extrinsic evidence also to consider,

especially the evidence from other writers about Aristotle's ethical writings. The hypothesis says that the *Great Ethics* is an exoteric work meant for an audience outside the school, so extrinsic evidence of two sorts is relevant: that relating to the character of an ancient exoteric audience and that relating to the character of the *Great Ethics*.

As for the audience, there is first a speech attributed to Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* (484c–486d) that praises the value of philosophical study and practice, provided it is indulged in moderately and at an early age. If it is pursued beyond that limit (in the way Socrates has done), it will ruin a man and prevent him being a good and decent citizen. Persons with Callicles' view would be likely to value the limited treatment of the subject found in the *Great Ethics* but not the more elaborated and developed treatment found in the *Nicomachean*, especially if the effect of the *Nicomachean* was to draw men away from the active life of the citizen into the contemplative life of the philosopher, which, of course, the *Nicomachean* notoriously does in its last book (and the *Eudemian* arguably does the same).[51]

Socrates in the *Republic* (497e–501a) gives voice to a like opinion with the *Nicomachean Ethics* about the pursuit of philosophy, and criticizes the existing contrary practice in cities, which practice he describes as being what Callicles said it was and should be. Socrates notes further that most people are prejudiced against extensive philosophic learning. He also admits, in the passage about philosophers needing to rule, which opens his praise of the philosophic life (473c–74a), that there is need to be careful about praising such life before an audience of decent citizens, at least until they have been brought, if they can be brought, to see that philosophy is not what they think it to be.

The conversation in Plato's *Meno* (90a–94e) between Socrates and Anytus, who is a classic example of a decent citizen prejudiced against philosophy, shows on Anytus' part a similar pattern of regard for learning in moderation but an angry fear of learning very much, especially if the learning comes from intellectualists like the Sophists. Notoriously Anytus, who was one of Socrates' accusers at his trial, could not or did not distinguish sophistry from philosophy.

If decent citizens in Aristotle's day were anything like Plato's portrayal of them in Socrates', there would be reason for Aristotle to be circumspect when giving lectures to an exoteric audience. That they were similar, both during Aristotle's day and after, can be shown not only by what happened to Aristotle himself (that he had to flee Athens toward the end of his life when prosecuted, like Socrates, on a charge of impiety) but also by other ancient sources. A first such source is Isocrates in the *Antidosis* (written 354 or 353 BC), where the aged orator writes: "I do not think it right to call philosophy what is of no help in the moment either for speaking or for doing, but rather I would call such a pastime a gymnastic of the soul and a preparation for philosophy; more manly, to be sure, than what boys in school do but for the

most part very similar . . . I would advise the young to pass a certain time in such education but not to allow their nature to get all dried up on these matters. . . . For I think that such verbal quibbles are like jugglers' tricks which, though of no benefit, attract crowds of senseless people, and that those who want to do something valuable must remove from all their pastimes vain words and acts with no bearing on life" (sections 266–69).[52] A second is a work attributed to the ancient Sicilian lawgiver Charondas (sixth or fifth century BC), though perhaps dating much after his time:[53] "Let each citizen make profession rather of moderation (*sōphronein*) than of wisdom (*phronein*), since profession of wisdom is significant evidence of pettiness (*smikrotētos*) and lack of experience with what is fine (*apeirokalias*)." These sentiments nicely mirror those of Callicles and Anytus referred to above. A third such source is Tacitus (first/second century AD), who says of his father-in-law (*Agricola* 4.4–5): "He used to relate that in his early youth he would have engaged with more fervor in the study of philosophy than was permitted to a Roman and a senator had not the prudence of his mother kept his ardent and burning spirit in check: for his lofty and upright mind sought the beauty and splendor of great and exalted glory with more eagerness than discretion. Reason and age soon tempered him, and from wisdom he retained what is most difficult: moderation."

We perhaps find it difficult nowadays to appreciate how prejudiced the civilized and cultured classes could be against philosophy and speculation and science. But that it was so the sources quoted attest. Consequently, when considering an ancient philosophical text directed to an ancient citizen audience, as the *Great Ethics* is here hypothesized to be, we should not expect its author to have the same easy unconcern about telling the audience what he thinks as a modern author might. An exoteric audience will typically be made up of two sorts of people: There will be those, on the one hand, who are interested in learning more about the treated subject, but who, like Anytus and Callicles and Isocrates and Charondas, would not want to take philosophical study very far and who might be puzzled or offended by some of the things that such study, if pursued further, would teach. There will, on the other hand, be those who would very much want to pursue philosophy further (like the young Agricola before his mother restrained him). From the latter would come, after proper testing and preparation, those worthy to join the school and whom Aristotle would want to attract. We should expect Aristotle, therefore, to be both bluntly direct and puzzlingly oblique, to use plain speaking in some things and indirection in others. But we should also expect, if we have the corresponding esoteric text from the school, that we will find plain and open in it what in the other is hidden and obscure.

So much for the extrinsic evidence as regards an exoteric audience, what must follow next is extrinsic evidence about the exoteric character of the *Great Ethics*. The first such evidence comes from Aulus Gellius who, when

speaking of the two classes or kinds that Aristotle's works were said to fall into, the exoteric and the acroatic,[54] writes:

> Those were called exoteric that had to do with rhetorical reflections and the ability to argue and knowledge of civil matters, but those were called acroatic in which more remote and subtle philosophy was handled and which pertained to the study of nature and dialectical disputations. To the exercise of this latter discipline, the acroatic, he would devote time in the Lyceum in the morning and would not admit anyone rashly, but only those whose intelligence and foundation in learning and attention to teaching and hard work he had tested. But the exoteric lectures and exercise in speaking he used to give in the same place in the evening, and he offered them to the young openly and without distinction, and he used to call them "evening walk" but that other earlier one "morning walk,"[55] for he used to discourse on each occasion while walking. He divided up his books too, his treatises on all these things, so that some were called exoteric and part acroatic.

Note that the *Great Ethics* is properly described as "knowledge of civil matters" (*civilium rerum notitiam*), for it significantly omits the reflections on philosophy and legislation (the "more remote and subtle philosophy," *philosophia remotior subtiliorque*) that mark the other two ethics and that make them rather more than merely "knowledge of civil matters." Also note that the *Great Ethics* can be viewed as a suitable vehicle for testing the "intelligence and foundation in learning and attention to teaching and hard work" of potential hearers of the acroatic lectures, since its arrangements and syllogisms, with their directness in some respects and indirectness in others, might well serve to show which hearers had the capacity and will to learn enough from the first to sort out the second, and so accordingly had the capacity and will to enter the school.

To this evidence we can add that of Cicero who says, speaking of Aristotle and Theophrastus:[56]

> About the *summum bonum*, because there are two kinds of books, one popularly written which they called exoteric, the other more carefully composed (*limatius*), which they left in their treatises (*commentariis*), they do not always seem to say the same thing; there is not, however, any variation in the sum itself (*in summa ipsa*) of what those at least whom I have mentioned say, nor any internal disagreement with themselves.

Note again that the *Great Ethics* does seem not to say the same thing as the other ethics yet, in the end or in sum, it does say the same (as will be discussed in some detail in the commentary).

It might seem that the *Great Ethics* could not be an Aristotelian exoteric work because the exoteric works are supposed to have been his lost dialogues, and the *Great Ethics* is not a dialogue. But, as scholars have pointed out, especially in view of the *Protrepticus,* which was exoteric and not a dialogue,[57] there is no good reason to suppose that only his dialogues counted as exoteric for Aristotle. Note, further, that among the references Aristotle makes in other works to exoteric discussions, there are several that could be to passages in the *Great Ethics*, among other works (the *Great Ethics* itself never refers to any exoteric discussions).[58] They are *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.13.1102a23–28 with *Great Ethics* 1.4–5.1185a13–b8 (recalled at 1.34.1196b13–15) about exoteric discussions of the division of the soul; *Politics* 4/7.1 and *Eudemian Ethics* 2.1.1218b32–35 with *Great Ethics* 1.3.1184b1–6 about exoteric discussions on divisions of goods; *Ethics* 5/6.4.1140a1–6 with *Great Ethics* 1.34.1196b37–7a13 about exoteric discussions on the difference between doing and making; and *Eudemian Ethics* 1.8.1217b19–23 and *Metaphysics* 13.1.1076a26–29 with *Great Ethics* 1.1.1182b5–3b8 about exoteric discussions on the Platonic ideas.[59] No great stress should perhaps be laid on these parallels, for by themselves they do not show that there is reference in them to the *Great Ethics* or that the *Great Ethics* is an exoteric work. They do nevertheless show that the hypothesis of its being exoteric is consistent with Aristotle's own evidence, and such consistency, if not much, is also not nothing.

Some further and stronger support for the hypothesis that the *Great Ethics* is exoteric (although it is not a dialogue) comes from the passage of Cicero just quoted. This passage immediately precedes the one where Cicero speculates that the *Nicomachean Ethics* could be by Aristotle's son Nicomachus (as mentioned earlier), and from such a circumstance we can construct an argument that Cicero must have been aware of at least three ethics by Aristotle. For first he speaks (in the passage just quoted) of an exoteric ethics as opposed to a different and non-exoteric one found among the treatises. Then he speaks (a few lines later) of an ethics that could be by the son because it is like another ethics[60] that Cicero already attributes to the father and because Cicero does not see that the son could not, in this respect, be like the father. But the ethics that could be by the son could not be either of the first two ethics mentioned, for then Cicero would not have two separate ethics by Aristotle to contrast as exoteric and non-exoteric. Therefore it must be a third ethics.[61]

Now if this third ethics, the one that could be by the son, is the *Nicomachean*, then the ethics, which Cicero says the *Nicomachean* is like, and which he judges definitely to be by the father, will be either the *Eudemian* or the *Great Ethics* or something else. But of the *Eudemian* and *Great Ethics*, only the latter could plausibly be judged an exoteric text. So either the *Great Ethics* is the exoteric ethics Cicero is thinking of (in which case the ethics that he thinks is definitely by the father will be the *Eudemian*),[62] or one or more of Aristotle's other works now lost is (as the *Protrepticus*, or precisely

one of the dialogues). It would be hard, however, for Cicero to say of these lost writings (if we go by what we know of them, as of the *Protrepticus* in particular) that any of them, despite "not always seeming" to say the same thing, nevertheless agreed "in the sum itself" with the ethical treatises, for they do not say enough about the several virtues and about the mean and about choice and deliberation and continence and friendship and the like to count as covering the same ground as those treatises, and so do not say enough to count as agreeing with them in sum despite not always seeming to. The *Great Ethics* does cover the same ground and does precisely agree in sum with the other ethics despite not always seeming to (as argued in the commentary). So it well fits the context and content of Cicero's remarks. It is likely, therefore, that Cicero was speaking of all three *Ethics* in the passage in question and was regarding the *Great Ethics* as the one among them that was exoteric. But even if he was not thinking of the *Great Ethics*, to suppose that that work is an exoteric one fits well the pattern of Aristotle's ethical writings as Cicero knew them.

If the *Great Ethics* is Aristotle's exoteric ethics, we will have a ready explanation of why it exists alongside the other ethics. It will be serving a different function and be directed to a different audience. That different works can differ because they have different audiences is a common enough idea, and we find it not seldom to be the case in writings produced today (scholarly books are not like popular books, even if sometimes they have the same author, because they are aimed, as we say, at different "markets"). It is curious that scholars have not thought of appealing to this idea more often in their discussions of Aristotle's ethics and of the *Great Ethics* in particular. One early scholar did think of it and did use it to advantage in arguing that the *Great Ethics* was genuine;[63] another much later scholar suggested it but did not pursue it;[64] others thought of it only at once to dismiss it;[65] and others finally both thought of it and, like the first, accepted it.[66]

It should occasion no surprise that Aristotle chose to write several times on the same topic, for he did that often.[67] Certainly, if we go by the works we still have, as well as by the titles of lost works preserved for us in the ancient catalogues, he wrote several times on Plato's ideas and several times on certain parts of logic.[68] That ethics should get triple treatment can also be explained by the importance of the subject—not in itself, to be sure (for man and his happiness are not the simply best things), but relative to us, for it is only if we know what happiness really is that we can live decent lives and that the best things can receive from us the honor and service that is their due.

Nevertheless, when all is said and done, the hypothesis that the *Great Ethics* is an exoteric work by Aristotle remains a hypothesis. Since it admits the *Great Ethics* to be authentic, it does have in its favor the unanimous support of the ancient evidence, but so do other hypotheses that accept the work as authentic. When faced with a choice between rival hypotheses about

a given phenomenon, we must proceed by asking whether these hypotheses do explain that phenomenon, and if they do, whether any of them are superior as explanations over others. The hypothesis that the *Great Ethics* is an exoteric work, when carefully considered in the light of all the evidence (literary, philosophical, historical, extrinsic), does arguably show itself to be thus superior. But it will be sufficient for present purposes to show that it is a genuinely viable hypothesis that should take its place beside, and be given equal attention with, the other hypotheses that scholars have endorsed over the years.

The Titles of the Ethical Works

A couple of questions remain: first about why Aristotle wrote two esoteric ethics, the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian*, when one of them might have sufficed, and second about the names of the ethical works. There is not strictly any need for answers to these questions so as to sustain the above argument about the *Great Ethics*, for that argument can stand independently of any such answers. Still, in order to show that neither question will pose any trouble for the hypothesis, a few speculations will, in imitation of other scholars, here be offered. The two esoteric ethics will differ, then, as is in large part evident from their beginnings and endings, in that the *Eudemian* is directed primarily to philosophers and the *Nicomachean* (which continues immediately into the *Politics*) primarily to legislators (which will include especially advisers to kings). So the *Eudemian* will have the name it has because it commemorates Eudemus of Rhodes, student and colleague of Aristotle, who established a school of philosophy at Rhodes after the fashion of the one established by Aristotle at Athens. Eudemus will thus represent the philosopher, which is why the *Eudemian Ethics* bears his name. The *Nicomachean* will have the name it has because it commemorates Aristotle's father and son (both named Nicomachus), the former of whom was physician and adviser at the royal court in Macedon (where Aristotle himself was also long an adviser), and the latter of whom was no doubt destined for a similar life at the same court. That he was to die young was unknown to his father who had already predeceased him. Nicomachus *père et fils* will thus represent the wise legislator, which is why the *Nicomachean Ethics* bears their name. The *Great Ethics*, by contrast, will have the name it has because it has a great audience, the large and extended audience of decent citizens to whom it is directed.[69]

Citizens, legislators, philosophers, these three, would seem, on reflection, to cover the full range of an ancient philosopher's ethical concern. Citizens, both rulers and ruled, are they who compose the city; legislators are they who fashion it and its constituent households; philosophers are they who, superseding the parochial and all-too-human mythology of the poets, point it to what is truly beyond and divine.[70]

An Epitome of Peripatetic Ethics

Included here at the end of the translation of the *Great Ethics* is a translation of what scholars now refer to as the epitome of Peripatetic or Aristotelian ethics by Arius Didymus.[71] The piece is entitled "About the Ethics of Aristotle and the Rest of the Peripatetics." It comes from the *Anthology* of John Stobaeus (early fifth century AD). Stobaeus does not, in the context, tell us his source. However, in a later part of the *Anthology*, he quotes a paragraph identical with one in the summary of Aristotelian ethics, and says "from the *Epitome* of Didymus."[72] We can legitimately conclude, therefore, that the whole summary comes from that *Epitome* (and also, for various reasons, that the summary of Stoic ethics that precedes it also comes from him). Who, however, is Didymus? While we know of other people with this name in antiquity, the only plausible candidate for an epitome of philosophical opinions is Arius Didymus. His name comes up in other ancient writers as the author of precisely such epitomes. Who, then, is Arius Didymus? The only philosopher we know of by that name is the court philosopher to the Roman Emperor Augustus, and accordingly it is with him that scholars identify the author of the epitome. The identification is not certain, but it is plausible.[73] If these inferences are correct, then, we have in the epitome a record of Aristotelian ethical thought as it was known in the early imperial period.

The dating is important because Arius Didymus the court philosopher must have known of the edition of Aristotle's works prepared at some time in the first century BC by Andronicus of Rhodes. This edition, which is the origin of the texts of Aristotle we still have, was based on the manuscripts of Aristotle himself. At least such is what we have reason to believe from the story that these manuscripts, which were left to Theophrastus on Aristotle's death and then to Neleus of Skepsis on Theophrastus' death, were deposited in Skepsis and some time later, in order to avoid the predations of royal book collectors, were hidden there in a cellar and abandoned for two centuries before they were brought back to the light and, ultimately, taken to Rome.[74] This story cannot mean that the texts of Aristotle (or the treatises of his we still have) were wholly lost during these two centuries, for other copies of these texts, made while Aristotle and Theophrastus were still alive, are known to have existed and to have been in circulation.[75] The story can only mean that Aristotle's own personal copies or manuscripts were thus lost. But Andronicus had access to them. They were not in good shape (they had suffered the effects of damp and other damage in Skepsis), but they must have constituted a wonderful resource for correcting existing copies of these writings and for returning these copies, as far as necessary and possible, to what the author himself had intended. As a result Andronicus' edition (prepared and produced in Rome) quickly became standard and is the edition that principally stands behind our own existing manuscripts.

If the Arius Didymus who is the author of the epitome of Aristotelian ethics preserved by Stobaeus is the Arius Didymus who was court philosopher to Augustus, he must have known and had access to Andronicus' edition of Aristotle's works (and may even have seen and handled the actual manuscripts on which Andronicus had worked). He can hardly, then, have ignored that edition in writing his epitome, even if he was also relying on epitomes or summaries written by others, for that edition would have been his own check or touchstone of accuracy. We can accordingly regard his epitome as an excellent guide, a guide tested against Aristotle's own manuscripts, both as to what Aristotle actually said and as to which works Aristotle actually wrote.

This fact alone would be a sufficient reason for including here a translation of Arius Didymus' epitome. For that epitome, as is evident from the references given in the notes (borrowed from Wachsmuth's edition of Stobaeus), treats all four ethics attributed to Aristotle (including the *Virtues and Vices*) as on a par for determining what Aristotelian ethics is. The epitome is evidence that Arius thought all four ethics were equally authentic and that Andronicus, whose edition Arius, as already remarked, could not have ignored in constructing his epitome, had actually had Aristotle's own personal copies of them in his hands when he produced that edition.

There is no need to press this argument further; it is based on assumptions that, even if plausible, we cannot know for certain. No matter, for whether Arius' epitome is evidence for the authenticity of the *Great Ethics* or not, it remains an excellent summary of Aristotelian ethics as this was known in Arius' own day, and so an excellent guide to the reception of that ethics into the world of the early Roman Empire. It deserves to be better known and more used for the study both of Aristotle's ethical thought and of how that thought was employed and adapted by others.[76]

Note on the Greek Text

The Greek text used for the translation of the *Great Ethics* is that of Bekker. The later edition by Susemihl, which is perhaps more readily accessible to scholars, has had to be largely set aside for two reasons: The first and less serious of the two is that it indulges in many emendations to the text that, even if plausible, are seldom necessary and sometimes misleading. Bekker is more conservative, perhaps excessively so, but he does make the manuscript readings easy to see. His *apparatus criticus* is thin and needs to be supplemented by Susemihl's, but both also need to be supplemented by the *apparatus criticus* recently provided by Johnstone. The second and more serious reason for largely setting aside Susemihl's text is that it regularly gets the Bekker line divisions wrong[77] and so makes exact reference to particular passages unreliable. If we are to continue enjoying the enormous benefits gained for the study of Aristotle from the convention of using Bekker numbers in

our references to his works, we must make sure that the numbers we give in our editions of them are correct. Susemihl unfortunately fails in this respect. His *apparatus criticus* is invaluable and should be used, but less so his text.

Notes

1. Such are the standard names, but we know from Elias (*CAG* xviii, pars 1, 32.31–33.2) that the *Great Ethics* (*GE*) was also called the *Great Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* the *Lesser Nicomachean Ethics*.
2. As is evident from nothing so much as the preoccupation of scholarly treatment with the question in the other *Ethics* of the intellectual life in contrast with the moral life and not, or hardly, with the question of the moral life as such. Schleiermacher (1835)—see below—had a point.
3. As particular instances should be mentioned Donini (1965) and Fahnenschmidt (1968), both writing since the appearance of Dirlmeier's magisterial work (1958).
4. The fullest accounts are by Dirlmeier (1958: 93–146; 1962: 109–143) and Schächer (1940). In English there is a brief account of the modern period by Rowe (1971: 9–14) and a fine one of the ancient period by Kenny (1978: 1–49). Susemihl (1884: ix–xxix) has a helpful collection of many of the ancient references. Also worth consulting are Bodéüs (1973, for the ancient period), Buddensiek (1999: 22–36), Décarie (1978: 10–12), Diller (1936: 134–137), Fahnenschmidt (1968: 1–28), Elorduy (1945: 364–366), Plebe (1965: vii-x), Walzer (1929: 2–13), Wilpert (1946: 123–137, mainly about and against the school of Jaeger).
5. Cicero, *De Finibus* 5.5, Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Eudoxus* in *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* viii 88, Aspasius (*CAG* xix, pars 1, 151.18–27).
6. See in particular the accounts by Dirlmeier and Kenny in note 4, both of whom well show that none of the historical evidence impugns GE's authenticity.
7. The details are again in Dirlmeier. Case (1596: 1–7) explicitly defended *GE* against these doubts, arguing that it served a different purpose and was for a different audience.
8. Scheiermacher (1835). His arguments have found echoes among contemporary scholars who have been engaged for some time in a debate about whether the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which they nevertheless hold to be genuine, is inconsistent in its argument about happiness and whether it is incoherently split between the practical life of moral virtue and the contemplative life of intellectual virtue. See the discussion in Natali (2001: 111–14) and Caesar (2009).
9. Spengel (1841, 1843). His move to philological considerations from philosophical ones was compelling and enough to defeat Schleiermacher's thesis in the eyes of most scholars, despite the fact that, for instance, the references to the *Ethics* in other writings of Aristotle are to books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that it has in common with the *Eudemian*, Kenny (1978: 5–8). But Spengel's rejection of the *Eudemian* did not, ultimately, win as much favor as his support of the *Nicomachean*.
10. Notably that of Thomas (1860).

11. Jaeger (1923).
12. Von Arnim (1924, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929a, 1929b).
13. As Walzer (1929) and Brink (1933) on Jaeger's side and Gohlke (1944) on von Arnim's.
14. Notably by Wilpert (1946), but see also Buddensiek (1999: 23–36).
15. See Plebe (1965: vii–ix) for a summary review of those who accept the authenticity of *GE*, to which list we can add also the name of Elorduy (1939). Others, as Cooper (1973), Kenny (1978: 219–20), and Theiler (1934), are also inclined to accept its authenticity but once removed, through the medium or editorship of someone else. Pellegrin, too (in Dalimier 1992), seems inclined to accept it though his official position is one of neutrality. Among those who reject authenticity we may note, besides the school of Jaeger, Donini (1965), Fahnenschmidt (1968), and Rowe (1971, 1975). Doubt, if not rejection, is expressed by Bobonich (in Kraut, 2006: 16) and by Natali (2001: 10).
16. The argument that follows was first developed independently, though with much stimulus from Wilpert (1946). It was, however, to some extent anticipated by Shute when he remarks (1888: 16): "As to the arguments from style and matter these must always be of very doubtful nature, resting, as they needs must, upon preconceived ideas of the arguer," and anticipated even more, in the reverse direction, by Littré (1834 I.171—appositely quoted by Shute, *ibid*. 17), when Littré writes the following about using such arguments for judging the authenticity of works of Hippocrates: "…il y a là une petition de principes; car avant de dire que tel style appartient à Hippocrate, il faut prouver que les ouvrages où l'on croit, à tort ou à raison, reconnaître ce style, sont réellcment de l'auteur auquel on les attribue." "There is there a begging of the question; for before saying that such style belongs to Hippocrates, it is necessary to prove that the works where one believes, wrongly or rightly, that one finds this style do really belong to the author to whom one attributes them."
17. Examples of the sorts of properties in question here abound in the scholarly literature on Aristotle, not to mention Plato and many others.
18. A classic instance is the first page in Walzer (1929: 1).
19. The standard Jaegerian position, adopted also by his opponents, like von Arnim, who disagreed less with Jaeger's method than with his results.
20. Rowe (1971: 9 n9). By judgment I take Rowe to mean judgment of authenticity and not judgment of literary or philosophical merit. Note, by the by, that if incoherence and inconsistency were enough to show a work was not by Aristotle, we would have to conclude that none of the surviving writings is by him, for scholars have been accusing or excusing these writings of such faults ever since commentary on them began.
21. So let me hasten to add that in this respect Rowe's work, as also that of many other scholars, is much to be commended.
22. Cf. Wilpert (1946: 132–135). Those who are some sort of Hegelian may be of the view that they can know in advance how any development must in principle go, and perhaps scholars who propounded theories of development were implicitly adopting some such Hegelian view. But then their arguments are really just applied Hegelianism, which does not seem a good way to settle historical questions.

23. Cicero, *Academica* 2.38: "Aristotle pouring forth a golden river of speech" (*flumen orationis aureum fundens Aristoteles*).
24. As Berg (1934) who argues for the presence of Hellenistic Greek in *GE*, but then cannot help conceding that such Greek was already developing in Aristotle's day and that its elements are present, if less markedly, in the *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics*; see the pointed responses by Elorduy (1939: 64–45 n1) and Dirlmeier (1958: 138–39, especially for its remarks on Aristotle's influence on Hellenistic Greek; see also 149–154, 157–58, 162 for questions of word use generally); cf. also Fahnenschmidt (1967: 13, 15).
25. The argument for Stoic influence in *GE* was presented by Trendelenburg (1867), but he was well answered by von Arnim (1924); further discussion in Dirlmeier (1958: 202–203). Gigon (1969: 209) also reminds us that we need to see in Aristotle as much a forerunner of the Hellenistic Age as a successor, and opponent, of Plato.
26. The conclusion amounts to a wholesale rejection of what is known as "higher criticism," that is, the attempt to distinguish different authors and datings of texts or parts of texts on the basis of internal criteria alone. The argument will thus make havoc (to borrow Hume's colorful word, *Enquiry* XII.3) of all the alleged results of "higher criticism" as this method has been applied, say, to other ancient authors, like Plato, or to other ancient literatures, like the Bible. Well, so be it. If that is what the argument correctly concludes, then that is what the argument correctly concludes.
27. Bonitz (1844: 3) says appositely that the question here, since judgment cannot rely on external testimony but only on the innate character of the work, "has drawn learned men into opinions widely differing among themselves, so that if we wished to compare authorities it would seem that the issue should be left in doubt and place given equally to diverse conjectures" (*in sententias longe inter se diversas traxit doctos viros, ut si quis auctoritates conferre voluerit, res in medio relinquenda et diversis coniecturis pariter locus dandus videatur*). Unfortunately he then goes on, rather inconsistently, to say that Spengel has settled the question. Note also Littré again (1839: I.171) who says: "Une pareille critique repose sur des fondements incertains; rien n'est sujet à controverse comme les arguments tirés de la gravité du style et de sa concision." "This sort of critique rests on unsure foundations; nothing is subject to controversy like arguments drawn from the gravity of the style or from its conciseness."
28. An instance of such failure is Deichgräber (1935: 106), on which see Diller (1936: 138), Dirlmeier (1958: 140), Fahnenschmidt (1968: 46).
29. The first hypothesis was espoused by Spengel and all who followed him, including the school of Jaeger; the second by the school of von Arnim; the third, in different degrees, by Dirlmeier, Cooper, Kenny; the fourth definitely by Case, though as a general possibility, if not specifically for *GE*, it is noted by Allan, in Mansion (1961), and Wilpert, as well as by Kenny (1992: 141) for the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*.
30. The speculations of Cicero and Aspasius about the authorship of the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics* are based on literary and philosophical grounds and so, according to the argument, are unsound. As for Diogenes

Laertius, while he asserts that Nicomachus wrote the *Nicomachean Ethics*, we do not know on what evidence he did so. But if his word does have weight it is weight against the *Nicomachean Ethics* and not the *Eudemian Ethics* or *GE*.

31. I follow the summary and review by Fahnenschmidt (1968: 2–51), but also Dirlmeier (1939: passim and especially 217–28).
32. The chief focus of Donini's work (1965).
33. The list could be continued. Direct discussion of the several items, and answers to the criticisms, must be left to the commentary.
34. Kenny (1978:216–18).
35. It is not clear that they are all correct. The Mentor could be the Mentor of Homer's Odyssey, the Neleus could be an unknown Ileus, and Darius could be Darius I, whose forces were defeated at Marathon in 490 BC. For the purposes of the argument here, nothing hangs on any of these identifications.
36. Kenny (1978: 218–19).
37. A complication is that Theophrastus also wrote an *Analytics*, which has not survived, and the reference could conceivably be to that; Pellegrin, in Dalimier (1992: 23).
38. Fahnenschmidt (1968: 15) regards the frequency of the use, not the mere use (which he cannot deny to be Aristotelian), as the sign of inauthenticity.
39. Spoken speech patterns tend to anticipate written speech patterns, so that when such patterns first appear in formal writing we can usually expect them to have existed in speech and popular writing for much longer. The style of Greek found in *GE*, as scholars have often noted, including Berg (1934), Dirlmeier (1958: 138–39), Elorduy (1939: 64–65 n1), Fahnenschmidt (1967: 13, 15), and Stevens (1936), is like the written Greek of the Hellenistic age (the *koinē*), and such Greek, whose elements are already present in authors of the Classical period, including Aristotle himself, was presumably more widespread in the spoken Greek of that period than the written.
40. A point that Fahnenschmidt concedes even against himself (1968: 24, 26, 48), for he allows that *GE* has the character of a lecture simplified according to pedagogical necessities and lacking the subtleties of Aristotle's other works, which, for a work before a popular audience, is exactly what we would expect.
41. Something complained about by Ramsauer (1858: 31) and Fahnenschmidt (1968: 7, 184).
42. Brink (1933), Donini (1965), Pansch (1841), Ramsauer (1858), Rowe (1971), and Walzer (1929).
43. Schleiermacher (1835) and Elorduy (1939), who both think it the only authentic ethics of Aristotle (because it is the best), von Arnim (1924–1929), Dirlmeier (1958), Cooper (1973), Gohlke (1944), and Plebe (1965).
44. Kenny's "philosophically naïve and crude" (1978: 218) is too strong but captures something of the right spirit.
45. Pellegrin, in Dalimier (1992: 25–26), speaks of *GE* as "un traité aussi subtil, à l'argumentation aussi serrée, aux interrogations aussi originales" and of "la grandeur de la pensée;" "a treatise so subtle, with argument so serried, with questions so original" and "the grandeur of the thought;" also Elorduy (1939: 27, 65).

46. Elorduy (1939: 68) remarks a propos Aristotle's exoteric writings, such as the lost *Eudemus* and the *Protrepticus*, that they were a sort of advertising or "propaganda" for the school. But while exoteric works can point to an esoteric meaning, there is no reason to think, unlike say the followers of Leo Strauss, that esoteric works themselves point to some additional esoteric meaning (see Simpson, 1998: xiv–xv). Further, the meaning that exoteric works point to, if they do, can only be learnt from comparing them with the relevant esoteric texts and not independently. If *GE* is an exoteric work, and the other two ethics are the esoteric works to which it is exoteric, and if comparisons between these works can show us what, for Aristotle, an exoteric work looks like, then *GE* can serve as a standing refutation of the Straussian theory of esotericism, at least as applied to Aristotle.
47. Noteworthy exceptions are Elorduy (1939) and Pellegrin, in Dalimier (1992).
48. Rowe (1971: 12).
49. Rowe (1971: 9 n9); and also his later article (1975: 160–61).
50. Dirlmeier (1958) and von Arnim (1927, 1929a & b), with the supportive comments of Elorduy (1939: 64 n1, 66); see also Cooper (1973: 327–335). Their arguments that no case has been made against the authenticity of *GE* will be all the stronger if we refrain from endorsing any views about temporal ordering, or relative dating, among Aristotle's ethical works.
51. The point is controversial, see Kenny (1978, 1992), and contrast Simpson (2013).
52. See Broadie's apposite comments (2002: 54) on this passage in the context of Aristotle's ethical thinking.
53. The *Anthology* of Stobaeus, IV.151.20–23.
54. Or acromatic, designed for hearing. The quotation is from *Attic Nights* 20.5. Düring (1957: 431–34) discusses this passage and invents the story that its story is invented.
55. Aulus Gellius was writing in Latin but he here uses the Greek words and the Greek for "walk" is *peripatos*, which is what gave to Aristotle and his school the name of Peripatetics.
56. *De Finibus* 5.5.
57. The evidence is collected and discussed at length by Zeller (1897: 1: 106–20), who expressly denies that we can conclude only dialogues were exoteric (120, 60 n1). Dirlmeier also discusses the question (1956: 274–75) and concludes the same even more strongly; see also Elorduy (1939: 67–70). Besides, as scholars of the *Great Ethics* have often pointed out and was already noted above, the work has distinct elements of dialogic and popular style; Dirlmeier (1958: 173–74), Thomas (1860: 43), Fahnenschmidt (1968: 36).
58. As Dirlmeier rightly remarks (1958: 163). The passages that follow are taken from Thomas (1860: 23–54), who also gives a long list of ancient authors who spoke about the difference between exoteric and esoteric works; see also Elorduy (1939: 66–67).
59. Elorduy (1939: 67) suggests that the reference to "general" or "everyday" discussions (*enkukliois*) in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.5.1096a2–4 could also be to *GE*.
60. That there must be at least two ethics under consideration by Cicero at this point in his argument is missed by many commentators but is rightly noted

by Kenny (1978: 16), following Titze (1826: 39), neither of whom, however, says anything about the need, within the larger context, for Cicero to be considering a third ethics as well.

61. This argument that Cicero must be referring to three ethics and not just one was already anticipated by Shute (1888: 55–56), save that Shute does not suggest that the third or exoteric ethics was *GE*.
62. That the *Eudemian* is the ethics Cicero definitely thinks to be by Aristotle was suggested by Shute (*ibid*.) as well as by Titze and Kenny (*ibid*.).
63. Case (1596: 1–7).
64. Allan, in Mansion (1961: 303–304, 318).
65. Schleiermacher (1835: 307–308), Brink (1933: 15); see also Fahnenschmidt (1968: 21).
66. Thomas (1860: 23–54), von Arnim (1929b: 6–8), Elorduy (1939: 18, 65–69) cf. Flashar (1965: 235). Helms (1954) seems to adopt the same view; at any rate the title he gave to his Danish translation of *GE* is *Aristotle's Popular Lectures on Ethics*, and he expressly says in his Introduction to the work (xii–xiii) that he considers it to consist of lectures Aristotle gave to and for beginners. Note too that Kenny (1992: 141) is inclined to adopt the view that the differences between the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics* are traceable to differences in intended audience.
67. A point first made and with force by Case (1596: 5–6)
68. The catalogues can be found in Düring (1957) and Rose (1863).
69. These suggestions about the names are entirely speculative, since we do not know from ancient sources how any of them arose; see the discussion in Décarie (1978: 17–31). The prevailing view about *GE*, for instance, is that the name comes from the fact that both its books are unusually long, so that the rolls on which it would have been written out in the ancient world were "great," that is, longer than any of the rolls that contained the books of the *Eudemian* or *Nicomachean*. The opinion is of course possible but by no means compelling. Case, by contrast, opines (1596: 5) that *GE* is called great because though little in mass, it is great in virtue, that is, in the great richness of the matter of virtue dealt with in it. Pellegrin, in Dalimier (1992: 26) has recently said something similar ("cette éthique est 'grande' aussi par la grandeur de la pensée qui s'y déploie" "this ethics is 'great' also by the greatness of the thought deployed in it"), though without, to my knowledge, being aware of Case's work.
70. We can throw in the *Virtues and Vices* too, if we like (though there is no need not insist on this), as an ethical *vade-mecum* for the noble young. For there is something to be said for Zürcher's charming suggestion (1952: 259) that the *Virtues and Vices* was first conceived and written for the young Alexander (and other princes) under Aristotle's tutelage at Pella.
71. Details in Kenny (1978: 19–22) and Kahn (in Fortenbaugh 1983: 3–13), the latter of whom is mainly followed here.
72. The point was first brought to scholarly attention by Meineke (1859).
73. The identification has been challenged by Görannsson (1995).
74. The story is found in Plutarch, *Life of Sulla* 26, and Strabo, *Geography* xiii 1.54.

75. The evidence, which is compelling, is collected by Zeller (1897: 1.137–60), to whose conclusions Burnet (1900: xvii n2) gives a ringing endorsement.
76. See the interesting article by Annas (1990). The most comprehensive and still the best discussion of Arius' epitome is that by von Arnim (1926). See also Moraux (1973 vol. 1) and Fortenbaugh (1983). Another translation of the epitome can be found in Sharples (2010).
77. Note the following instances in the first few pages alone of his edition, but similar ones litter the whole extent of it: 1182a27–28, 82b5–7, 83a24, 83a38–39, 83b33, 83b38–84a2, 84a10–11, 84a15, 84b5–15 (an egregious example of ten lines in a row), 84b37–85a1.

Analytical Outline of Aristotle's *Great Ethics*

TRANSLATION OF THE *GREAT ETHICS*

Book One: The Science of Ethics in General and in Particular

Chapter 1

Subject Matter and Practical Aim of This Science. *This treatise is about morals, and morals are part of the science of politics, for political action requires virtue. Virtue must be studied both as to what it is and as to how to get it, for the aim is to be virtuous and not just to know virtue.*

Since morals are what we are choosing to talk about, we must first examine **1181a24**
what moral character is part of. In brief, then, it seems to be part of nothing
other than the science of politics. For one cannot do anything in politics
without being of a certain sort, I mean as a good[1] man is. But to be good is
to have the virtues. So if one is going to be active in politics, one must be **b25**
good in one's character. It seems then that the treatment of morals is part
and principle of politics. On the whole in fact I think the treatment would
rightly have the title of politics and not of ethics.

The first thing then that is needed, it seems, is to talk of what virtue is and **1182a1**
what it comes from. For there is, I suppose, no point knowing virtue and yet
not understanding how it will come to be and what from. For we must not only
look to know what it is but must also see what it will come from, for we want
to know virtue and at the same time also to be like it ourselves, and we will **a5**
not be able to do that if we do not know both from what and how it will be. So
we need to know what virtue is. For to know what it will come from and how,
if one does not know what it is, is not easy, as it is not in the sciences either.

Errors about the Subject Matter and the Aim
About the Subject Matter
Virtue. *Others who have spoken of virtue have misidentified what study it belonged to, like Pythagoras, who said it was a number, or Socrates, who said it was knowledge, or Plato who mixed with it ontology.*

Nor should we overlook any who have previously spoken of these things. **1182a10**
So Pythagoras first took it in hand to speak about virtue, but not in the right
way. For by reducing virtues to numbers, he made a study of the virtues that
was not appropriate to them. For justice is not an equal number multiplied
equally.[2] Socrates, coming after him, spoke better and more fully of the virtues, **a15**

but even he did not do so correctly. For he made the virtues into sciences, and this cannot be the case. For the sciences are all with reason but reason exists in the part of the soul that reasons things out. On his view, then, all
a20 the virtues come to exist in the reasoning part of the soul. So by making the virtues sciences he ends up getting rid of the nonrational part of the soul, and by doing this he gets rid of passion and character. Hence he did not, in this respect, get hold of the virtues in the right way. Afterward Plato rightly
a25 divided the soul into the part with reason and the part without reason and gave each its proper virtues. Fine so far but what came after was no longer right. For he mixed up the virtues with treatment of the good,[3] which is not at all right, for it is not germane. For someone speaking of beings and truth should not have been talking of virtue, for there is nothing common between the first and the second.

The Political Good. *What should be spoken of first is the good, and that the political good, which is the good for us. This good is not the Idea of the Good, for that is separate; nor the good that is common to everything, whether by definition or induction, for if so politics would say of its own good that it was good, which no science does; nor every good, for no science studies every good but only a determinate one. Also, the Idea of the Good, being a thing of thought, should not be used to make clear things of sense but the other way round. The idea is also not such as to be a first principle of good, for other goods are known without it.*

1182a30 So this is how far and how they handled the matter. The next thing to consider is what they should say[4] about it. First, then, they should see that every science and capacity has an end and this end is good, for no science or
a35 capacity is for the sake of bad. So if the end of all capacities is good, then the end of the best capacity would plainly be a better[5] good. But in fact politics is the best capacity, so its end would be a good.

1182b2 We must then, it seems, speak of good, and not of the good as such but of the good for us. For our subject is not the good of gods, but that is another
b5 discussion and someone else's job to examine. So we must speak of the political good. But again we must divide this up too. Good in what sense? For it is not simple. For good is said either to be the best in each of the things that are, and this is what the thing's own nature makes to be preferable, or to be
b10 what other things are good by sharing in, and this is the Idea of the Good. Must we talk about the Idea of the Good, then, or instead the common good present in all things? For this would seem to be different from the idea. For the idea is separate and itself by itself, but the common is present in everything and cannot be the same as what is separate, for the separate and what itself
b15 naturally exists by itself could never be present in everything.

So are we to speak about this good, the one that is in everything? Or not? 1182b16
Why? Because this good is what is common, like definition or induction. But
a definition aims to state each thing's substance, whether it be the good or
bad or anything else, and the definition says that such and such (whatever it b20
is that is preferable itself for itself) is good universally. But the good present
in everything is like a definition, and definition says of it that it is good. But
no knowledge or any capacity says of its own end that it is good, but some
other capacity has this for its study. For neither doctor nor builder says either b25
that health or that a house is a good thing, but the one that he makes health
and how he does so and the other a house. It is plain, then, that for politics
too there must be no talk of the good that is common, for it is a science itself
as well along with the rest, and it was not part of any of them (any capacity
or science) to say that this good belongs to its end. So it is not part of politics
either to speak of the good common by way of definition.

But neither is it part of politics to speak of the good common by way 1182b31
of induction. Why? Because whenever we want to show that something is
among the particular goods, we show it either by definition (because the same
account fits both the good and what we want to prove is good) or by induction.
For example, whenever we want to show that magnanimity is a good, we say b35
that justice is a good and courage and the virtues as such, but magnanimity
is a virtue, so magnanimity must be a good too. So politics must not speak of
the common good by induction either, because the same impossible things
will happen to this good as to the common good by definition. For here too a5
it will say that it is good. Plainly, then, politics must speak of the best good,
and of a best that is the best for us.

One can see as a general fact that it belongs to no one science or capacity 1183a7
to take a view of every good. Why? Because the good is in all the categories.
For it is in the what and the what sort and the how much and when and in a10
relation to something and by something, that is, simply in all of them. Yet,
in fact, the good of when in medicine is known by the doctor, in steering by
the helmsman, and so on in each case. For the doctor knows when to cut,
the helmsman when to sail, and in each science each will know the when a15
that is good in his own case. For the doctor will not know the when that is
good in steering, nor the helmsman the when in medicine. So we must not
speak of the common good even in this way; for the when is common in all
of them. Likewise too the good that is in relation to something and the good
in the other categories are common in all the sciences, and yet it belongs to a20
no one capacity or science to speak of the good in each of them whatever it
is, nor, again, to politics to speak of the common good. It belongs to politics,
then, to speak of the good and of the best good and of the good best for us.

Nor I suppose should one use examples that are not clear when wanting 1183a24
to prove something, but use the clear for the unclear, that is things of sense

(since they are clearer) for things of thought. So when one is trying to speak of the good one should not speak of the idea. Yet that is, at any rate, what they think, that whenever they speak of the good they should speak of the
a30 idea. For they say they must speak of the thing that is most good, and each in itself is most such and such, so the idea, as they think, would be most good. Now such an argument is perhaps true, but the science or capacity of politics, which we are now talking of, does not look into this good, but into the good for us. For no science or capacity says of its end that it is good, so politics does not either. That is why it does not talk of the good according to the idea.

1183a38 But perhaps it will use this good as a principle and speak of the particular goods taking from there its start? But this way is not right either. For one must take principles that are germane. For it is odd, if one wants to prove that the triangle has angles equal to two right angles, to take as one's principle that the soul is deathless. For it is not germane, but the principle must be germane and relevant. As it is, there will be proof that the triangle has angles equal to
b5 two right angles even without the soul's being deathless. Likewise in the case of goods too, it is possible to consider the other goods without the good in idea. Hence it is not a principle germane to the present good.

About the Aim. *Socrates erred in making the virtues sciences, for thus the virtues lose their point for making us good.*

1183b8 Socrates was not right either when he made the virtues sciences. For he thought that nothing should be without point, but if the virtues are sciences, it turns out that the virtues, for him, are without point. Why? Because, in the sciences it happens that to know what the science is goes along with being a scientist. For if someone knows what medicine is, he is straight off a doctor;
b15 and so likewise with the other sciences. But this does not happen with the virtues. For it is not true that if someone knows what justice is, he is at once just, and the same too with the rest. The virtues then turn out to have no point, and not to be sciences.

Notes

1. The Greek word is *spoudaios,* which is translated here mainly as virtuous but also as good or serious. Literally it means serious, and so a serious man might be thought of as someone who takes life seriously enough to acquire its proper virtues. *Spoudaios* is the standard word for virtuous in Greek, which had, at least in Aristotle's day, no adjectival form of its word for virtue, *aretē* (Dirlmeier 1978: 155, with apposite reference to *Categories* 10b5–9).
2. The Pythagoreans said that justice was the number 4, which is the square of 2, or an equal number (2 = 1+ 1) multiplied equally (2 × 2). See Dirlmeier (1978: 161).
3. As particularly in the *Republic*.

4. Or, "what we ourselves should say. . . ." The Greek *autous* at 1182a32 is ambiguous.
5. Following the MSS at 1182a36 in reading "better" and not the scholarly emendation of it to "best."

Chapter 2

The Science in General
The Subject Matter or the Nature of Virtue
Kinds of Good. *The political good can be divided in several ways, into: (a) the honorable, what is to be praised, capacities, and what preserves or makes good; (b) what is always or wholly good and what is not so; (c) goals and things toward the goal; (d) final goals and nonfinal goals. The final goal is not best by combination with what is inside it, and not as separate by itself, and not by comparison with what is outside it, because absurdities result in each case.*

Since these things have been decided, let us try to say in how many ways the **1183b19**
good is spoken of. For among goods some are honorable, some to be praised, and some are capacities. By the honorable I mean things like this: the divine, the better (such as soul, intelligence), the elder, the beginning,[1] and suchlike. For things honorable are what there is honor for, and honor follows on these sorts of things. So virtue too is an honorable thing, at least when someone **b25**
has become virtuous through it, for at that point he has been fashioned in virtue. By things to be praised I mean things like virtues, for praise comes from deeds done in accord with them. By capacities I mean things like rule,[2] wealth, strength, beauty, for they are what the virtuous man can use well and the base man badly. That is why such things are called good in capacity. They **b30**
are good, indeed, for it is by the virtuous man's use, not the base man's, that each of them gets its stamp, but it is incidental to these very things that they are good and that chance is cause of their coming to be, for chance brings wealth to be and rule[3] and on the whole everything that falls under the rank of capacity. Last, and fourth, among goods is what saves and makes good, as exercise does health and anything else of the sort.

But further, goods also have another division, as that some goods are in **1183b37**
every way and wholly good and others not so, as justice and the several virtues are both in every way and wholly to be chosen but strength and wealth and capacities and the like are neither in every way nor wholly so.

Further, there is yet another division. For of goods some are ends and **1184a3**
some not ends, as health is an end but things for the sake of health are not ends. In the case of things good in this way, the end among them is always

better, as health is better than the things for health, and as such always that is better universally, which other things in fact are for the sake of.

1184a7 Again, of ends themselves, the final is better than the nonfinal. Final is what, when we have it, we need nothing else further, and nonfinal what, when we have it, we do need something else, as we need many other things when we have justice, but nothing else further when we have happiness. This is the best for us, then, the thing we are looking for, which is final end; and the final end is indeed a good and the end is the good.

1184a14 So next, how should we examine the best? In this way, that it is itself part of the sum counted up? But that is absurd. For since the best is a final end and the final end, simply speaking, would seem to be nothing other than happiness, and since we make happiness up from many goods, then if, when a20 examining the best, you were to count it up as well in the sum, it will be better than itself, for "it" will be best.[4] For instance, take health and the things for health and examine which of all of these is best. Health is best. So if this is best of them all, it is also best of itself. An absurdity results then. So this, at any rate, is not the way to examine the best.

1184a25 But in this way then at least, as separate from it? Or is this too absurd? For happiness is made up of a number of goods, and to examine if this is best of the goods of which it is made up is absurd. For happiness isn't anything else apart from these goods but *is* these goods.

1184a29 But might one then at least in this way examine the best, by way of comparison? For instance by comparing happiness itself, made up of these goods, against other goods that are not present in it, would one, by examining it like this, see it right? But the best we are now looking for is not simple. One might say, for instance, that prudence is best of all goods when compared one a35 by one. But this is perhaps not the way to look for the best good. For we are looking for the final good and prudence taken by itself is not final. So this is not the best we are looking for, nor the best in this way.

Notes

1. The word is *archē*, which also means rule.
2. The word is *archē*, which also means beginning.
3. The word is *archē* again.
4. Or "it will itself be best"; the *auto* in the Greek at 1184a21 could mean either "it" or "it itself."

Chapter 3

The Best Good and Happiness. *The best is highest in an ordering of goods, and happiness is the using, not merely the having, of goods.*

Now next there is another way also of dividing goods. For some goods 1184b1
are in the soul, like virtues; some in the body, like health, beauty; and some outside, wealth, rule, honor, and anything else of the sort. Of these, those in the soul are best, and the goods in the soul are divided into three, into prudence, into virtue, and pleasure.

The thing, then, that now comes next, which is both what we all say and 1184b6
what is held to be both end of goods and most final, is happiness, and this we say is the same as doing well and living well. "End" is not simple, however, but double. For of some things the activity or the use itself is the end, as in b10
the case of sight. And the use is more to be chosen than the having; the use is end, for no one would want to have sight if he was not going to see but have his eyes shut. Likewise too with hearing and things of that sort. So wherever there is use and having, the use is always better and more to be chosen than the having. For the use or activity is an end, but the having is for the use.

So if one were next to examine this in respect of all the sciences, one will 1184b17
see that a house is not made by one science and a good[1] house by another but by house-building. And what a builder is maker of, his virtue is maker of that very thing. Likewise with all the others.

Note

1. The Greek is *spoudaios*.

Chapter 4

Happiness and Living Virtuously. *Happiness is living well, which is done through virtue. It is an active using of virtue and not merely a having of virtue. It is also realized in a complete man and in a complete time. The part of the soul that deals with nourishment, even if it has virtues, is not involved in the work of happiness.*

After this, then, we see that we live by nothing other than soul, and in soul 1184b22
is virtue. At least it is the same thing that we say is done by the soul and by the virtue of the soul. But while the virtue does in each of us what it is the virtue b25
of, the soul does other things as well, and by soul we live. So it is through the virtue of the soul that we will live well. But living well and doing well are, we say, nothing other than being happy. So being happy and happiness are found in living well, and living well is found in living in accord with the virtues. This then is end and happiness and best.

So it is some using and activity that happiness would be found in. For where 1184b31
there is having and using, the using and the activity are end. But virtue is a

having in the soul; there is activity and using of its virtues; thus its activity
b35 and using are goal. Happiness would then be found in living in accord with the virtues. So since happiness is the best good, and since this is end, it is in an actual living out of life[1] in accord with the virtues that we would be happy and that we would have the best good.

1185a1 Since happiness, therefore, is a good and end that are complete, we must not ignore the fact either that it will also be in what is complete. For it will not be in a child (for a child is not happy) but in an adult male, for he is complete;
a5 nor in an incomplete time but a complete one. A complete time would be as much as a man's way of life. For it is indeed well said among the many that it is by the greatest time that the happy man must be judged in respect of his way of life, their thought being that the complete thing needs to be in a time and a man that are complete.

1185a9 That happiness is an activity one can see also from this. For if in the case of slumbers, for example, someone were to spend his way of life asleep, we are not much inclined to say that such as he is happy. For while living is his, yet living in accord with the virtues (which was an activity) is not.[2]

1185a13 The thing we are going to talk of next would seem neither very close to these matters nor very far from them, namely that since, as it seems, there is a part of the soul whereby we grow that we call the nourishing part (for it stands to reason that it exists; at any rate, we see that stones cannot grow, so it is plain that growing belongs to ensouled things; and if to ensouled things,
a20 then the soul would be cause; but none of these parts of the soul, I mean the reasoning part or spirit or desire, could be cause of growing, but there must be some other part besides them for which we have no name more fitting than the nourishing part)—well then, someone might say, is there a virtue also to this part of the soul? For if there is, plainly the soul will need to be active in
a25 this too. For the activity of complete virtue is happiness. Now whether there is a virtue of this part or not is another discussion, but if there is, there is no being active of it, for where there is no impulse, there is no being active either. But there seems to be no impulse in this part but it seems like fire, for
a30 that eats up whatever you throw into it, and if you do not throw anything in, it has no impulse to go and get it. That is what this part of the soul is like too, for if you throw in food, it feeds, but if you do not throw in food, it has no impulse for feeding. That is why, where there is no impulse, there is no being active. So this part does not add any activity to happiness.

1185a36 Now we should next say what virtue is, since the activity of this is happiness. So, to speak simply, virtue is the best habit. But it is perhaps not enough to talk in a simple way like this, but there is need to define it more clearly.

Notes

1. Taking the Greek for "actual" (*energeiai*) at 1184b37 to go with the participle "living" (*zôntes*) that follows at 1184b38 and not with the word "goal" (*telos*) just before it. Also translating *zôntes* as "living out of life" and not just as

"living" because it is in participial form, while earlier the same verb was in infinitival form (*zēn*), and this point is important enough in the context to deserve being brought out in the English.

2. In the passage from 1185a6–13, the distinction in the use of the Greek words *bios* and *zēn* seems to be important for the point being made, so the first has been translated, if a little awkwardly, as way of life and the second as (merely) living.

Chapter 5

The Definition of Virtue

Parts of the Soul, Excess, Lack, and the Mean. *The soul has two parts: one part possessed of reason and another not. The moral virtues of character whereby we deserve praise exist in the latter part. We are not praised for the qualities of the former part. The moral virtues are destroyed by excess and want.*

First, then, we must talk of the soul where virtue comes to be—not of what **1185b1**
the soul is (that is matter for another discussion), but to make a division of
it in outline. The soul, as we say, is divided into two parts: a part with reason
and a part without. In the part with reason, there arise prudence, quick wits, **b5**
wisdom, readiness to learn, memory, and the like; but in the part without
reason these virtues as they are called, temperance, justice, courage, and all
the other virtues of character that are held worthy of praise. For we are said
to deserve praise in accord with these, but no one is praised in accord with **b10**
those of the part with reason. For neither is someone praised because he is
wise nor because he is prudent[1] nor, on the whole, for being in accord with
anything of the sort; so the part without reason is not praised either insofar
as it is subservient and ministers to the part that has reason.[2]

Moral virtue is destroyed by lack and excess, and the fact that lack and **1185b13**
excess destroy it can be seen from the moral facts. But one must use things
clear as evidence for things that are not clear. For one can see the fact straight
off in the case of physical exercise, for strength is destroyed by much exercise
just as by little. The like too in drink and food. For when there is much of **b20**
these, and likewise too when there is little, health is destroyed; but when it is
proportionate, strength and health are preserved. Something like this happens
with temperance and courage and the other virtues. For if you make someone
too fearless so that he does not fear even the gods, he is not brave but mad;
but if you make him fear everything he is a coward. A brave man, then, will **b25**
neither be he who fears all things nor he who fears none. So these are the
things that both increase and destroy the virtue, for fearing too much and
everything destroys it just as likewise does fearing nothing. Courage turns
on fears, so that fears in due measure increase courage. By the same things **b30**

then is courage increased and destroyed, for fears have this effect on people. The like holds of the other virtues.

Notes

1. The Greek words for wise (*sophos*) and prudent (*phronimos*) can have a broad meaning to cover the wisdom of the skilful craftsman and the prudence of the clever knave (cf. *Ethics* 5/6.12.1144a27–28), and praise would not be due to these.
2. The part without reason is not praised insofar as it serves reason (for thus it could be serving the reason of the craftsman and the unscrupulous politician), but only insofar as it has virtue.

Chapter 6

Pain and Pleasure and Custom. *Moral virtue of character also concerns pleasures and pains, and is so called because "character" and "ethics" come from "custom," and virtue comes about in us by custom and not by nature.*

1185b33 Further, one should define virtue not only by such facts but also by pain and pleasure. For because of pleasure we do foul things and because of pain we keep from fair things, and on the whole it is impossible to get virtue or vice without pain and pleasure. Virtue, then, turns on pleasures and pains.

1185b38 "Moral" virtue thence gets called moral, if it is by its literal meaning that we should see how the truth lies. And perhaps we should, for moral character [*ēthos*] gets its name from custom [*ethos*], for ethics [*ēthikē*] is so called because of the process of getting accustomed [*ethizesthai*]. By this, in fact, it is plain that none of the virtues of the part without reason arises in us by nature. For none of the things that are by nature gets to be other than it is by

a5 custom. A stone, for instance, and heavy things as a whole, are carried downward by nature. So if one threw them up many times and made it a custom for them to be carried upward, they would still not be carried upward but always downward. Likewise too with other things of the sort.

Chapter 7

Passions, Powers, and Habits. *Of the three things in the soul, passions are things like anger and hate, powers are that whereby we feel these passions, habits that whereby we are well disposed with respect to these passions and feel them neither too much nor too little but in the mean.*

So the next thing, if we want to say what virtue is, is to know what the things are that arise in the soul. What arise are these: passions, powers, and habits. So virtue would plainly be one of these. 1186a9

Passions, then, are anger, fear, hate, longing, zeal, pity, things like this, where pain and pleasure usually follow. Capacities are what we are said to be such as to feel these passions by, as what we can feel anger, pain, pity by—that sort of thing. Habits are what we are in a good or bad state by as regards these things. For example, if, as regards being angry, we are, on the one hand, too prone to anger, we are in a bad state for anger, but if, on the other hand, we do not get angry at all at what we should, we are in this way too in a bad state for anger. So the middle state is neither getting annoyed too much nor not getting annoyed at all. When we are in this state, then, we are well disposed. And so similarly with the other like things. For being good tempered and mild is in the mean between anger and apathy to anger. Likewise too for boastfulness and self-deprecation.[1] For making claim to having more than one has is a mark of boastfulness, and to having less a mark of self-deprecation. So the mean between these is truth. 1186a12 a20 a25

Note

1. The Greek word is *eirōneia*, which gives us our word irony.

Chapter 8

Praise and the Mean. *To be in the mean is to be well disposed and is what we deserve praise for, and is about passions and pleasures, as is shown by adultery, which is a passion blamed because it is a pleasure falling under the extreme of license.*

Likewise too in the case of all the others. For it is the mark of habit to be well or badly disposed toward certain things, and to be well disposed toward these things is to be disposed neither to excess nor to lack. The habit of being well disposed, then, is toward a mean in such things as we are said to deserve praise for, and the habit of being badly disposed is toward excess and lack. So since virtue is a mean of these passions, and since passions are either pains or pleasures or not without pain or pleasure, virtue then is about pains and pleasures, and thereby is it plain. 1186a27 a30

There are in fact other passions, as one might think, where vice is not excess or lack of any sort, for example, debauchery.[1] Indeed, the debaucher is not the fellow who corrupts free women too much, but it and anything else like it, which falls under the pleasure of license, is blameworthy, whether it is done to excess or very little. 1186a36

Note

1. Or adultery. The translation depends on marking a period in the Greek after *moicheia* (debauchery) at 1186a38, and taking what follows to be a new sentence.

Chapter 9

The Mean and the Middle. *Opposed to the mean are both the excess and the lack, but sometimes one extreme seems more opposed than the other, either because one extreme is closer to the mean or because our nature goes after one extreme rather than the other. Virtue, being a mean of passions, is hard to acquire.*

1186b4 Next it is necessary, I suppose, to say what is opposed to the mean, whether it is the excess or the lack. For in some cases lack is opposite to the mean but in others excess is, for example, boldness, which is an excess, is not opposite to courage but cowardice, being a lack, is; and to temperance, which is a mean between license and insensibility about pleasures, insensibility does b10 not seem to be opposite, being a lack, but license does, being an excess. But both are opposed to the mean, both the excess and the lack, for the mean is more lacking than the excess though it exceeds the lack. That is also why the prodigal say that the generous are miserly. But the miserly say that the generous are prodigal, and the daring and the impetuous call the brave cowards, and cowards call the brave impetuous and mad.

1186b17 So we would seem to have two reasons for opposing the excess and the lack to the mean. For either it is from the thing itself, when we consider which is closer to the mean or further away, for example, whether prodigality or miserliness is further away from generosity; for generosity would seem more like prodigality than like miserliness; miserliness then is further away, and things further away from the mean would seem to be more opposite. So from b25 the thing itself the lack appears to be more opposed. But there is also another way, as that the things we are naturally more inclined to are more opposed to the mean. For instance, we are naturally more inclined to be licentious than controlled.[1] We progress, then, more toward our natural inclination. But b30 what we progress more toward, that is also more opposed. But we progress more toward license than control, and so an excess beyond the mean would be more opposed. For license is an excess beyond temperance.

1186b32 What virtue is then has been examined, for it seems to be a certain mean of passions. Consequently it would be necessary for anyone going to be esteemed in character to guard the mean of each of the passions. Hence it

is also hard to be virtuous, for getting the mean is hard in everything. For example, to draw a circle is something anyone can do, but to get the middle in it is difficult. Likewise too to get angry is easy and also to do the opposite of this, but to keep to the mean is difficult. And, in a word, in each of the passions one can see this, that what circles round the mean is easy but the mean that we are praised for is hard. That is also why what is virtuous is rare. **a1**

The Practical Aim or the Sources of Virtue
That Virtue Is Voluntary
Refutation of Errors. *Socrates' view that being virtuous or vicious is not up to us is false, first because it conflicts with the practice of lawgivers, second because it conflicts with the practice of praise and blame, third because it conflicts with what we say of those voluntarily ill or ugly.*

Since we have spoken of virtue, then, the next thing to examine would be whether it is possible to attain it or not but, as Socrates said, being virtuous or base is not up to us. For if, he said, anyone were to ask anyone at all whether he wanted to be just or unjust, no one would choose injustice. And likewise with courage and cowardice and with the other virtues it is always plain[2] in the same way that if some people are base they would not be base voluntarily. So it is plain that they would not be virtuous voluntarily either. **1187a5** **a10**

Such an argument is not true. For why does the lawgiver not let people do base things and why does he bid them do fine and virtuous things? And he lays down a punishment for base things if you do them, but for fine things if you don't do them. Yet it would be absurd for him to lay down laws for things that it is not up to us to do. But, as is likely, it is up to us to be virtuous and to be base. **1187a13**

Further, there is the evidence of our practices of praising and blaming. For virtue is praised and vice blamed, but praise and blame are not given to what is involuntary. So plainly it is up to us in the same way both to do virtuous things and to do base things. **1187a19**

But they used to tell this sort of story as well, wishing to show that the voluntary does not exist. For why, they say, when we are ill or when we are ugly, does no one blame us for being so? But that is not true. For we blame people like this too when we think they are themselves the cause of being ill or in a bad bodily state, on the ground that the voluntary is present here as well. So one's being in accord with virtue and vice would likely be a voluntary thing. **1187a23** **a25**

Notes

1. The Greek is *kosmios*, which connotes orderly arrangement and gives us our word cosmos.
2. Omitting the *de* (and) after *dēlon* (plain) at 1187a11, as does one of the manuscripts, and construing as all one sentence.

Chapter 10

Proof That Virtue Is Voluntary
The Principle. *Each nature begets something of the same kind as itself, as plants and animals; and in geometry what follows the principles is the same way the principles are, and vice versa.*

1187a29 Further, one might also see the fact more clearly from this. For every nature generates the same sort of substance as itself, for example, plants and animals, for both generate. And they generate from their principles, for example, the tree generates from the seed, for this is a sort of principle. And what follows the principles is the way it is because the way the principles are is also the way the things from the principles are.

1187a35 One can see this more clearly in the case of geometry. For there too, when certain principles are taken, the way these principles are is also the way that what follows them is; for example, if the triangle has angles equal to two right angles, then the quadrilateral has angles equal to four right angles, and if
b1 the triangle changes so also does the quadrilateral change along with it. For the reverse holds, and if the quadrilateral does not have angles equal to four right angles, neither will the triangle have angles equal to two right angles.

Chapter 11

The Proof. *Man is begetter of his actions, but the actions are always changing, so the principle must change likewise. The principle is choice and wish and reason. So these must change voluntarily as the actions do. We can choose to be better but not to be best, unless we have the best nature too.*

1187b4 So the case is just like these when it comes to man. For since man generates substance from certain principles he generates the actions he does too—for what else would do so? For we do not say that any of the lifeless things acts, or that any of the other living things does except man. It is plain then that man generates actions.

1187b9 So since we see our actions changing, and we are never doing the same thing, and since the actions are being generated from certain principles, it is plain that, when the actions change, the principles of the actions that those actions come from change too, just as we said when taking our example from
b15 the case of geometry. But of action, both virtuous and base, choice or wish and all that goes with reason are principle. Plainly, then, these too change, for

we also change, along with our actions, voluntarily; as a result the principle too, that is, choice (for it does change), changes voluntarily.[1] Consequently it is plain that it would be up to us to be both virtuous and base.

Someone might perhaps say then, "Since it is in me to be just and virtu- 1187b20
ous, I will be the most virtuous of all if I want." That is not indeed possible. Why? Because it does not happen even in the case of the body. For it is not the case that if someone wants to care for his body he will in fact have the best body of all. For not only must there be care, but the body too must be b25
beautiful and good by nature. His body, then, will be in better shape, but not in the best shape of all. We must suppose the same in the case of the soul too. For the one who chooses to be most virtuous will not be so unless nature is present as well; he will, nevertheless, be better.

Note

1. Punctuating the Greek here at 1187b16–19 as in the English translation, and not as the Bekker text does, which would give the less logical sense of: "Plainly then these too change, for we also change, along with our actions, voluntarily, so that the principle, that is, choice, changes. For it changes voluntarily."

Chapter 12

The Nature of the Voluntary
Relation to Kinds of Appetite
Desire and the Voluntary. *The voluntary is what is not done under necessity. Action is done by appetite, and appetite is desire or spirit or wish. Reasons that desire is voluntary are: (a) what is done by desire is pleasant but what is done by necessity is painful, so what is done by desire is voluntary; (b) the incontinent man, even if he does bad things unknowingly, does them with desire and pleasure, and he also does wrong, all of which is done voluntarily.*

So since being virtuous is manifestly up to us, the thing we need next to talk 1187b31
of is what the voluntary is, for this, namely the voluntary, is most in charge when it comes to virtue. The voluntary, to state it thus simply, is what we do not do under necessity. But something clearer, perhaps, should be said of it.

So, what we do things by is appetite, and appetite has three kinds: desire, 1187b36
spirit, wish. First, then, we must examine action in accord with desire, whether it is voluntary or involuntary. Now it would not seem to be involuntary. Why and wherefore? Because everything that we do not do voluntarily, we do a1
under necessity, and on things done under necessity pain follows. But on things done because of desire pleasure follows. So in this way, at any rate, things done because of desire would not seem to be involuntary but voluntary.

1188a5 But, again, another argument opposes this, the one about incontinence. For no one, it says, voluntarily does bad things knowing that they are bad. Yet the incontinent man, it says, knowing that the things are base, does them all the same, and he certainly does them in accord with desire. He does not, a10 then, do them voluntarily. He is under necessity, then. Here again the same argument will meet it. For if in fact he does it in accord with desire, he does not do it of necessity, for pleasure follows on desire and what is with pleasure is not of necessity.

1188a13 The fact that the incontinent man acts voluntarily might be made plain in another way too. For those who do wrong do wrong voluntarily, but incontinent men are wrongdoers and do wrong; so the incontinent man would be doing voluntarily what accords with his incontinence.

Chapter 13

Desire and the Involuntary. *A reason that desire is not voluntary is that the continent man is praised, and praise is for what is voluntary, but the continent man acts against desire, so if to act against desire is involuntary, the continent man would not act voluntarily; but this seems false; therefore acting by desire is not voluntary.*

1188a16 But, again, there is another opposing argument, which says it is not voluntary. For he who is continent does voluntarily what accords with his continence, for he is praised and people are praised for what is voluntary. But if what a20 accords with desire is voluntary, that which is against desire is involuntary. But the continent man acts against his desire, so as a result the continent man would not be continent voluntarily. But that does not seem to be the case. Therefore what accords with desire is not voluntary either.

Spirit, Wish, the Voluntary, and Involuntary. *Similar reasons show that action from spirit also is both voluntary and involuntary. As for wish: (a) the incontinent man wishes to do bad things, but no one voluntarily does bad things, so wish is not voluntary; (b) but, on the contrary, the incontinent man is blamed, and what is blamed is voluntary, so wish is voluntary.*

1188a23 Again it is similar in the case of what accords with spirit. For the same arguments fit as with desire too, and they will, as a result, generate the puzzle, since there can be incontinence and continence in anger.

1188a26 Further, of the appetites we distinguished we have wish left to examine, whether it is voluntary. But certainly the incontinent want at the time the things they are impelled toward. The incontinent, then, do base things wanting

to do them. But there is not anyone who voluntarily does bad things know- a30
ing that they are bad, and the incontinent man, knowing that the bad things are bad, does them wanting to do so. He is not acting voluntarily, then; nor, in that case, is wish voluntary. But this argument takes away incontinence and the incontinent man, for if he is not acting voluntarily then he is not blameworthy. But the incontinent man is blameworthy. Therefore he acts voluntarily. Therefore wish is voluntary.

Since, then, certain arguments are appearing that are in conflict, something 1188a35
clearer needs to be said of the voluntary.

Chapter 14

Relation to Necessity
Force. *Force exists in lifeless things, as a stone going upward, and in living things, as a horse being turned aside. Force is when the cause of doing something is external. When the cause is internal there is not force.*

So first we should speak of force and of necessity, for force exists also in 1188a37
lifeless things. For there is a proper place assigned to all the lifeless things, to fire the place upward and to earth the place downward, yet one can nevertheless force a stone to go upward and fire to go downward. One can also use force on animals, for example, one can take hold of a horse and turn it aside when it is running straight on.

Now in the case of everything where the cause of their doing something 1188b6
against nature or against what they want is external, we say that they are forced to do whatever they do. But in the case of things that have the cause inside them we no longer say that they are forced. Otherwise, the incontinent man will retort by denying that he is base, for he will say that he is forced by his desire to do base things.

So let this be our definition of the forced: things where the cause of 1188b11
being forced to do them is external, but where the cause is internal and on the inside there is no force.

Chapter 15

Necessity. *Necessity is not in everything, as not in pleasure, but in things external, as in being compelled to do something by external events.*

1188b15 Again, we must speak of necessity and the necessary. The necessary must not be said in every case or in everything, for example, in what we do for the sake of pleasure. For it would be absurd of someone to say, "I was compelled by pleasure to corrupt my friend's wife." For the necessary is not in everything, b20 but precisely in things that are external, for example, when someone suffers a harm being under necessity from the facts to take it in exchange for a greater one. For example, "I was compelled to use more haste to get to the country for otherwise I would have found my things there destroyed." The necessary, then, is in things like this.

Chapter 16

Relation to Thought. *The voluntary is what goes along with thought, for to do someone harm without thinking to do so, is to do it involuntarily, as with the woman who involuntarily poisoned her lover.*

1188b25 Since the voluntary is not in any single impulse, what would be left is that it is something that arises from thought. For the involuntary is what accords with necessity, and arises in accord with force, and third, what does not arise with thought. This is plain from what happens. For when someone hits someone or kills him or does anything else like it, not having thought beforehand, we say that he acted involuntarily, supposing that the voluntary lies in thinking things through.

1188b31 For example, they say that once a certain woman gave someone a philter to drink, the man then died by the philter, and the woman was put on trial before the Areopagus. On her appearance there they let her go for no other b35 reason than that she did not do it from forethought, for she gave it in love but mistook in the fact. That is why it did not seem to be voluntary, because she gave him the dose of the philter with no thought of doing away with him. Here then the voluntary falls under what is with thought.

Chapter 17

Relation to Choice

Nature of Choice. *Choice is not appetite, for animals have appetite but not choice; nor wish, for we wish for but do not choose impossible things, and wish is of the end, but choice of the means; nor thought, for we think about*

things we do not choose. Choice is a combination of these, being an impulse or appetite to act that follows deliberation.

There is still choice left to consider, whether it is appetite or not. For **1189a1**
appetite arises also in the other animals but choice does not, for choice is with reason but reason does not exist in any of the other animals. So it would not seem to be appetite.

But is it then at least wish? Or is it not even this? For there is wish also for **1189a5**
impossible things, for example, we wish to be deathless but we do not choose to be. Further, choice is not of the end but of things for the end, for example, no one chooses to be healthy but we choose the things that are for health: walking, running. We wish for the ends, though, for we wish to be healthy. So in this way too it is plain that wish and choice are not the same thing.

But choice seems to be the way its name is too,[1] as that we choose this in **1189a12**
place of that, for example, the better in place of the worse. Whenever therefore we exchange the better in place of the worse we could take, there it would seem that choosing fits.

So since choice is none of these things, is it then that which in choice **1189a16**
accords with thought, or is it not even this? For we think about many things and we opine many things in accord with thought, so are the things we think about then also the things we choose? Or not? For we often think of things in India[2] but we do not choose any of them as well. Therefore choice is not thought either.

So since as regards each of these, choice is not any of them, but these are **1189a22**
what arise in the soul, the joining of some of them together must be what choice is. Since choice, therefore, as was just said, is of goods that are for the end and not of the end, and is of things that are possible for us, and of things that make us debate whether this is the thing to take or that, plainly we have first to think and deliberate over them, and then, when a better appears to us after thinking, we have thus an impulse for doing it, and so, when doing **a30**
this, we are held to be acting by choice.

The Choosable. *The voluntary is not the choosable, but the choosable is voluntary. The choosable is the doable that is up to us where we can grasp the why. But the why in choosable things is not fixed, as it is in geometry or spelling, but is matter for deliberation, where there is possibility of error, as by deficiency or excess because of pleasure and pain.*

If choice then is a certain appetite that is deliberative with thought, the **1189a31**
voluntary is not the choosable. For we do many things voluntarily before having thought and deliberated about them, for example, we sit down and stand up and do much else of the sort voluntarily without thinking, but things by **a35**
choice were all with thought. The voluntary then is not choosable, but the choosable is voluntary. For if we choose to do something after deliberating

about it, we act voluntarily. There are a few lawgivers, too, who seem to define the voluntary as other than what is from choice, and who lay down lesser punishments for what is voluntary than for what is by choice.

1189b6 Choice, then, is found in doable things, that is, where it is up to us both to do and not to do and to do in this way or not this way, and where it is possible to grasp the why. But the why is not simple. For in geometry, when someone says that the quadrilateral has angles equal to four right angles, and the question is asked why, he says, "because the triangle has its angles equal to two right angles." In such things, then, they take the why from the fixed principle.

1189b13 But in doable things, where choice is, it is not like this. For there is no fixed principle laid down. "But why did you do this?" suppose someone asks. "Because there was no other way," or "Because it was better so." It is on the basis of the outcomes themselves, which ones seem better, that he chooses these things and for these reasons. So in these sorts of things there is deliberating about how to act but not in the sciences. For no one deliberates how to write b20 the name "Archicles" because it is fixed how to write the name "Archicles." Error, then, does not arise in thought but in the activity of writing. For where there is no error in thought, there we do not deliberate either.

1189b24 But when it is not now fixed how to do it, then there is error, and in doable things it is not fixed, and also in things where there are errors on either side. We err in doable things, then, and likewise in things that accord with the virtues. For when aiming at virtue, we err along natural lines, for it is in b30 deficiency and in excess that error lies and to both of these we are carried by pleasure and pain. For because of pleasure we do base things and because of pain we flee fine things.

Notes

1. The Greek for choice is *prohairesis*, which literally means a "taking before," that is, a taking of one thing before another thing.
2. An implicit reference perhaps to the fact that Aristotle's pupil, Alexander, had famously invaded and conquered parts of India.

Chapter 18

Choice and Virtue

Means and Ends. *Error in choosing concerns means, not ends, where pleasure and pain can trip us up. Virtue concerns the ends, as in the sciences where the end is given and the means are chosen. Virtue is best and what everything else is for.*

1189b32 Further, thought is not like perception; for example, one cannot do anything by sight other than seeing nor anything by hearing other than hearing,

nor likewise do we deliberate whether we should hear by hearing or by sight. Thought is not like that, but it can do this or that or the other; that is why precisely here there is deliberation.

Error in choosing good things, therefore, is not about ends (for everyone **1190a1**
agrees about these, for example, about health that it is good), but precisely about what is for the end, for example, whether it is good to eat this for health or not. Therefore it is here above all that pleasure and pain trip us up. For we flee the one and take the other.

So since we have distinguished what error is in and how, it remains to **1190a7**
say what virtue takes for its aim, whether the end or things for the end, for example, whether the beautiful or things for the beautiful. How is it with science then? Is it the job of the science of building to set up the end in a fine way or to see what is for the end? For once that is finely set up, for example, to make a fine house, then no one else besides the builder will find out and provide what is for it. And likewise with all the other sciences.

It would seem, then, to be the same with virtue too, that its mark is rather **1190a15**
on the end, which it has to set up correctly, than on what is for the end. And no one else will provide the sources for this, or find what each must make and set up in view of it (and reasonably is virtue what sets this up for everything that has in it the principle of the best).[1]

Nothing is better than virtue then, for the other things are both for its sake **1190a21**
and the principle is in its presence[2] (the things that are for it are rather for its sake). The end is like a sort of principle, and each thing is for the sake of it, but this will be in a way that it is plain in the case of virtue too that, since it **a25**
is best cause, it aims at the end rather than what is for the end.

Notes

1. Punctuating the Greek at 1190a19–20 by putting *kai eulogon . . . tou beltistou* in a parenthesis. Standard punctuations, including Bekker's, require emendations to the text to produce grammatical sense.
2. Following Armstrong's suggestion that the Greek *pros* at 1190a23 should be taken to mean "in the presence of" (1947: 509n).

Chapter 19

The End. *The end of virtue is the beautiful and choice should follow this, and it is from the choice that virtue is known.*

Virtue's end, at any rate, is the beautiful, so it has its eye on this rather than **1190a28**
on the sources it will come from. These do also belong to it but that they are wholly it surely seems odd. For perhaps someone could be a good imitator

in drawing and yet he would not be praised if he did not set up imitation of the most beautiful things as his target. So this belongs altogether to virtue, to set up the beautiful.

1190a34 So why, someone might say, did we earlier assert that the activity is better than the virtue by itself, but now we are giving to virtue as finer, not what activity comes from, but what there is no activity in? Yes, but in fact we are
b1 still in like manner saying this, that the activity is better than the habit. For, because the choice each man has cannot be pointed to, other people judge the virtuous man, when they are studying him, from what he does—since if it was possible to know each man's sense of judgment[1] and how it relates to the beautiful, he would be held virtuous even without his acting.

1190b6 But since we counted up certain means of passions, we must say which passions they are about.

Note

1. The Greek is *gnōmē*.

Chapter 20

The Science in Particular
The Subject Matter in Particular: The Several Virtues
Courage. *Courage concerns daring and fears on a human level. But courage does not come by experience or knowledge, as in soldiers, nor by inexperience, nor by passion, nor by shame before fellow citizens, nor by hope of gain, but for the beautiful and through thought and reason. Courage is not fearless but withstands fears, and fears of loss of substance that are close to hand.*

1190b9 Since courage then concerns daring and fears, we must examine what fears and what daring. So if someone is afraid he may lose his substance[1] is he a coward, or if he is daring about these matters, is he brave? Or not? Likewise in the case of someone merely afraid or merely daring,[2] he is not to be called a coward when afraid nor brave when not afraid. Courage does not lie then
b15 in such fears and daring. Nor yet in such things as the following: if someone is not afraid of thunder, for instance, or lightning or any other thing above man that is fearful, he is not brave but rather mad. In fears and daring on a human level, then, is the brave man found, I mean in things the many are afraid of or that everyone is afraid of; he that is daring in these things is brave.

1190b21 With these distinctions in place, then, we must, since people are brave in many ways, examine what sort of man is brave. For it is possible to be brave by experience, as soldiers are for example, for they know by experience that
b25 in such and such a place or time or state of affairs nothing can happen. But

anyone who knows all this and on these grounds withstands the enemy is not brave. For if none of these things obtains, he does not stand fast. That is why they are not to be called brave who are so by experience. Nor did Socrates speak correctly when he said that courage was knowledge. For knowledge becomes knowledge when experience is gained from getting used to things. **b30** But we do not say, nor will people say, that those who stand fast because of experience are brave. Courage, then, would not be knowledge.

But again, there are some who are brave from the opposite of experience. **1190b32** For those who have no experience of what will happen are not afraid because of the inexperience. Nor should these be called brave either.

There are others again who seem to be brave because of passions, for **1190b35** example, those in love or enthused. Nor are these to be termed brave either. For if the passion is taken from them, they are not brave anymore; but the brave man should always be brave. That is why one would not say that beasts like pigs are brave either, for fighting back when beaten and in pain. The brave man must not be brave because of passion.

There is yet another courage that seems to be a political one: they who **1191a5** withstand dangers out of shame before the citizens also seem to be brave. A sign of this is that Homer too in his poem made Hector say,

"Poulydamus would 'gainst me first heap blame."[3]

and that is why he thinks he should fight. Neither then is this sort of thing **a10** to be called courage, for the same account will fit each of them: for he whose courage does not remain when he has something taken away will be brave no more. If therefore I take away the shame that made him brave, he will no longer be brave.

Further, in another way too, people are held to be brave when they are **1191a13** so because of hope and expectation of good. Not even they should then be called brave, since it seems odd to call such people and in such conditions brave. Anyone like this, then, who is brave in any sort of way, we must not set down as brave, and we must consider who the brave man is. Simply speaking, he is one who is brave because of none of the aforesaid things but because he thinks it a fine thing and does it whether there is anyone present or not.

Nor, to be sure, does courage arise altogether without passion or impulse, **1191a21** but the impulse must arise from reason because of the beautiful. He who has an impulse, then, to run risks because of reason for the sake of the beautiful and is fearless with respect to them, he is brave and these are the things **a25** courage is about—but not fearless in that the brave man may turn out such as to have no fear at all; for someone like that, who holds nothing fearful, is not brave. For thus a stone and other lifeless things might be brave. No, he must have fear, yet he must stand firm, for he would not be brave if he stands firm but has no fear.

1191a30 Also, as in the distinction made above, the fears and dangers he faces are not of all kinds but those that take away his substance.[4] Further, it must not be at any and every time but when the fears and dangers are close by, for a man who has no fear of a danger that is ten years away is not brave yet. For some a35 are bold because of the great distance but, when things are close by, they die through fear. Courage, then, and the brave man are of this sort.

Notes

1. The Greek is *ousia* and could mean either life or property or both.
2. The MSS at 1190b13 all have *monon* (merely) but scholars think, following a parallel passage at *EN* 3.6.1115a17, 29, that it should be emended to *noson* (illness) so that the translation will read "if someone is afraid of illness. . . ." The Greek does nevertheless have a sense as it stands, so I prefer to leave it as it is.
3. *Iliad* 22.100.
4. The Greek is *ousia* and could mean either life or property or both.

Chapter 21

Temperance. *Temperance is a mean of license and insensibility in pleasures of touch and taste, it enjoys these pleasures neither too little nor too much, and it does so, through reason, for the sake of the beautiful.*

1191a37 Temperance is a mean between license and insensibility about pleasures. For temperance and all virtues simply are the best habit, but the best habit is of what is best, and what is best of excess and want is the mean. For in each of these respects people are blameworthy, both in respect of excess and in respect of want. The result is, if the mean is best, that temperance would be a mean between license and insensibility.

1191b5 So first, then, it would be a mean between these things but, next, temperance concerns pleasures and pains, though not all of them nor those that are about anything. For, if someone enjoys looking at a drawing or a statue or anything else of the sort, it is not then the case that he is licentious; nor likewise with hearing or smelling. But temperance lies in the pleasures of touch and taste.

1191b10 Neither indeed will a man be temperate in these things if his habit is such that not one such pleasure makes him feel anything (for such a person is insensible), but he precisely will be who does feel them and who is not so carried off by them as, by enjoying them to excess, to make everything else b15 secondary and to posit him at least as temperate who acts for the sake of the beautiful itself and not for anything else.[1] For he who keeps off from the excess of such pleasures either because of fear or anything else of the sort is

not temperate. For neither do we say that the other animals apart from man are temperate, since there is no reason in them to commend the beautiful by and choose it. For all virtue is of the beautiful and toward the beautiful.

Consequently temperance would be about pleasures and pains and those of them that are found in touch and taste. 1191b21

Note

1. The text as it stands at 1191b14–16 is dubious, and to give it sense one has to treat the phrase as a zeugma. An alternative would be to mark a lacuna and supply a "we call" or the like to give the sense "to make everything else secondary. And we call him at least temperate who. . . ."

Chapter 22

Mildness. *Mildness is the mean of anger and un-anger that neither gets angry at everyone always nor gets angry never at anyone.*

Next after this would be to speak of mildness, what it is and where it is. Mildness then is in the middle between angriness and un-anger. In fact virtues on the whole appear to be means of a certain sort. And in this way too one can say they are means, for if the best is in a mean, and virtue is the best habit, and the middle is best, virtue would be the middle. But it will be clearer if we look at them one by one. 1191b23

For since the angry man is he who is angry at everyone and in every way and too much, someone of this sort is indeed blameworthy. For one should not get angry with everyone nor on every occasion nor in every way and always; nor again should one have a habit so as never to get angry at anyone. For the latter too is blamable, as being dulled to pain. So since he who goes to excess is blamable and he too who is deficient, the person in the middle between these would be both mild and praiseworthy. For neither is he who is deficient in anger praiseworthy, nor he who goes to excess, but he whose habit in respect of these things is in the middle—he would be mild, and mildness would be a mean in these passions. 1191b30 b35

Chapter 23

Liberality

What Liberality Is. *Liberality is a mean of prodigality and miserliness about money.*

1191b39 Liberality is a mean between prodigality and miserliness. Such passions are about money. For the prodigal man is he who spends on what he should not and more than he should and when he should not, but the miser is opposite to him and does not spend on what he should or as much as he should or when he should. But they are both blameworthy, for one of them is deficient and
a5 the other goes to excess. The liberal man therefore, since he is praiseworthy, would be the middle between these. Who then is he? The one who spends on what he should and as much as he should and when he should.

Chapter 24

What Liberality Is Not. *Miserliness is of several kinds, for the bad has many forms but the good only one. Liberality is about spending money not getting it, which belongs to business.*

1192a8 Of miserliness there are several kinds: for example, there are those we call niggards and skinflints and money-grubbers and penny pinchers. All these fall under miserliness. For the bad has many forms, but the good has one form, as health, for example, is something simple but disease has many forms. Likewise virtue is a simple thing, but vice has many forms, for all these characters about money are blamable.

1192a15 Does it then belong to the liberal man also to acquire and to provision himself with money? Or not? For it is not the case with any other virtue either. For it does not belong to courage to make weapons, but to something else, and courage takes them from it and makes right use of them (likewise
a20 with temperance and the other virtues). So it is not liberality's job either but precisely business.

Chapter 25

Magnanimity. *Magnanimity is a mean of vanity and smallness of soul and is about honor received from those who are virtuous. The vain man thinks himself worthy of what he is not and the small-souled man not worthy of what he is.*

1192a21 Magnanimity is a mean between vanity and smallness of soul and is about honor and dishonor, and about honor that comes not from the many but from

the virtuous. And indeed it is more about this honor, for the virtuous will give honor based on knowledge and right judgment. So the magnanimous man a25
will want rather to be honored by him who knows along with himself that he is worthy of honor. For neither will he be about every honor but the best, and about the good that is honorable and has the rank of rule.

Those, then, are vain who are despicable and base but hold themselves 1192a29
worthy of great things and think, moreover, that they deserve to be honored. But they, by contrast, are small-souled who think they deserve less than befits them. So the one in the middle between these is he who thinks he deserves neither less honor than befits him nor greater honor than he is worthy of, nor every honor. This man is the magnanimous man. Consequently it is plain that a35
magnanimity is a mean between vanity and smallness of soul.

Chapter 26

Magnificence. *Magnificence is a mean of extravagance and shabbiness in making expenditures. Other kinds of magnificence are said by way of metaphor.*

Magnificence is a mean between extravagance and shabbiness. Magnifi- 1192a37
cence is about outlays whose occurrence befits what is proper. So whoever expends where he should not is extravagant; for example, if someone feasts his dinner club as one would feast a marriage, such a one is extravagant. For the extravagant man is the type who shows off his prosperity at a time when he should not. But the shabby man is his opposite, who will not make b5
magnificent outlays where he should—either because not doing this, as for marriage feasts, or[1] because when making outlays for a chorus, not doing it in a worthy way but in a way that is wanting. Someone like this is shabby.

Its name, in fact, makes clear that magnificence is of the sort we say, for 1192b8
since on special occasions the great is due,[2] rightly is its name "magni"-ficence. Magnificence, then, since it is praiseworthy, would be a certain mean between deficiency and excess with respect to fitting outlays on due occasions.

But there are, as people think, many kinds of magnificence, for example, 1192b13
they say "and he strode along in a magnificent way," and other like magnificences indeed there are, spoken of in transferred senses and not strictly. For magnificence is not in these things but in what we said.

Notes

1. Inserting a comma after *gamous* (marriage feasts) at 1192b6 and taking the *ē* that follows it as beginning a new clause.
2. Reading *to mega dei* at 1192b10 with one of the manuscripts rather than *to mega deon* with another.

Chapter 27

Righteous Indignation. *Righteous indignation is a mean of envy and joy at ill, and it feels pain at undeserved good or bad. Envy is pain at another's success, and joy at ill is pleasure at another's loss.*

1192b18 Righteous indignation is a mean between envy and joy at ill. For both these are blamable, but the righteously indignant man is praiseworthy. Righteous indignation is a certain pain about good things, which happen to someone who does not deserve them. So a righteously indignant man is one who feels pain at such people, and this same man will feel pain again if he sees anyone doing badly who does not deserve to. Righteous indignation, then, and the righteously indignant man are, I suppose, like this. But
b25 the envious man is contrary to him. For he feels pain simply if someone is doing well, whether deserving to or not. Like him is the man who rejoices at ill; he will be pleased when someone is doing badly, whether deserving to or not. The righteously indignant man is neither, but is a middle between them.

Chapter 28

Dignity. *Dignity is in the middle of disagreeableness and fawning and is about social intercourse.*

1192b30 Dignity is in the middle between being disagreeable and fawning, and it is about social intercourse. For the disagreeable man is such as not to consort or converse with anyone, but his name seems to come from his manner, for the disagreeable man is someone self-agreeable, from being agreeable
b35 to himself.[1] But the fawner is such as to consort with anyone and in any way and anywhere. Neither of these, then, is praiseworthy, but the man of dignity, being in the middle between them, is praiseworthy, for he consorts neither with everyone but with those who are worthy nor with no one, but with these same people.

Note

1. The Greek for the disagreeable man is *athaudēs* which derives from *autos* "self" and *hēdomai* "to be pleased."

Chapter 29

Shame. *Shame is a mean between shamelessness and shamed shyness about actions and words.*

Shame is a mean between shamelessness and shamed shyness and is about 1193a1
actions and words. For the shameless man is he who says and does before anyone whatever comes to his mind in anything, but the shamed shy man is opposite to him and shrinks from doing or saying anything before anyone, for someone of this sort, who is shamed shy about everything, does not act. a5
But shame and the man of shame are a mean between them; for neither will he speak or do everything and in every way, like the shameless man, nor will he hold back in everything and in every way, like the shamed shy man, but he will act and speak where he should and what he should and when he should. a10

Chapter 30

Wit. *Wit is a mean of buffoonery and boorishness and is about jests.*

Wit is a mean between buffoonery and boorishness, and it is about jests. For 1193a11
the buffoon is he who thinks he should make fun of everyone and everything, and the boor is he who wishes neither to make fun nor to be made fun of but gets angry. But the wit is in the middle between these, who neither makes fun a15
of anyone or in any way nor is himself a boor. But the wit will be spoken of in a sort of twofold way, for both he who can make fun tastefully and he who can bear being made fun of is witty. And such is what wit is.

Chapter 31

Friendliness. *Friendliness is a mean of flattery and hostility and is about actions and words.*

Friendliness is a mean between flattery and hostility, and it is about 1193a20
actions and words. For the flatterer is he who adds on things beyond what is fitting and is the case, but he who hates is hostile, by taking away even what

is the case. Neither, then, is rightly to be praised, but the friendly man is in
a25 the middle between these. For he will neither add things on beyond what is the case, nor praise what is not fitting, nor on the other hand will he play them down or completely deny them, contrary to what he thinks. Such then is the friendly man.

Chapter 32

Truth. *Truth is a mean of self-deprecation and boasting and is about what one says of one's own worth.*

1193a28 Truth is a mean between self-deprecation and boasting. It is about words but not all of them. For the boaster is he who claims for himself more than he has, or claims to know what he does not know. But he who self deprecates is his opposite, and claims for himself less than he has and does not say what he knows but hides his knowledge. But the truthful man will do neither of these, for neither will he make claims to more than he has nor to less, but he will say both that he is what he is and that he knows what he knows.

1193a36 Now whether these are virtues or not virtues would be another discussion. But that they are means between the things said is plain. For those who live in accord with them are praised.

Chapter 33

Justice

The Nature of Justice

What Justice Is. *Justice is of two kinds, either according to law, when it is the acts of all the virtues, or in relation to someone else, when it is the equal and a mean between the too much and the too little. The just in question here is this latter one.*

1193a39 It remains to speak about justice, what and in what and about what sort of thing it is. So if we take first what the just is, then the just is twofold, one of which is according to law. For they say that just things are what the law commands. But the law commands the doing of brave things and of temper-
b5 ate things and of simply everything whatever that is said in accord with the virtues. Hence, they say, justice is also held to be a certain perfect virtue. For

if just things are what the law bids the doing of, and the law commands what is in accord with all the virtues, then he who abides by what is just according to the law will be perfectly virtuous, and the result is that the just man and justice are a certain complete virtue. One sort of justice, then, is in these things and about these things.

But we are not looking for this just nor for justice about these things. 1193b11
For one can be just in accord with these just things when by oneself. For the temperate man and the brave man and the man of endurance can be what they are even by themselves. But the just that is in relation to someone else b15
is other than the just that is said according to law, for one cannot be just by oneself in things that are just in relation to another. But this is the just and these are the things the justice is about that we are looking for.

The just then that is in relation to another is simply speaking the equal. 1193b19
For the unjust is the unequal. For whenever people allot themselves more of the good things and fewer of the bad ones there is inequality, and this is how wronging and being wronged, they think, take place. It is plain, then, that since injustice is in things unequal, justice and the just are in an equality of transactions. Consequently, it is plain that justice would be a certain mean b25
between excess and deficiency and between much and little. For the unjust man, in doing wrong, has more, and the wronged man, in being wronged, has less. But the middle between these is just (the middle is an equal), so that the middle between the more and less would be just, and he is a just man who wants to have the equal. But the equal arises, at a minimum, in a pair. b30
Being equal in relation to another, then, is just, and a just man would be of this sort.

What Justice Is In. *Justice exists in equality of proportion in exchanges, as in Plato's "Republic," where we use currency for measure. It is not getting back the same in the way the Pythagoreans said but getting back the same in proportion.*

Since justice, therefore, exists in a just and an equal and a mean, and the 1193b32
just is said to be just among persons and things, and the equal to be equal to them, and the mean to be a mean for them, the result is that justice and the just will be with respect to certain people and in certain things.

Therefore, since the just is equal, then the equal by way of proportion 1193b36
would be just, and proportion is, at a minimum, in four things, for as A is to B, C is to D. For instance, there is proportion when he who possesses much contributes much, and he who possesses little contributes little; again there a1
is proportion in the same way when he who has worked much gets much and he who has worked little gets little. And as he who has worked is to him who has not worked, so is much to little, and as he who has worked is to much, a5
so is he who has not worked to little.

1194a6 Plato in fact seems to use this proportion of justice in his *Republic*.[1] For the farmer, he says, makes grain, and the builder a house, and the weaver a cloak, and the cobbler a shoe. The farmer therefore gives the builder grain, a10 and the builder gives the farmer a house; and in like manner all the others are related in such a way that they make exchange of what they have for what the others have. The proportion is this: for when the farmer gives[2] to the builder, the builder thus to the farmer, to the cobbler likewise, to the weaver, to all the a15 rest, the same proportion with respect to each other arises and this proportion holds the regime together. Consequently the just seems to be proportion. For the just holds regimes together, and the just is the same as proportion.

1194a18 But since the builder makes his work worth more than the cobbler, and since it was possible for the cobbler to exchange work with the builder but not possible to take a house in place of shoes, it was at precisely this point that they agreed to make current the use of that for which all these things can be bought, silver, calling it by the name of currency, and to make exchanges with one another as each gives for each thing its price, and in this way to hold a25 the political community together. Since, therefore, the just is in these things, and in what was said above, justice about these things would have in its habit an impulse, with choice, about these things and in these things.

1194a28 Justice is also being done to as one did, but not, to be sure, as the Pythagoreans said. For they think it is just for someone to have done back to him what he did. Something like this is not indeed possible with everyone. For the same thing is not just for a servant compared with a free man. For, if the servant strikes the free man, it is not just that he be struck in return, but that he be struck in return several times. In fact getting back what one did is just by way of proportion, for as the free man is related to the slave by being a35 better so is the doing back related to the doing. Likewise too for the free man in relation to the free man, for it is not just, if someone knocks someone's eye out, that he merely have his eye knocked out in return, but that, following the proportion, he suffer more. For he began first as well as did the wrong and b1 he is wrong in both, so that, in proportion to the wrongs done, his suffering more than he did is just.

What Sort of Thing Justice Is About. *Justice is about the political just, which is equality between equal citizens, and not the household just of inequality between unequals, as of father and son or slave and master. The just is by nature and by law. Both are subject to change, but the just by nature is what is for the most part. The political just is by law.*

1194b3 Since the just is said in many ways, we should define what sort of just our investigation is about. So there is a just, as they say, that is for the slave toward the master and for the son toward the father. But the just in these cases would seem to be said equivocally with the political just. For there is a just, which

our investigation is about, the political just, for this exists above all in equality. For citizens are a sort of sharers in common, and they profess to be alike in nature though other in mode. But for a son with respect to his father and for a slave with respect to his master, there would not seem to be anything just.

For neither is there anything just for my foot with respect to me nor for my **1194b11** hand, and likewise neither for any of my parts. So it would seem to be alike for the son with respect to his father. For the son is like a part of his father, save that when he has now taken on the rank of the man and has thereby **b15** been separated off, then he already exists on an equality and likeness with his father. And that is the sort of thing that citizens profess to be. Likewise for the same reason there is no just either for the slave toward his master, for the slave is a thing of his master. But if there really is something just for him, the household just is what relates to him. But this is not, of course, what **b20** we are looking for, but the political just. For the political just seems to be by equality and likeness.

Now, to be sure, the just in the community of man and woman is close to **1194b22** the political just. For while the woman is an inferior being to the man, yet she is more his kin and does in a way have more a share of equality. That is why their way of life is close to that of political community. Hence, too, the just that is for the woman in respect of the man is on that account in a way most political of all.

Since, therefore, it is what exists in political community that is just, justice **1194b28** and the just man will concern the political just. Among just things some, are by nature and some by law. But one should not take this in such a way that they are things that never change. For even things that are by nature partake of change, I mean, for example, that if all of us were to practice always throwing with our left hand, we would become ambidextrous. Yet by nature, at any rate, it is a left hand, and right-handed things are no less by nature better than **b35** the left hand, even if we were to do everything with our left hand as with our right. Nor is it because things change that they are therefore not by nature. But if it is for the most part and for the longer time that the left hand stays thus being a left hand and the right hand a right hand, then this is by nature.

The same with things that are just by nature: it is not the case that, if **1195a1** they change because of our use, therefore there is no just by nature. On the contrary there is. For what persists for the most part, that is on its face just by nature. For what we set down and accept as law, that is both now just and we call it just by law. Therefore what is by nature is a better just than what **a5** is by law. But the just we are investigating is political, and the political is by law not by nature.

The Doing of Justice

Doing Wrong. *The wrong thing is what has been by law determined; the wrong deed is the doing wrongly of the wrong thing; likewise with the just*

thing and the just deed. There is doing a deed and the doer of it is just or unjust when the deed is voluntary and by choice and all the circumstances are known, otherwise not. Ignorance makes a deed involuntary when one is not oneself cause of the ignorance, not as in the drunk hitting their fathers but as in small children doing so.

1195a8 The wrong thing and the wrong deed would seem so far to be the same, but they are not, for the wrong thing is what has been determined by law.
a10 For example, it is wrong to embezzle what one has been entrusted with. But the wrong deed is precisely the unjust doing of something. Similarly the just thing and the just deed are not the same; for the just thing is what has been determined by law, but the just deed is the doing of just things.

1195a14 So when is the just thing the same and when not? When, speaking simply, one does it according to choice and voluntarily (what the voluntary is we stated in our arguments above),[3] that is, when one acts knowing whom and with what and why—this is how one does a just thing. Likewise too in the same way the unjust man will be he who knows whom and by what and why. But when he knows none of these things and does something wrong,
a20 he is not unjust but unfortunate. For if he has killed his father thinking he is killing his enemy, he has done a wrong thing, yet he is not being unjust to anyone; he is merely unfortunate. So, then, the not doing wrong when one does wrong things lies in not knowing this, namely when, as was said in fact a little above, one knows neither whom one is harming nor with what nor why.

1195a25 But now we must define ignorance as well, how it is that in cases of ignorance he will not wrong the person whom he harms. Let this, then, be the definition, that whenever ignorance is cause of someone's doing something, he is not doing it voluntarily; consequently he is not being unjust. But when he is himself cause of his ignorance, and does something according to the
a30 ignorance of which he is himself cause, he is precisely being unjust, and justly will such as he be called responsible. Take the example of people who are drunk. For those who are drunk and do something bad are being unjust, for they are themselves cause of their ignorance. For it was possible for them not to get so drunk that they struck their father in ignorance. Likewise with the other cases of ignorance that they themselves bring about—those who do wrong because of these are unjust.

1195a36 But where they are themselves not to blame but ignorance is and is cause of the act when they are doing it—they are not unjust. Such ignorance is natural, as when little children strike their fathers in ignorance. But their
b1 ignorance, since it is natural, does not make little children, because of this action, to be called unjust. For the ignorance is cause of their doing it, and they are not causes of the ignorance; hence they are not called unjust either.

Receiving Wrong. *Arguments exist on both sides about whether it is possible to suffer wrong voluntarily or not: (a) people flee punishment and harm; (b) people voluntarily accept getting less than is equal; (c) but they get back something else, as honor or praise or friendship; (d) and they vaunt themselves on taking less; (e) the incontinent man voluntarily wrongs himself by harming himself; (f) the incontinent man voluntarily harms himself but no one wants to wrong himself; (g) not to keep the law by being moderate and the like is to wrong oneself. In answer: (i) no one can have more and less, be willing and unwilling, at the same time, which would be necessary if one can wrong oneself; (ii) no one can steal from himself or commit adultery with his wife or do other unjust things (unless the justice be household justice and not political justice); (iii) to receive something unjustly, as from a judge in a competition, is not to do wrong.*

So how is it with respect to being wronged? Is it possible for someone to **1195b4**
be wronged voluntarily? Or not? For while we do just and unjust things voluntarily, it is no longer the case that we are wronged voluntarily, for we flee from being punished, so plainly our being wronged would not be voluntary; for no one voluntarily puts up with being harmed.

Yes, but there are those who give way to people when they should have **1195b9**
what is equal, so that if having what is equal was just, and having less is to be wronged, and he voluntarily has less, then, it says,[4] he is voluntarily wronged.

But, again, it is plain from this that he is not voluntarily wronged. For all **1195b13**
who take less receive in return either honor or praise or glory or friendship or some other such thing. But he who receives something in return for what he gives up is no longer wronged. But if he is not wronged, neither then is he voluntarily wronged. Again, further, those who take less and are wronged by not taking what is equal show themselves off and are proud over such things, because they say "although it was permissible for me to take what was equal, **b20**
I wasn't going to take it, but I yielded to my elder or to my friend." And no one, for sure, prides himself on being wronged. But if they do not pride themselves over wrongs and do pride themselves over these things, they would not be at all wronged when they thus take less. But if they are not wronged, they would not be wronged voluntarily either.

These and the like arguments are, to be sure, opposed by the argument **1195b25**
about incontinence. For the incontinent man harms himself when doing base things, and these he is, at any rate, doing voluntarily. He himself, then, voluntarily harms himself. Consequently he himself is voluntarily wronged by himself. But at this point the definition when added on will block the argument. The definition is this: no one wants to be wronged. Yes, and the **b30**
incontinent man, when he does what accords with his incontinence so as to be wronging himself, does it wanting to do it. He wants, then, to do base

things to himself. But no one wants to be wronged. Nor, then, would the incontinent man be voluntarily wronging himself either.

1195b35 But perhaps someone might here again be puzzled: can one really wrong oneself? It would appear to be possible when one looks at the incontinent man. Also when one looks in this way, if the things the law commands to be done are just, he who does not do them commits wrong. And if he does not do
a1 them for the person the law bids him do them for, he wrongs that person. But the law commands one to be temperate, to have got a livelihood for oneself, to care for one's body, and other such things. He who does not do these things then wrongs himself, for there is no one else to attribute such injustices to.

1196a6 But perhaps these things are not true, and it is not possible for one to wrong oneself. For it is impossible for the same man at the same time to have more and less or to be at the same time willing and unwilling. But the man who does wrong, insofar as he does wrong, has more, and the man who is wronged, insofar as he is wronged, has less. So if he wrongs himself, the same man can, at the same time, have both more and less. But this is impossible. So it is impossible to wrong oneself.

1196a13 Further, the man who commits a wrong commits a wrong voluntarily, but the one who is wronged is wronged involuntarily, so that if a man can wrong himself, he can at the same time do something both voluntarily and involuntarily. But this is impossible. So it is impossible in this way too for a man to wrong himself.

1196a17 Further, suppose one begins from particular injustices. For everyone does wrong either by taking away a deposit or by committing adultery or by steal-
a20 ing or by doing some other of the particular injustices. But no one has ever taken away a deposit from himself or committed adultery with his own wife or stolen his own belongings. So if it is in things like this that doing wrong is found, and if one cannot do any of these things against oneself, then one cannot do wrong against oneself.

1196a25 Or if this is not so, then at least it is not a political wrong but a household one. For the soul, being divided into several parts, has in it that which is worse and that which is better, so that if there does arise some wrong deed as to what is in the soul, it is as to the parts with each other. For we have distinguished household wrong by its being toward one's worse and better
a30 part,[5] and thus one becomes unjust and just to oneself. This, however, is not what we are investigating, but the political wrong. So in the sorts of wrongs we are looking for, one cannot wrong oneself.

1196a33 Again, which of the two does wrong and in which of them is the wrong deed—in him who has a thing unjustly or in him who judges and makes the award, as in contests? For he who receives the palm from the one presiding and judging does no wrong even if it was awarded to him unjustly. But he who judged badly and gave it to him is the one who does wrong. And he does
b1 wrong in a way and in a way does not. For insofar as he did not judge what

was in truth and by nature just, he does wrong; but insofar as he judged what seemed to him to be just, he does not do wrong.

Notes

1. *Republic* 369d–371e.
2. Supplying "gives" at 1194a13 from the earlier sentence and taking "*hōs*" to mean "when" and not "as," because otherwise one gets the rather odd remark: "as the farmer is to the builder so the builder is to the farmer," which induces scholars to emend the text. The text can stand as is if translated as suggested here and, indeed, as thus translated it follows more accurately what Plato himself wrote.
3. 1.14–16.
4. The reference of "it says" at 1195b12 is the argument here being stated.
5. Presumably a reference back to 1.33.1194a3–21.

Chapter 34

The Practical Aim in Particular
Prudence
Nature of Prudence
Prudence and the Soul. *The soul has a part that is possessed of reason and a part that is not, and the former is divided into the deliberative and the scientific, and of these the deliberative or choosing part deals with things sensible.*

Since the virtues have been spoken of, what they are and in what they are **1196b4**
and about what they are, and about each of them that the best is if we act according to right reason, this way of speaking "to act according to right reason" is like saying that health would best arise if one provided healthy things, which is indeed an unclear sort of remark. But you will say to me, "Be clear about what things are healthy." So too in the case of reason, "What is reason and what right reason?"

Perhaps the first thing necessary is to divide up what reason is found in. **1196b11**
Now the soul was in fact distinguished in outline earlier,[1] that there is one element in it possessed of reason and the other element a nonrational part of the soul. Next there is a division into two that the part of the soul possessed **b15**
of reason has, one of which is deliberative and the other scientific. That they are different from each other might be made clear from their underlying subjects. For as color and flavor and sound and odor are different from each other, so nature has in like manner given them different senses too. For we **b20**
recognize sound by hearing, flavor by taste, color by sight. We must likewise suppose that the rest are also the same way, for the underlying subjects are different; different too are the parts of the soul by which we recognize them.

1196b25 The intelligible and the sensible are different, and these we recognize by soul. Different then would be the part that deals with sensible things and intelligible things. But the deliberative and choosing part deals with things sensible and changing and with everything, simply speaking, that is coming
b30 to be and passing away. For we deliberate about what it is up to us to do or not to do when we choose (deliberation is about things where there is also choice to do them or not). But these are things that are sensible and in process of change. Consequently the choosing part of the soul is reasonably of sensible things.

Prudence and Reason. *Science deals with things known through proof; prudence with things doable, whose end is in the doing (but art with things whose end is in the thing made), and with things that are useful—prudence is praised and is a virtue, not a science; intelligence deals with first principles; wisdom is science and intelligence together; supposition is what goes either way on any question.*

1196b34 So, with these distinctions made, the next thing we must say—since reason concerns truth, and we are investigating how the truth stands and there is science, prudence, intelligence, wisdom, supposition—is what each of these deals with.
1196b37 Science, then, deals with the knowable, and that as reached by proof and argument. Prudence deals with doable things, where there is taking and avoiding, and where it is up to us to act or not to act. There is, of course, the fact that, in the case of things being made and being done, that which makes and that which does are not the same. For makers have some other end
a5 beyond the making; for example, beyond the art of house-building, since it is a making of a house, the end is the house beyond the making. Likewise with carpentry too and the other arts of making. But in the case of doers there is no other end beyond the doing itself, for example, beyond playing the lyre
a10 there is no other end, but this itself, the activity and the doing, is end. Now it is action and doable things that prudence deals with, but art with making and makeable things. For it is in makeable things rather than doable ones that technical skill is found.
1197a13 Hence prudence would be a habit of choosing and doing everything it is up to us to do and not to do that contributes directly to advantage. Prudence, as it would seem, is a virtue and not a science, for the prudent are praised and praise is of virtue. Further, while there is a virtue of every science, there is no virtue of prudence but, as is likely, virtue is it in a certain way.
1197a20 Intelligence deals with the principles of intelligibles and of beings. For science deals with beings that have proof, but the principles are without proof, so that science would not deal with principles; rather intelligence would.
1197a23 Wisdom is made up of science and intelligence. For wisdom deals both with the principles and with what has already been proved from the principles,

which is what science deals with. So, as far as it deals with the principles, it shares in intelligence but, as far as it deals with beings that come after the principles along with proof, it shares in science. Hence it is plain that wisdom is made up of intelligence and science, so that it would deal with what intelligence and science deal with. a25

Supposition is that whereby we go either way on everything as to whether it is so or is not so. 1197a30

Prudence and Wisdom. *Wisdom and prudence are different: wisdom deals with things that do not change, prudence with things that do change. Wisdom is a virtue because it is better than prudence, and prudence is a virtue. Understanding is judging and seeing aright and is part of prudence. Cleverness is not prudence, but the prudent are clever, while the clever are not prudent. Wisdom is part of ethics because it is a virtue and in the soul.*

Are prudence and wisdom the same thing? Or not? For wisdom concerns beings that have proof and are always the same way, but prudence is not about these things but about beings that change. I mean, for example, that straight or curved and concave and the like are always the way they are, but useful things are not of the sort any more as not to change into each other. On the contrary, they do change, and this thing helps now but tomorrow it will not, and it helps this person but not that, and it helps in this way but not in that. Things useful are what prudence deals with and not wisdom. Wisdom and prudence, then, are different. 1197a32 a35 b1

But whether wisdom is a virtue or not might be made plain by these facts: that on the ground of prudence itself it is a virtue, for if prudence, as we say, is a virtue of one of the two parts possessed of reason, and prudence is worse than wisdom (for it deals with worse things, for wisdom, as we say, deals with the eternal and the divine, but prudence with what is useful to man)—if therefore the worse is a virtue, surely the better is likely a virtue, so that it is plain wisdom is a virtue. 1197b3 b5

But what is understanding[2] and what is it about? Understanding is found where prudence is too, among doable things. For the man of understanding is, I suppose, spoken of by his ability to deliberate and by his judging and seeing aright, his judgment being about and in small things. Understanding, then, and the man of understanding are part of prudence and of the prudent man, and do not exist without them. For you would not separate the man of understanding from the man of prudence. 1197b11 b15

The like would seem to hold of the facts about cleverness too. For neither is cleverness prudence nor is the clever man prudent, although the prudent man is clever, which is also why cleverness does in a way work along with prudence. But the base man too is said to be clever, for example, Mentor[3] seemed to be clever but he was not prudent. For it is the mark of the prudent 1197b17 b20

man and of prudence to desire the best things and to be a chooser and to be
b25 a doer always of these, but it is a mark of cleverness and of the clever man to examine what the sources are for each doable thing and to provide them. Such things, then, are what the clever man would seem to be involved in, and these the things he deals with.

1197b27 One might raise the puzzle and wonder why, when speaking about character and the business of politics, we are speaking about wisdom. Well, perhaps, first because to examine it would not even seem to be something alien, since it is, as we say, a virtue. Further, perhaps, it is the mark of a philosopher in the case of these things as well to extend his examination to everything that happens to be found in the same thing, and since we are speaking about what
b35 is in soul, it is necessary to speak about all of it. But wisdom, too, is in soul, so that we are not having discussions about soul that are alien.

Prudence and Impulse. *Some virtues exist by nature as being impulses without reason for virtue. When they are with reason, they are complete and deserve praise. Virtue is not without the impulse, contrary to what Socrates said, and it is combined with reason and is not merely in accord with it.*

1197b36 The way cleverness relates to prudence would seem to be the way it is with all the virtues. I mean, for instance, that there exist virtues that arise in individuals also by nature, as that there are in each of us impulses without
a1 reason toward the brave things and the just things and so on in the case of every virtue. But virtue is by custom and choice, and so the ones with reason, being completely virtues, are objects of praise when they supervene. Natural virtue, then, the one that is without reason, is a small thing when separated
a5 from reason and falls short of being praised, but when it is added to reason and choice it makes virtue complete. That is in fact why the natural impulse toward virtue works along with reason and is not without reason.

1198a8 On the other hand, neither are reason and choice altogether complete in being virtue without the natural impulse. Hence Socrates did not speak correctly when he said that virtue is reason. For doing the brave and just things is no help, he said, if one does not know and choose them by reason. Hence he said, not correctly, that virtue was reason. People nowadays, however, speak better, for they say that doing beautiful things in accord with reason is virtue.
a15 But not even this is right. For if someone were to do just things without any choosing and without knowing what is beautiful but by a certain nonrational impulse, and did these things rightly and in accord with right reason (I mean that he did them in the way that right reason would command), yet, even
a20 so, such action does not have what is worth praising. But better is the way we define it, that it is the impulse toward the beautiful when combined with reason. For that sort of thing is virtue, and praiseworthy too.

Prudence and Action. *Prudence is a virtue for it does virtuous things by commanding them, in the same way that a ruling craftsman, who commands the assistant, is also the maker of what the assistant makes. Prudence does not rule over wisdom but does for it what an overseer does in a house, providing leisure for it by holding the passions in check so that it can do what is beautiful.*

Whether prudence is virtue or not, one might find puzzling. That it is **1198a22**
virtue, however, can be made plain from this. For if justice and courage and
the other virtues are praiseworthy because they are doers of things beautiful, **a25**
then it is plain that prudence too would belong to what is praiseworthy and
that it has the rank of virtue. For what courage impels us to do, prudence
also impels us to do; for, on the whole, what prudence commands that does
courage also do. Consequently, if courage is praiseworthy because it does **a30**
whatever prudence commands, prudence would be perfectly both praise-
worthy and virtue.

Whether prudence moves to action or not may be seen thus, by looking at **1198a32**
the sciences, for example, at the art of building. For in the art of building there
is someone who, as we say, is called ruling craftsman[4] and another who assists
him, a builder, and this latter is maker of a house. But the ruling craftsman **a35**
too, to the extent the latter made a house, is maker of a house. The like holds
of the other arts of making where there is a ruling craftsman and someone
who assists him. So the ruling craftsman too will be maker of something, and **b1**
of the very thing that he who assists is also maker of. If, then, this is the way
it in fact is with the virtues, as is likely and reasonable, prudence would be
practical as well. For all the virtues are practical, and prudence is as it were **b5**
the ruling craftsman. For as this commands, so do the virtues and the virtuous
do. Since the virtues, then, are practical, prudence would be practical as well.

But is prudence ruler of everything in the soul as is held and as people **1198b8**
puzzle about? Or not? For it would not seem to be so of the better things;
it is not ruler of wisdom, for example. But it cares for everything, it says,[5]
and is in charge of giving commands. Perhaps, however, it is like the way
the overseer is in a house, for he is in charge of everything and manages
everything, though he is not yet ruler of everything. Rather he provides his
master leisure so that necessities do not get in his way and close the door on **b15**
his doing something fine and proper. Thus too prudence, like him, is a sort
of overseer for wisdom, as it were, and provides it leisure and for it to do its
job, holding the passions in check and making them temperate. **b20**

Notes

1. 1.5.1185a1–5.
2. The Greek is *sunesis*.
3. This reference is usually said to be to Mentor of Rhodes, a mercenary leader in league with the Persians, who was instrumental in the execution

of Aristotle's wife's guardian, Hermias, in 342 BC. But, in the light of the explanation Aristotle immediately gives, one could as well refer it to the Mentor in Homer's *Odyssey*, a better known figure, who, though full of clever suggestions when Athena takes his guise, is, in his own person, neither a chooser nor a doer of the best things. He was put in charge of Odysseus' home when Odysseus left for Troy but let it be taken over and wasted by the suitors (to whom he also speaks in very unwise fashion, *Odyssey* 2.225ff.).

4. The Greek is *architectōn*, the origin of our word architect.
5. The "it says" here at 1198b11 refers to the analogy with the ruling craftsman just given.

Book Two: The Science of Ethics in Particular (Continued)

Chapter 1

Workings of Prudence
Powers of Prudence
Equity. *Equity is a matter of taking fewer of the things just by law but not of the things just by nature.*

We should make an investigation after this of equity, what and in what and about what sort of thing it is. Equity and the decent man[1] take fewer of the things that are just according to law. For where the lawgiver is unable to give an accurate determination of particulars and makes general statements instead, the man who there gives way and takes what the lawgiver would have wanted by giving a particular determination but could not—that sort of man is decent. But he does not take fewer of things simply just. For he does not take fewer of things by nature and truly just but of things just by law, which the lawgiver, because of his inability, left alone. **1198b24** **b30**

Note

1. The Greek for equity is *epieikeia* and for decent man *epieikēs*; the sameness of word is not easy to capture in English.

Chapter 2

Good Judgment. *Good judgment judges the things of equity.*

Good judgment[1] and the man of good judgment are about the same things that equity is also about (namely the just things that have been left alone by the lawgiver in not being determined accurately), and they judge the things that have been left alone by the lawgiver and recognize that they have been left alone by the lawgiver though they are just. A man like this has good judgment. Therefore good judgment is not without equity, for to judge belongs to the man of good judgment, but to act indeed according to judgment belongs to the decent man. **1198b34** **a1**

Note

1. The Greek word is *eugnōmosunē*.

Chapter 3

Good Counsel. *Good counsel judges the things that are done by prudence.*

1199a4 Good counsel is about the same things as prudence (for it is about the doable things that are about taking and avoiding) and is not without prudence. For prudence is doer of these things, and good counsel is a habit or state or some such that grasps what in the doable things is best and most useful. Hence the sort of thing that spontaneously turns out all right would a10 not seem to belong to good counsel. For where there is no reason looking for the best, you would no longer say that someone who had something turn out all right was a man of good counsel but that he was fortunate. For success that happens without any judgment of reason is good luck.

Puzzles of Prudence

Social Intercourse. *The just man treats each in social intercourse as each deserves.*

1199a14 Does it belong to the just man to give each in social intercourse what is equal (I mean that when, for example, he meets people he becomes like each of them)? Or not? For this would seem to be mark of both a flatterer and a fawner. But to give treatment in accord with worth in social intercourse, that is the mark of a simply just and virtuous man.

What the Bad Man Does Not Know. *To do wrong is to harm someone knowingly, so does the unjust man have the same knowledge as the prudent man has? No, because the unjust man knows what is simply good, but not what is good for himself, and so makes mistakes. The prudent man knows both and does not mistake.*

1199a19 But one might raise this puzzle too. For if to do wrong is to harm someone voluntarily, knowing whom and how and why, and if harm and injustice are in good things and about good things, would the one then who does wrong and the one who is unjust know what sort of things are good and what bad? But surely to have knowledge of these sorts of things is proper to the prudent a25 man and to prudence. So the oddity results that the unjust man has the best good, prudence, following along with him.

Or would prudence not seem to follow along with the unjust man? For 1199a26
the unjust man does not look for, nor can he judge, what is simply good and
what is good for him, but makes mistakes. It belongs to prudence to be able
rightly to study these things—just as in medicine likewise, we may all know a30
what is healthy simply and makes for health (that hellebore and an aperient
and surgery and cautery are healthy and make for health), but we still do not
have medical science. For we do not yet know what each person's good is (in a35
the way the doctor knows for whom this is good and when and in what state),
for this is precisely where medical science is found. We know, then, what is
healthy simply, but we do not have medical science nor is it something that
follows along with us.

In the same way the unjust man knows that tyranny and rule and power are 1199b1
good simply, but whether they are good for him or not, or when they are or in
what state, that he no longer knows. This is above all the mark of prudence.
Consequently prudence does not accompany the unjust man. For the good b5
things he chooses, which he does wrong for, are things good simply but not
things good for him. For while wealth and rule are good simply, they are for
him, I suppose, not good. For if he acquires prosperity and rule, he will do
himself and his friends many evils, for he will not be able to use rule rightly.

Harming the Bad Man. *If to wrong someone is to take from him what is good, and if it is good for the bad not to have good things, like rule and wealth, then to take them from him is not to wrong him. The many think this paradoxical, but it is not, for not everyone is fit to rule or be rich, just as not everyone is fit to eat healthy food but only the healthy.*

This too has something in it to puzzle over and examine, whether injus- 1199b10
tice is possible toward the base man or not. For if injustice lies in harm, and
harm in being deprived of good things, he would not seem to be harmed, for
the good things that he thinks are good for him are not good. For rule and
wealth will harm the base man, since he cannot use them rightly. So if they
will harm him when he has them, to deprive him of them would not seem
to do him wrong.

This sort of argument would seem indeed a paradox to the many. For all 1199b17
think that they can handle rule and power and wealth, but they suppose in-
correctly. The thing is plain, in fact, from the lawgiver, for the lawgiver does
not entrust rule to anyone, but an age is defined and a wealth that, because
ruling is not possible for everyone, must be had by him who is going to rule.

So if someone were to get upset that he was not ruling or that no one let 1199b24
him govern, one might say, "Because you do not have in your soul any sort
of thing to enable you to rule and govern by." In the case of the body we see
that people cannot be healthy by supplying themselves with what is simply
good, but if someone with a body in a poor condition is going to be healthy,

he must be supplied first with water and small amounts of food; and is not
b30 he whose soul is in a bad condition, so as to prevent him doing anything bad, to have wealth and rule and power and things simply of this sort the more taken from him the more the soul is easy to move and change than the body? For just as going on a diet was suitable for the man with a body thus in a bad condition, so living without possessing any of these things is suitable for the man with a soul thus in a bad condition.

When Virtues Conflict. *Conflicts can arise between natural virtues, which are without reason, but not between true virtues, which are with reason.*

1199b36 The following sort of question is puzzling too: when it is not possible to do at the same time what is brave and what is just, which of them should one do? In the case of the natural virtues we said[1] that the impulse without reason
a1 toward the beautiful need alone be present. But, where there is choice, it lies in reason and in what has reason. Consequently as soon as the act of choice is present, perfect virtue will be present, which we said[2] was with prudence, though not without the natural impulse toward the beautiful.
1200a5 Nor will virtue oppose virtue. For it is its nature to yield to reason or to the way reason commands, so that where this leads there it inclines, for reason is chooser of what is better. For the several virtues do not arise without prudence nor is there perfect prudence without the several virtues, but they work in a way together with each other in following after prudence.

Virtue in Excess. *Can virtue be had to excess, as other goods can, for virtue brings honor and honor can be had to excess? But the virtuous man is he who uses honor and all goods well, and the more virtuous he is the more will he keep to the mean.*

1200a11 Such things as this too will no less raise a puzzle, whether it is ever with the virtues the way it is with the other goods (the external goods and the goods of the body). For when these go to excess, they make people worse,
a15 for example, when wealth is plentiful, it makes people proud and nasty; and the same too with the other goods, rule, honor, beauty, size. Is virtue, then, also such that if someone has justice or courage to excess he will be worse? Or does it[3] not say this?
1200a19 But from virtue comes honor, and honor, when it gets to be great, makes people worse. Virtue will as a result, it says, plainly make people worse as it advances further in amount (virtue is cause of honor, so that virtue too, as it becomes greater, would make people worse).
1200a23 Or is this not true? For if there are many things that virtue does, as is in fact the case, this is among the chief of them, being able to put to right use

these and the like goods when one has them. Indeed, if the virtuous man will not put great honor or great wealth to right use when he has them, he would not be virtuous any more. So neither honor nor rule will make the virtuous man worse, just as virtue will not either.

But on the whole, since it was determined by us at the start[4] that virtues 1200a30
are mean states and that the more the virtue the more it is a mean, the result is that far from making him worse as it progresses in amount, virtue will make him better. For the mean was a mean between excess and want in the passions.

Thus far then about these things. 1200a34

Notes

1. 1.34.1197b36–98a1.
2. 1.34.1198a3–21
3. Taking the "or not" at 1200a19 with "it says" and not as part of the preceding sentence. The "it says" refers, here and a few lines later, to the argument being given.
4. 1.5.1185b13–32, 1.7–8.1186a9–35.

Chapter 4

Things Incident to Virtue
As Regards the Subject Matter or the Nature of Virtue
Extremes and Intermediates of Virtue and Vice. *Besides vice there is in the soul also brutishness and incontinence.*

After this we must make another beginning and speak about continence 1200a36
and incontinence.[1] But as these are odd, both the virtue and the vice, so must the arguments too be odd that will be given about them. For this virtue is not a1
like the others, for in the others both reason and passions have an impulse toward the same things and do not oppose each other, but in this virtue both reason and passions are opposed to each other.

There arise in the soul three things that we are said to be base because of: 1200b4
vice, incontinence, brutishness. Of vice and virtue, what and in what they are, we have spoken in what we said above. We must now speak of incontinence and brutishness.

Note

1. The Greek words are *enkrateia* (literally: inner power) and *akrasia* (literally: lack of power).

Chapter 5

Brutishness. *Brutishness is excessive vice and is opposite to the heroic or divine virtue that is beyond man.*

1200b8 Brutishness is a certain excessive vice. For when we see someone altogether base, we do not even say that he is a man but a brute, supposing there to be a certain vice that is brutishness. The virtue over against it is unnamed, but it is of a sort to be beyond man, as a certain heroic and divine virtue. But this virtue is unnamed because there is no virtue in a god. For the god is better
b15 than virtue and is not good[1] because of virtue, for thus will virtue be better than the god. That is why the virtue over against the vice that is brutishness is unnamed, but a divine and beyond human virtue should be what is over against such a vice. For as the vice, which is brutishness, is beyond man, so the virtue that is over against it is too.

Note

1. The Greek is *spoudaios*.

Chapter 6

Continence and Incontinence
Statement of Puzzles
About the Existence of Incontinence. *The puzzles are (a) Socrates said that no one who knows evil would do it, so no one is incontinent (which however conflicts with the facts); (b) the incontinent man cannot have knowledge of what is base for then he would not do it; (c) if the incontinent man only has opinion he would not be blamed, but he is blamed.*

1200b20 Of incontinence and continence we must first state the puzzles and the arguments in conflict with the phenomena, so that, by starting our investigation from the arguments that puzzle us and examining them critically, we may, as far as possible, see the truth of them. For it will be easier to see the truth in this way.
1200b25 Now the older Socrates[1] took away incontinence altogether and denied that it existed, saying that no one who knew that the evils were evil would choose them. But the incontinent man, knowing that the things are base, seems nevertheless to choose them, being impelled by his passion. So on account of this sort of argument he did not think that there was incontinence—not

indeed correctly. For it is odd to be convinced by this argument to take away something that convincingly happens: for incontinent men there are, and though they themselves know the things are base, they do them anyway. b30

So since there is incontinence, does the incontinent man have any knowledge whereby to study and examine critically base things? But again it would seem odd for something to overpower what in us is the strongest and firmest of things, for knowledge is most stable and forceful of everything in us. Hence this is again an argument against it, because knowledge it is not.[2] 1200b32

But though not knowledge, then, is it at least opinion? But if the incontinent man has opinion he would not be to blame. For if he does something base not having accurate knowledge but opinion, one would excuse his clinging to pleasure and doing what is base, because he does not know with clarity but has opinion that they are base. Those whom we excuse, however, we do not blame. Consequently the incontinent man, if he has opinion, will not be to blame. But he is to blame. 1200b38 a1

So such arguments make us puzzled. For some of them deny that it exists (for they make something odd result), and others again deny that it is even opinion (for these too again make something odd result). 1201a6

About the Nature of Both. *Further puzzles are (d) if the temperate man is continent he will have strong desires to overcome, and if he has no desires he will not be temperate; (e) if the incontinent and continent reason falsely that the beautiful is base but nevertheless desire the beautiful, then the incontinent man who does the beautiful against reason will be praiseworthy, and the continent man who shuns the beautiful because of reason will be blameworthy; (f) some seem to be incontinent in money and anger and glory and so forth, and not just in some one definite thing.*

But one might be puzzled by this too. For since the man who is temperate seems also to be continent, is there anything that will make the temperate man have strong desires? Now if he is to be a continent man, he will have to have strong desires (for we would not call continent someone who overcomes measured desires). But if, on the other hand, he is not to have strong desires, it will no longer be that he is temperate (for someone who does not desire or feel passion will not be temperate). 1201a9

Such things again as these are also puzzling. For a result of the arguments is that sometimes the incontinent man is to be praised and the continent man to be blamed. For, it says,[3] let there be someone who has made a mistake in calculating, and let him in his calculating think that what is beautiful is base. But let his desire be drawing him to what is beautiful. His reason, then, will not let him do it, but being drawn by his desire, he will do it (for that is what it is like to be an incontinent man). So he will do what is beautiful—for let desire be leading him toward this, though reason will be preventing him 1201a16 a20

(for let him be mistaken in his calculating of what is beautiful). Therefore this man, though incontinent, will nevertheless be praiseworthy (for insofar as he does what is beautiful he is praiseworthy). The result, then, is odd.

1201a27 Again, let him once more make a mistake in reason and let what is beautiful not seem beautiful to him, and let desire be drawing him toward what is beautiful. But a continent man is he who, though desiring, does not do, be-
a35 cause of reason, what he desires. So he who makes a mistake in reason about what is beautiful will stop himself doing what he desires. He stops himself, then, from doing what is beautiful (for that is where his desire was taking him). But someone who does not do the beautiful thing that he ought to do is blameworthy. The continent man, then, will sometimes be blameworthy. So the result in this way too is odd.

1201a35 And one might raise the puzzle whether incontinence and the incontinent man will be found in everything and in respect of everything, as in respect of money and honor and anger and glory (for there seem to be incontinent people in respect of all these), or whether it will not, but incontinence will be about something determinate.

Solution to Puzzles

About Existence. *As regards puzzles (a) and (b) and (c), first, opinion makes no difference because it can be as strong as knowledge (as it was in Heracleitus); second, knowledge is twofold, by habit or in exercise, and the incontinent man goes against knowledge in habit but not in exercise, which is not something odd for it is like what happens in sleep; third, knowledge is general or particular, and there is nothing odd in the incontinent man lacking the particular knowledge but going against the general, as happens in the drunk.*

1201a39 These, then, are the things that cause puzzlement, but the puzzles need solving. So first the puzzle in the case of science, that it seemed odd that someone who has knowledge should throw it away or undergo change. The same argument holds of opinion too. For whether there is opinion or
b5 knowledge makes no difference. For if the opinion is strong in its firmness and in being hard to dislodge, they who have opinions will differ in nothing from knowledge in their belief that things are as they opine—Heracleitus of Ephesus, for example, had such an opinion of what seemed so to him.

1201b9 There is, then, nothing odd in an incontinent man doing something base, whether it is knowledge he has or the sort of opinion we are talking about. For there are two ways of knowing, one of which is having the knowledge (for we do say that someone knows when he has knowledge), and the other is actually exercising the knowledge. The incontinent man, then, is one who
b15 has knowledge of what is beautiful but is not exercising it. So, whenever he is not exercising this knowledge, there is nothing odd in his doing base things

while having the knowledge. For it is like what happens with people who are asleep, for though these have knowledge nevertheless they do and experience in their sleep many vexatious things. For the knowledge is not active in them. It is the same way with the incontinent man, for he seems like one asleep b20
and he does not exercise his knowledge. And thus is the puzzle solved (for the puzzle was whether the incontinent man throws away his knowledge or undergoes change, for both seem to be odd).

Yet again it might become clear from this, that, as we said in the *Analytics*,[4] a syllogism arises from two premises, and the first of these premises is general and the second falls under it and is particular—as that I know how to make any man with a fever healthy, and this man has a fever, so I also know how to make this man healthy. There is a possibility, then, that what I know with the universal knowledge I do not know with the particular. So b30
mistake can happen to the one who has knowledge here as well (as that he knows how to make any man with a fever healthy but not if this man is in a fever).

So, in the same way, the same mistake will happen in the case of the in- 1201b33
continent man who has knowledge. For the incontinent man can have the general knowledge, that such and such is base and harmful, but yet not know that these things in the particular case are base. Consequently, although he thus has the knowledge, he will make a mistake, for he has the general knowledge but not the particular. In this way too, then, it will not be at all an odd result that, in the case of the incontinent man, he who has the knowledge does something base.

For it is like the case of people drunk. For the drunk, when their drunken- 1202a1
ness leaves off, are themselves again; and it was not that either their reason or their knowledge changed but that it was overcome by their drunkenness, and when they leave off from their drunkenness, they are again themselves. So the like again holds of the incontinent man. For his passion, overcoming a5
him, put his calculation to rest; but when the passion, like the drunkenness, leaves off, he is himself again.

About Nature

Relation to Praise and Blame. *As regards puzzle (e), the continent and incontinent are not deceived in reason, so neither could the first be blamed nor the latter praised for going against reason. Some cases of incontinence spring from disease or nature and these are not to be blamed, but they are not at issue here.*

There was also another argument about incontinence that posed a puzzle, 1202a8
that the incontinent man will sometimes be praiseworthy and the continent man blameworthy. But this is not the case. For neither is a continent nor an incontinent man someone who is deceived in his reason; rather he is someone who does have right reason and judges by it things base and things beautiful,

and when he disobeys such reason, he is incontinent, and when he obeys it and is not led by his passions, he is continent. For it is not the case either, if
a15 there is someone who thinks it not shameful to strike his father and, desiring to do so, refrains from it, that he is continent. Hence, if in cases like this there is no continence or incontinence, then neither would incontinence be praiseworthy, as it seemed, nor continence blameworthy.

1202a19 Some cases of incontinence are diseased and others are by nature. For example, diseased ones are like this: for there are people who pull their hair out and chew on it, so if someone overcomes this pleasure, he is not to be praised, nor, if he does not overcome it, is he to be blamed, or not much, at any rate. The ones by nature are, for example, the son they say was once being tried in court for beating his father and defended himself by saying
a25 "yes, and he beat his father," and so he was acquitted. For they say his jurors thought his fault natural. So if someone overcame father beating, he is not praiseworthy. Such, then, are not the incontinence and continence that we are now looking for, but rather those by which we are said to be simply blameworthy or praiseworthy.

Relation to Subject Matter. *As regards puzzle (f), incontinence simply is about the bodily goods of touch and taste. The incontinent in honor are in a way praised and are incontinent only in a certain respect; the man simply incontinent is blamed, because the bodily pleasures he is about are blameworthy.*

1202a29 Of goods, some are external, as wealth, rule, honor, friends, glory, and others are necessary and concern the body, as touching and tasting. He then who is incontinent in these would seem to be simply incontinent, and those cases of incontinence that are, for instance, bodily[5] and the incontinence we are looking for, would seem to be precisely in these things.

1202a34 But there was a puzzle about what it is that incontinence is about. Now the incontinent man is not simply about honor. For someone incontinent in honor is praised in a way, for he is a lover of honor. In fact, on the whole, we speak in these sorts of cases of the incontinent man with an addition: he is
b1 incontinent in honor, or glory, or anger. But as for the man simply incontinent, we do not add on what he is about, because it is a given for him and clear without the addition. For bodily pleasures and pains are what the man simply incontinent is about.

1202b4 That incontinence is about these things is also clear from this, that since the incontinent man is blameworthy the underlying objects must be blameworthy. Now honor and glory and rule and money and all the other things that people are said to be incontinent about are not blameworthy, but the bodily pleasures are blameworthy. Hence he who is involved in these things more than he should is reasonably said to be incontinent in the complete sense.

Relation to Other Conditions and Habits

Anger. *He who is incontinent in anger is blameworthy but less so than those simply incontinent. For he follows reason in a way, while the impulse for pleasure opposes reason, and anger is with pain and not with pleasure.*

Since, among the cases of incontinence that are said to be about other things, the one that is about anger is most blameworthy, is the one that is about anger the more blameworthy or is it the one that is about pleasures? The incontinence, then, that is about anger is like those slave boys who are in an eager state of service. For they too, when the master says "give me," being carried off by their eagerness, give before hearing what they should give and give the wrong thing, for they often give a pen when they should give a book. Something like this is what is felt by the man incontinent in anger. For his spirit, as soon as ever it hears the words "he did wrong," is impelled to take revenge and no longer waits to hear whether it should or should not, or not so forcefully. **1202b9** **b15**

Now such impulse to anger, which is what incontinence in anger seems to be, is not much to be faulted. The impulse to pleasure, though, is to be blamed, for it is different from the former in that reason is turning it away from acting but it goes against reason anyway. That is why it is more blameworthy than incontinence because of anger, for incontinence because of anger is pain (for no one who is angry is without pain), but that because of desire involves pleasure. Therefore it is more blameworthy. For incontinence because of pleasure seems to involve wanton violence.[6] **1202b21** **b25**

Endurance and Softness. *Continence is about pleasures but endurance about pains; incontinence is about not withstanding pleasures but softness about not withstanding pains.*

Are continence and endurance both the same? Or not? For continence is about pleasures, and the continent man is he who overcomes pleasures. But endurance is about pains, for the man of endurance is he who endures and withstands pains. **1202b29**

Again, incontinence and softness are not the same. For softness or the soft man is he who does not withstand pains (not all of them but those that someone else would necessarily withstand), while the incontinent man is he who cannot withstand pleasures but is made soft and carried away by them. **1202b33**

License and Temperance

License. *The licentious man is not incontinent because his reason agrees with what he does, but in the incontinent man it does not. The licentious man may seem easier to cure, for if his reason is made correct, he will follow it. But he is in a worse state because both his parts are bad, including his more honorable*

and principal part, reason. That is why a bad man is worse than a beast because he has a bad principle, but there is no bad principle in a beast. A tyrant does bad things more than a lion.

1202b38 Again, there is a sort of person who is called licentious. Is the licentious man incontinent, then, and is the incontinent man the same as he? Or not? For the licentious man is such as to think that the things he does are both best for him and very advantageous, and he has no reason opposing what appears to him as pleasant. But the incontinent man has a reason that opposes him as to what his desire is leading to.

1203a6 Which of the two is easier to cure, the licentious man or the incontinent man? Now that it is perhaps not the incontinent man seems so in this way, that the licentious man is easier to cure, because if a reason were to arise in him teaching him that the things are base, he will not do them anymore. But there is reason present in the incontinent man and he acts all the same. Hence someone of this sort would seem to be incurable.

1203a11 But which of them is in a worse state? The one who has not any good thing in him, as well as these evils?[7] Surely it is he clearly, and all the more so that the more honorable thing is in a bad condition. So the incontinent man has his reason good, since it is right, but the licentious man does not.

1203a15 Further, reason is principle in each of us. Now in the incontinent man the principle (which is the most honorable thing) is in a good state, but in the licentious man it is in a bad state. Consequently the licentious man would be worse than the incontinent man.

1203a18 Further, as with the vice of brutishness that we spoke of, it is not possible to see it in a beast but in a man (for brutishness is a name for extreme vice). Why? On no other ground than that in a beast there is no base principle (the principle is reason). Since which would do bad things more? A lion, or Dionysius or Phalaris or Clearchus,[8] or one of these wicked men? Clearly these latter. For the fact that the internal principle is base makes a huge difference,
a25 and in a beast there is altogether no principle. In the licentious man, then, there is a base principle, for insofar as he does things that are base and his reason consents to them and he thinks he should do them, the principle in him is not healthy. Hence the incontinent man would be better than the licentious man.

Sudden and Lingering Incontinence. *There are two forms of incontinence: one that is sudden and without thought, the other that has reason pulling against it. The former is not much to be blamed, being found also in virtuous men with hot and fine natures, and can be anticipated beforehand by reason, but the latter goes against reason, which is something no virtuous man would do.*

1203a29 There are, in fact, two forms of incontinence, one of which urges us onward[9] and is without forethought and happens suddenly. For example, when we see a

beautiful woman, we are immediately affected by something and there arises in us from passion an impulse to do a thing that perhaps we should not. The other is a sort of lack of strength and has with it reason urging us back.[10] Now the former would not seem to be very blameworthy, for even in virtuous men, in those who are hot and have a good natural condition, such incontinence happens. But the other is in the cold and the melancholic, and such are blameworthy. a35

Further, it is possible to use reason to anticipate and not to be affected at all: "because a woman fair of face is going to come by, one must therefore get a grip on oneself." Anticipating, then, by reason of this sort, he who is incontinent because of the immediacy of the image will not be affected and will not do anything shameful. But he who knows by reason that he ought not to do it and gives in to the pleasure and is made soft, someone like this is more to be blamed (for the virtuous man would never become incontinent in this way), and reason, by anticipating, would not cure him. For it is leader in him and he does not let it rule him, but he gives in to the pleasure and is softened by it and made strengthless in a way. 1203b2 b5 b10

Temperance and License. *As regards puzzle (d), the temperate man is continent, for he is such as to hold back strong desires even though he does not have them. But the continent man is not temperate for he has strong desires to overcome while the temperate man does not. The licentious man is not incontinent, nor vice versa, because he has a bad reason and because, as being harder to cure, he is more base.*

We raised the puzzle in the arguments above whether the temperate man is continent. Let us speak of it now. For in fact the temperate man is continent. For the continent man is not only he who has desires within and, because of reason, holds them back, but also he who, even though he has no desires within, is such as to hold them back were he to have them. The temperate man is he who does not have base desires and has his reason about them right. The continent man is he who does have base desires and has his reason about them right. 1203b11 b25

Will, consequently, the continent man follow on the temperate man and will he be temperate?[11] For the temperate man is he who is not affected by these desires, but the continent man is he who is affected by them and overcomes them, or is such as to be affected by them. But neither of these belongs to the temperate man. Hence the continent man is not temperate. 1203b19

But is the licentious man incontinent or is the incontinent licentious? Or does either not follow the other? For while the incontinent man has his reason fighting against his passions, the licentious man is not like that but, when doing base things, has his reason voting along with him at the same time. So the licentious man is not like the incontinent man, nor the incontinent man like the licentious man. 1203b24

1203b29 Further, the licentious man is in fact baser than the incontinent man. For natural things are harder to cure than things that arise from custom, for custom in fact seems to be strong for this reason, that it passes over into nature. Now the licentious man is by himself such as to be base by nature. It is because of this and from this that the reason in him is base. But that is
b35 not how the incontinent man is. For it is not because he is as he is that his reason is not sound; for, were he by nature such as the base man is, it ought to have been base. The incontinent man, then, seems to be base by custom but the licentious man by nature. And the licentious man is harder to cure, for a custom is expelled by another custom, but nature is expelled by nothing.

Prudence. *The prudent man cannot be incontinent because he both knows and also acts on what he knows, but the clever man can be incontinent since he need not act on what he knows.*

1204a4 But is it the case, since the incontinent man is such that he knows and is not deceived in his reason, and since the prudent man also is such that he studies everything by right reason—is it the case that the prudent man can be incontinent? Or not? For one may be puzzled by what has been said.

1204a8 If we follow what was said before, the prudent man will not be incontinent. For we said[12] that the prudent man was not only he who has right reason, but also he who does the things that appear according to reason to be best. But if the prudent man does the best things, the prudent man would not be incontinent, though such are clever. For in our arguments above we distinguished the clever man from the prudent man as being each different;[13] for
a15 while they are about the same things, the one is a doer of what he should but the other is not. He who is clever, then, can be an incontinent man (for he is not a doer of what he is also clever in), but he who is prudent cannot be.

Notes

1. The famous Socrates who figures prominently in Plato. There was a younger Socrates who appears as a companion of Theaetetus in Plato's *Theaetetus* and its companion dialogues.
2. The Greek here at 1200b37–38 is dubious and may be corrupt.
3. At 1201a19 the "it says" refers to the argument being stated.
4. *Prior Analytics* 1.4.26a17–25.
5. Taking this phrase at 1202a33 with the words that follow and not altering the Greek text as scholars wish.
6. The Greek is *hubris* (which can also carry the connotation of rape).
7. Reading at 1203a12 *ta kaka tauta* (these evils) with the MSS and not *ta kata tauta* (what accords with these things) with Bekker.
8. Dionysius I and his son Dionysius II were tyrants of Syracuse in Sicily in the late fifth and early to mid-fourth century BC. Plato famously tried to make Dionysius II into a philosopher but failed and was for a time imprisoned by him. Phalaris was tyrant of Acragas in Sicily in the mid-sixth century BC,

and he was notorious for roasting his victims alive in a hollow bronze bull. Clearchus was tyrant of Herakleia in Pontus in the first half of the fourth century BC. He was for a time a student of Plato's.

9. The word in Greek is *protreptic*, or literally a turning forward.
10. The word in Greek is *apotreptic*, or literally a turning away.
11. There seems to be a lacuna in the Greek at 1203b19–20, for the sentence as it stands makes a statement that contradicts what immediately follows. A variety of emendations has been proposed. The expedient adopted here is that of making the sentence into a question, which the following remarks then answer in the negative.
12. 1.34.1197b17–27.
13. As in the previous note.

Chapter 7

Accompaniment of Virtue

Pleasure. *Pleasure must be discussed because pleasure, or the absence of pain, belongs to happiness, and because virtue is about pleasure and pain.*

We must after this speak about pleasure, since of course our discussion is **1204a19**
of happiness and everyone thinks that happiness is either pleasure and living pleasantly, or at any rate not without pleasure. Those who even get vexed at pleasure and do not think that pleasure should be counted up among the goods do yet at least add absence of pain; being without pain is surely close to pleasure.

That is why pleasure must be spoken of—and not just because others also **1204a25**
think it should be, but because there is indeed a necessity for us to speak of pleasure. For since our discussion is of happiness, and we have defined happiness and say it is activity of virtue in a complete life,[1] and virtue is about pleasure and pain, it would be necessary to speak of pleasure—since happiness indeed is not without pleasure.

Puzzles of Pleasure. *Pleasure is said not to be good because (a) pleasure is a coming to be and incomplete, and what is incomplete is not good; (b) some pleasures are base and the good never exists with the base; (c) pleasure is found in everyone, including the base and animals, but the good does not mix with the base nor is it something common; (d) pleasure is not greatest, but the good is; (e) pleasure is an impediment to doing what is beautiful.*

First then let us state what it is that some say who do not think it neces- **1204a31**
sary to take pleasure to be part of good. For they say, to begin with, that

pleasure is a coming to be, that coming to be is something incomplete, and
a35 that the good never occupies the place of the incomplete. Second, that there are certain base pleasures but that the good never exists in baseness. Again, that pleasure exists in everyone, for it exists as well in the base man and in the virtuous man and in beast and in cattle; but the good is not mixed with
b1 the base and is not common to many. Also, that pleasure is not greatest, but the good is greatest.[2] Also, that it is an impediment to doing beautiful things, but what gets in the way of beautiful things would not be good.

Nature of Pleasure. *As regards puzzle (a), first, not every pleasure is a coming to be, as those of studying and hearing, which do not come from filling up a need or want (as eating and drinking do), and are not with preceding pain as filling up is, so these pleasures would be good; second, no pleasure at all is a coming to be, not even those from being filled up, for pleasure is an activity of soul that accompanies the filling up (and not every pleasure comes from filling up a need), so again pleasure would be good.*

1204b4 Now we must first speak to the first argument, to coming to be, and we must try to undo this argument, because of its not being true. For, first, not every pleasure is a coming to be. For the pleasure that comes to be from study is not a coming to be, nor is the pleasure that comes from hearing and smelling. For it does not come to be from want, as in the case of the others, as those from
b10 eating or drinking. For these come to be from want and excess, by either the want being filled up or the excess being taken away. That is why they look like a coming to be. But want and excess are pain. There is pain, then, where there is coming to be of pleasure. But as far as seeing is concerned, at any rate, and hearing and smelling, there is no being pained beforehand. For no one
b15 is in pain first when he gets pleasure by seeing and smelling. Likewise with thought too, one can get pleasure when studying something without being in pain first. Consequently there would be some pleasure that is not a coming to be.

1204b18 If pleasure then, as their argument said, is not good because it is a coming to be, and there is some pleasure, which is not a coming to be, this pleasure would be good.

1204b20 But, in general, no pleasure is a coming to be. For not even those pleasures that are from eating and drinking are comings to be, but those who say that these pleasures are comings to be are mistaken. For, since pleasure comes to be when there is an intake of something, they think that for this reason it is a coming to be. But it is not.

1204b25 For since there is a part of the soul that, at the same time as we take in what we are in want of, we feel pleasure by, this part of the soul is active and changes, and its change and activity is pleasure. So, because that part of the soul is active at the same time as the intake, or because of its activity, they

think, since the intake is evident but that part of the soul is not evident, that pleasure is a coming to be.

It is just like someone thinking that man is body because this is perceptible 1204b32
while the soul is not. But there is in fact a soul. Likewise here too. For there is a part of the soul that we feel pleasure by, and it is active at the same time as the intake.

Hence no pleasure at all is a coming to be or, as they say, a perceptible 1204b35
restoration to nature. For in fact those who have not been restored to nature enjoy pleasure, for being restored is the coming to be of the fulfillment of the natural want. But, as we say, it is possible when not in want to feel pleasure, a1
for want is pain, but without pain and before pain we say that we feel pleasure. Consequently pleasure would not be a restoration of what is wanting, for there is nothing wanting in the case of such pleasures.

Consequently if it is because pleasure is a coming to be that it did not 1205a5
seem to be a good, and no pleasure is a coming to be, pleasure would be good.

The Goodness of Pleasure

Response to Arguments That Pleasure Is Not Good. *The good is said in all categories and some pleasure follows every actuality of good, so pleasure is good. Also, pleasures differ in kind, and those of drink are not like those of sex. As regards puzzle (b), first, there are base natures and base sciences but nature and science are not base for this reason, for things should be judged from their best instances, not their worst; second, if the pleasures of base natures are base, those of virtuous natures are good; third, to say all pleasures are base comes from ignorance of pleasures (as some people are ignorant of nectar and think wine is sweetest), because there are pleasures besides the bodily ones and these are pleasures of nature restored and not of nature being restored. As regards puzzle (c), this argument springs from love of honor, not thought, for in fact what everything desires must be good, so pleasure must be good. As regards puzzle (e), first, the pleasure proper to the thing being done is not an impediment to it but only an opposing pleasure is; second, the pleasures of one science oppose those of another science but science is not thereby bad; third, the pleasure proper to the thing makes one do it more; fourth, pleasure in doing virtuous things shows one is virtuous while pain in doing them shows one is not; fifth, virtue cannot be done without either pleasure or pain; sixth, pleasure is even something made by some sciences.*

But next, it says,[3] not every pleasure is good. One might get a view of this 1205a7
too as follows. For since we assert[4] that the good is said in all the categories (for it is said in substance and in relation and in quantity and in when and a10
generally in all of them), the fact then is already clear, for in accord with all the actualities[5] of good some pleasure follows. Consequently, since the good is in all the categories, pleasure too would be good. Consequently, since in these

things are the goods and pleasure, and pleasure from the goods is pleasure, every pleasure would be good.

1205a16 It is plain at the same time from this that pleasures are different in kind. For the categories in which pleasure is are also different. For it is not as it is in the sciences, for example, grammar (or any other whatever). For if Lampros a20 has grammar, he will be a grammarian disposed by this grammar in a similar way to anyone else who has grammar (there are not two kinds of grammatical science, the one in Lampros and the other in Ileus[6]). But it is not like this in the case of pleasure. For the pleasure from being drunk and the pleasure from conversation[7] do not dispose in a like way, hence pleasures would seem to be different in kind.

1205a25 But the fact also that some pleasures are base, this too was a reason pleasure did not seem to them to be good. Well, that sort of thing and that sort of judgment are not peculiar to pleasure but apply also to nature and science. For there is also a base nature, for example, the nature of maggots and beetles a30 and despised animals as a whole, but nature is not on this account one of the base things. Likewise there are also base sciences, for example, the mechanical[8] ones, but nevertheless science is not base on this account.

1205a33 But science and nature are good in their kind. For just as one should not study what sort of sculptor someone is like from work that he failed in and finished badly but from what he finished well, so also one should not judge what science or nature or anything else is like from base instances but from good[9] ones. Likewise pleasure too is a good thing in its kind—since even we do not fail to notice that base pleasures do at least exist.

1205b2 For since animals' natures are different, as being both base and good (for example, the nature of man is good while of a wolf or some other beast it is b5 base), a horse's nature likewise and a man's and an ass's and a dog's are different. But pleasure is a restoration to nature from what is against nature (its own nature for each thing), so that this, a base pleasure, would be a very pleasant thing, at least for the base nature. For it is not the same thing for a horse and a man nor likewise for the rest, but since their natures are different, their b10 pleasures are different too. For pleasure was a restoration, and restoration, they say, restores to nature, so that of the base nature the restoration would be base and of the serious nature serious.

1205b13 But they who say that pleasure is not serious have had happened to them what happens to those who, not knowing nectar, think the gods drink wine and that nothing sweeter than it exists. But this happens to them because of their ignorance. The like has happened to those who say that all pleasures are comings to be and are not good. For because they do not know there are other pleasures besides the bodily ones, and because they see that these are comings to be and are not good, they suppose altogether that pleasure is not good.

1205b20 Since pleasure exists, therefore, both when nature is being restored and when it has been restored—those, for example, when it is being restored,

being fillings up from want, and those, when it has been restored, being from seeing and hearing and the like—the activities of nature when it has been restored would be better (for the pleasures that are spoken of in both these ways are activities). Consequently it is plain the pleasures from seeing and hearing and thinking would be best, since the bodily pleasures are, at any rate, from being filled up. b25

Further, this too was said, that pleasure is not good because what exists in everyone and is common to everyone is not good. Now such a remark is more at home with the lover of honor and with love of honor. For the lover of honor is he who wishes to be alone in having a thing and, in this sort of way, to surpass the rest; and so pleasure, if it is going to be the good, would have to be something of this sort. 1205b28

Or not, but in fact the opposite thing would seem to be good for this reason, that everything desires it. For everything by nature desires the good, so that, if everything desires pleasure, pleasure would be in its kind a good thing. 1205b33

Again, they also deny that pleasure is good because pleasure is an impediment. But saying that it is an impediment is something that occurs to them because they are not observing correctly. For the pleasure from the thing being done is not an impediment, though if it is a different one it is an impediment, as the pleasure from drunkenness is an impediment to doing things. But in this way a science will also be an impediment to a science. For one cannot be active in both at once. But why is science not a good thing if it causes the pleasure that is from the science? 1205b37 a5

And will it be an impediment? Or not, but one will act the more? For the pleasure that comes from doing something impels one toward doing it more—since suppose the virtuous man does what accords with virtue and does it with pleasure, will he not then be much more active in doing it? 1206a8

And if he acts with pleasure, he will be virtuous, but if he does beautiful things in a state of pain, he will not be virtuous. For pain happens to things that are by necessity, so that if someone is pained while doing beautiful things, he is being necessitated to do them. But he who does them from necessity is not virtuous. 1206a12

But it is not, at any rate, possible to do what accords with virtue without being pained or pleased. To be in between is not possible. Why? Because virtue is in passion and passion is in pain and pleasure. It is not in between. It is clear, then, that virtue is with pain and pleasure too. Now if someone does the beautiful things in a state of pain he is not virtuous. Consequently virtue would not be with pain. With pleasure then. Not only, therefore, is its pleasure not an impediment but it is also something that urges on to[10] action. 1206a17 a20

In fact, on the whole, virtue cannot be without the pleasure that comes from it (another argument[11] was that no science makes pleasure; but this is not true either, for chefs and garland makers and perfumers are makers of pleasure; although the other sciences do not, indeed, have pleasure as their 1206a24

a30 end, yet they are both with pleasure and not without pleasure; science, then, can be a pleasure maker).

Response to the Argument That Pleasure Is Not Best. *As regards puzzle (d), first, if what is not best is not good then the virtues like courage are not good; second, if what is not greatest is not good, then sometimes reason and sometimes passion is greater, but a base reason that is greater will not use virtue badly because virtue requires right reason; third, passion must come first and be principle, and reason then follows, as is evident in children and animals, but passions do not always follow reason if reason comes first.*

1206a31 Further, there was also another argument, that pleasure is not best thing. But you will in this way and by this sort of argument take away the particular virtues too, for courage is not best thing. Is it for this reason, then, not a good thing? Is not this odd, and likewise with the others? And neither is pleasure for this reason not a good thing, that it is not best thing.

1206a36 One might pass on and also raise about the virtues this sort of puzzle: that since reason is sometimes greater than[12] passions (for we said[13] this in the case of the continent man), and the passions again in contrary fashion greater than reason, as happens with the incontinent,[14] when therefore the b1 unreasoning part of the soul, being possessed of vice, is greater than well-disposed reason (for that is what the incontinent man is like), and reason is similarly base, then will it too be greater than passions that are well disposed and are possessed of their proper virtue? But if this is what it will be, it will b5 end up using virtue badly. For he whose disposition with respect to reason is base and who uses virtue will use it badly, which would indeed seem an odd sort of result.

1206b7 Now a reply and a solution to this sort of puzzle is easy to make from what we said on virtue before. For we said[15] that then virtue exists when reason is well disposed and is of one measure with passions that are possessed of their proper virtue, and passions with reason. For as thus disposed they will be in agreement with each other, so that reason always commands the best, and well disposed passions do easily whatever reason commands. If reason, then, b15 is badly disposed and the passions well disposed, there will, since reason is lacking, not be virtue, for virtue is from both of them. Nor, as a result, is it possible to use virtue badly.

1206b17 Simply put, it is not the case, as others think,[16] that reason is principle and leader of virtue, but rather the passions are. For there must first arise from within some unreasoned impulse toward the beautiful (which does in fact happen), then, on this basis, reason must later be present casting its vote and giving its judgment.

1206b22 One can see this from children and things that live without reason. For in their case impulses of passions toward the beautiful arise within, first without

reason and reason afterward follows up and, casting its vote with them, makes them do what is beautiful. But it is not the case, if it is from reason they take their principle for things beautiful, that the passions follow along with the same opinion, but they are often in opposition. That is why passion well disposed is more like a principle for virtue than reason. b30

Notes

1. 1.4.1184b22–85a35.
2. The Greek for "greatest" at 1204b2 is *kratiston*, which means "strongest" literally but colloquially also "best," and this ambiguity may perhaps be captured in English by "greatest."
3. "It says" at 1205a7 refers to the argument under discussion here.
4. 1.1.1183a9–12.
5. The Greek is *energeiai*.
6. Or Neleus, which one of the manuscripts has, 1205a23, and which is a known Greek name, while Ileus is not.
7. The Greek word is *sunginesthai*, which connotes intercourse, either social or sexual.
8. The Greek word is *banausic*.
9. The word for "good" here 1205a37 and at 1205b3, b4, and b19 is *spoudaios*.
10. The Greek is the word for *protreptic*.
11. Marking this argument as a parenthesis, 1206a25–30, because it is not introduced as a grammatically separate sentence in the Greek (it lacks the sort of connecting particle a new and separate sentence normally requires). It seems presented rather as a sort of appendage to the previous sentence.
12. The phrase "greater than" here and in the next lines translates *kratei* in the Greek, which is elsewhere translated as "overcome" or the like. Translating it as "greater than" in this passage helps to bring out the connection to what has just been said, namely the focus on the argument that pleasure is not best or, as that argument itself originally put it, 1204b1–2, not greatest (*kratiston*).
13. 2.6.1201a29–30, 2a13–14, 2b31, 3b14–16.
14. The continent man is *en-kratēs* and the incontinent man *a-kratēs*, and so the first is someone who, in this context, would be *greater* than his passions and the latter someone who is not.
15. Not expressly, but see 1.34.1197b36–98a9, 2.6.1201a16–35, 2a8–18.
16. A reference in particular to Socrates, whom Aristotle has criticized on this point several times already.

Chapter 8

As Regards the Practical Aim or the Sources of Virtue

Luck. *Happiness requires the goods of luck, but luck does not seem to be nature, for nature is not random, nor mind, for mind has order, nor care*

from the gods, for the gods do not care for the base. But luck is like nature in not being up to us (so virtue is not by luck), and consists in getting something good against reason; it is a sort of irrational nature or an irrational impulse in the soul toward what is good. Another sort of luck comes not from nature but from how things fall out; it is less fitting for happiness.

1206b30 Next after this, since our discussion is about happiness, would be to speak about luck. For the many think that the happy way of life is the lucky life, or that, at any rate, it is not without luck, and perhaps correctly. For without the external goods, over which chance has control, one cannot be happy. Hence there is need to speak of luck, that is, who is simply lucky and in what and about what luck is.

1206b36 Now when one first comes to these things and takes a look at them one might be puzzled. For one may not say that chance is nature, for what nature is cause of it always is maker of for the most part or in the same way, while
a1 chance never is but operates randomly and as it chances, which is why chance is said of such things. So it is not mind of any sort nor right reason either, for no less here too there is order and things being always the same way, but no chance. That indeed is why chance exists least where mind and reason exist most, and mind least where chance most.

1207a6 But is luck at least, then, like a sort of divine care? Or would it not seem so? For when the god has control of such things we expect him to distribute the good and the bad to those who deserve them, but chance and things that come from chance happen truly as it chances. If we attribute such to the god we will make him a base judge, or not a just one, and that does not become a god.

1207a12 But in fact there is nothing else apart from these under which to classify chance, so plainly it would be one of these. Now mind and reason and science seem to be a thing altogether foreign to it. But the care and kindness that are
a15 from the god would not seem to be luck either, because luck turns up among the base too, and that the god cares for the base is not likely. What is left, then, and what is most akin to luck, is nature: luck and chance are in things that are not up to us and things we are not ourselves in control of and do not have power of action over.

1207a20 That is why no one says that the just man, qua just, is lucky, nor that the brave man is, nor any of those on the whole who accord with virtue, for having and not having these things is up to us. But luck is more akin, we will say, to this sort of thing, that it is the well-born man we speak of as lucky and anyone on the whole who has the sort of goods that he has himself no control over.

1207a26 Nevertheless not even here would the word luck be used in its proper sense, but the lucky man is said in many ways. For we say he is lucky who happens to do something good contrary to his own reasoning, and we say of someone who by reason should have made a loss that, if he makes a gain, such a person is lucky.

Luck, then, is in having something good against reason and in not getting something bad with reason. But luck would seem more, and more appropriately, to be in getting a good, for getting a good would seem to be per se a piece of luck, while not getting an evil, a piece of luck per accidens. 1207a30

Luck then is irrational nature. For the lucky man is he who has an impulse without reason toward good things and gets hold of them, and this is a mark of nature. For there is by nature in the soul a thing such that by it we have an irrational impulse toward things that we are well disposed for. And if someone were to ask someone in such a state, "Why does it please you to act thus?" "I do not know," he says, "but it pleases me," experiencing something like what the enthused do, for the enthused also have an impulse without reason to do something. 1207a35 b1

We do not have an appropriate and proper name for calling luck by, though we often say that it is a cause. But cause is foreign to its name, for a cause is different from what it is a cause of; also it is called a cause without there being any impulse for chancing upon good things, as with the cause of not getting an evil or, again, of getting a good when one is not thinking one will get a good. 1207b5

This sort of luck then, is different from that other, and it seems to arise from how things fall out and to be luck per accidens. So that, although this sort of thing is also luck, yet, with respect to happiness, at any rate, the more appropriate sort of luck would be that where the principle of getting hold of good things is in oneself. 1207b11

Since happiness, therefore, is not without the external goods, and since these arise from luck in the way we just said, luck would be a fellow worker for happiness. So much, then, about luck. 1207b16

Chapter 9

Gentlemanliness. *The gentleman, or the man beautiful and good, is he who is completely virtuous. Things beautiful are the virtues and the deeds of virtue, while things good are rule and wealth and honor and the like. The gentleman is he for whom the goods are good and not he for whom they are bad or harmful.*

Since we have spoken one by one of each of the virtues, what is left is to put the particulars into a universal unity too and speak about them as brought to a crowning completion.[1] Now the name that is not badly used to speak of the completely virtuous man is the beauty and goodness of the gentleman.[2] For it says[3] he is beautiful and good when he is completely virtuous. For it is in respect of virtue that they speak of the gentleman, as the just man they 1207b20 b25

say is a gentleman, and the brave man, and the temperate man—in respect of the virtues as a whole.

1207b27 So since we divide him[4] into two parts, and some things we say are beautiful and others good as well, and since of the goods some are simply good and others not so, and since beautiful things, for example, are the virtues and
b30 the deeds that come from virtue, and goods are such things as rule, wealth, glory, honor, and the like, the beautiful and good man, then, is he to whom the simply good things are good and the simply beautiful things beautiful. For such a man is beautiful and good.

1207b33 But he to whom the simply good things are not good is not beautiful and good, just as neither would he seem to be healthy for whom the simply healthy things are not healthy. For if wealth and rule harm someone when they come to him, they would not be worth his choosing, but he will want for himself such things as will not do him harm. But he who is such as to shrink from any
a1 good thing so as not to have it would not seem to be beautiful and good. But he to whom all the real goods are good and who is not destroyed by them, as by wealth and rule, such a man is beautiful and good.

Notes

1. The Greek word is *kephalaiōsamenous* (from the root *kephalē* or head), 1207b22, which could simply mean to speak of all the virtues under one heading, though since the gentleman is, as it were, at the peak of virtue, to translate the verb as connoting the idea of "crowning" virtue is perhaps not inappropriate.
2. The Greek is *kalokagathia*, which is, literally, beauty and goodness combined, but is colloquially in English the quality of the gentleman. So, in order not to lose the literal sense of the Greek but to have the English too, both are used here together and *kalokagathia* at 1207b23 is in effect translated twice.
3. The "it says" at 1207b24 refers to the name. Some manuscripts have "they say" (*phasin*) instead of "it says" (*phēsin*), which, if correct, would refer to what people generally say (as in the succeeding lines).
4. Taking gentleman to be the (unexpressed) object of the verb, 1207b27. Alternatively one could take the verb absolutely and translate: "Since we make a division into two. . . ." The division, at all events, is not into species of gentleman but into the parts that make up a gentleman.

Chapter 10

Right Reason. *Right reason is when the irrational part of the soul (or the passions), which is the worse part, does not get in the way of the calculating part, which is the better part. Knowing that the passions are not getting in the way*

is a matter of direct perception. But knowledge is not enough and gives only the habit and not also the use. Happiness lies in the using, which does not come from knowledge by itself.

Of acting rightly according to the virtues we have spoken but not enough. 1208a5
For we said[1] that it was acting in accord with right reason, but perhaps someone who does not know it is this might ask, "What is in accord with right reason and where is right reason?" Acting in accord with right reason, therefore, is when the irrational part of the soul does not prevent the calcu- a10
lating part from exercising its own exercise. For then action will be in accord with right reason.

For since we have one part of the soul that is worse and another that is 1208a12
better, and always the worse is for the sake of the better—just as in the case of body and soul the body is for the sake of the soul, and we say that the body is then in a beautiful state when it is in such a state that it does not prevent, a15
but in fact contributes to, and has an accompanying impulse for, the soul fulfilling its work (for the worse is for the sake of the better, to work along with the better)—whenever, therefore, the passions do not prevent mind from fulfilling its work, then will what accords with right reason come about.

"Yes but," perhaps someone might say, "when the passions do not get in 1208a20
the way how are they disposed, and when are they thus disposed? For I do not know." What such a thing is, it is indeed not easy to say. For the doctor does not say it either, except when he says to bring barley to him who has a fever. "But how will I perceive that he is in a fever?" "When," he says, "you see that he is pale." "But how will I know that he is pale?" So there let the doctor a25
understand: "Well," he will say, "if you do not have perception at least of things like this in your possession, we no longer[2] have common speech about such things as we do about other things." Likewise too in the case of knowing the passions, for one must contribute something oneself to the perception.

But perhaps someone might further ask this sort of question, "Will it then 1208a30
at least be the case that when I have real knowledge of this I will be happy?" For people think so. But it is not like this. For neither does any other science give him who learns it the use and the activity but only the habit. So knowledge of these things does not give one the use either, but the habit (for happiness, a35
as we say, is activity). Nor is happiness in knowing what its sources are but in using them. But to use and actualize these things is not this method's job to provide; for use is not provided by any other science either, just the habit.

Notes

1. 1.34.1196b4–10, 1198a10–22.
2. At 1208a27 reading *ouketi* (no longer) with the manuscripts, and not the *ouk esti* (there is not) with Bekker. Also taking 1208a28 to be part of this sentence and not a separate sentence by itself. The Greek is difficult in any event and may be corrupt.

Chapter 11

Friendship

Puzzles about Friendship. *The puzzles are (a) whether friendship is in those who are like (b) or in those who are unlike; (c) whether becoming friends is hard; (d) whether the virtuous will be friends with the base; (e) whether the base will be friends with the base.*

1208b3 In addition to all these matters, friendship[1] must be spoken of, what and in what and about what it is. Since we see it extending throughout the whole of life and being present on every occasion and being a good thing, it would need to be taken up into happiness.

1208b7 Now it is perhaps better first to go over the puzzles and queries. For is it the case, as is believed and is said, that friendship is between the like? For b10 they do say both that "jackdaw perches by jackdaw," and that "god always brings like to like."[2] They also say that when once a dog was sleeping always on the same tile and Empedocles was asked why it was that the dog slept on the same tile, he said that the dog had some likeness to the tile, as though it was because of the likeness that the dog kept going there.

1208b15 Again, though, certain others think friendship arises rather among opposites. For "earth loves rain," the saying goes, "what time the plain is dry."[3] The opposite, it says then, wants to be friends with the opposite, for there is no possibility of it happening among the like, for the like, it says, has no need of the like, and so on.

1208b20 Further, is it hard work to become a friend or is it easy to become one? For flatterers, who latch onto people quickly, are, to be sure, not friends though they appear to be friends.

1208b22 Further, such puzzles as these are also raised: will the virtuous man be friends with a base man? Or not, for friendship exists in trust and stability, but the base man is not at all like this? And is the base man friends with the base man, or is not even this the case?

What Friendship Is. *Friendship exists where there is loving and loving back, and so not with the gods or lifeless things.*

1208b26 Now we must first define what sorts of friendship we are examining. For there is, as people think, friendship also toward the god and lifeless things—not correctly. For friendship here we say exists where there is being loved back, but friendship toward the god neither allows of being loved back nor, b30 on the whole, of loving. For it would be odd if someone were to say he was friends with Zeus. Neither indeed can one be loved back by lifeless things, though there can of course be love of lifeless things, as of wine or something

else of the sort. That then is why we are not investigating friendship toward the god, nor lifeless things, but toward living things and those where there b35
is loving back.

What Friendship Is About
The Kinds of Lovable Things and of Friendships
In General and in Answer to the Puzzles. *What is loved is the good, but the lovable is what is simply good, and that which should be loved is what is good for oneself. On the good and the lovable follow the good for oneself and that which should be loved, and also the useful and the pleasant. The virtuous love each other as lovable and as good, and the base only as useful and pleasant and not as lovable. The friendships of utility and pleasure are derivative from the friendship of virtue and are only the same in the way that "medical" is the same when said of medical knife and medical science. In answer to puzzles (d) and (e), the virtuous man will be friends in virtue only with the virtuous man; he will be friends with the base man only in utility or pleasure; the base man will be friends with the base in utility.*

So if one were to examine next what it is that is loved, it is then no other 1208b36
thing than the good. Now there is a difference between what is lovable and what is to be loved, just as there is also between what is want-able and what is to be wanted. For what is want-able is the simply good, but what is to be
wanted is the good for each. So also the simply good is lovable, but the good a1
for oneself is what is to be loved. Consequently the lovable is also to be loved, but what is to be loved is not the lovable.

It is here, then, and for this sort of reason that the puzzle arises whether 1209a3
the virtuous man is a friend with the base man or not. For to the good is attached, in a way, the good for oneself, and to the lovable the thing that is a5
to be loved. In fact connected to and following on the good are the pleasant and the useful. Now the friendship of the virtuous exists when they love each other back. But they love each other insofar as they are lovable, and they are lovable insofar as they are good. So the virtuous man, it says,[4] will not be a friend with the base man.

However, he will be. For, since on the good there follows the useful and the 1209a11
pleasant, insofar as he is pleasant, though base, to that extent he is a friend. And again, being useful, he is, insofar as useful, to that extent a friend. But this sort of friendship will not, at any rate, be in accord with what is lovable
(for the good was lovable and the base man is not lovable), for it is only in a15
accord with what is to be loved. For these friendships in fact, the one in accord with the pleasant and the one in accord with the useful, are derived from the all-complete friendship, the one that is among the virtuous.

He then who loves in accord with the pleasant does not love with the 1209a18
friendship that is in accord with the good; nor he who loves in accord with

a20 the useful. In fact these friendships (that in accord with the good and that in accord with the pleasant and that in accord with the useful) are neither the same nor are they altogether foreign to each other, but are in a way articulated from the same point, as we speak of the medical knife and the medical
a25 man and medical science (these are not said in a similar way, but the knife is said to be medical by its being useful for the medical art, and the man by his being a maker of health, and the science by its being a cause and a principle).

1209a27 Friendships too are likewise not the same way—the friendship of the virtuous, which is on the basis of the good, and that in accord with the pleasant and that in accord with the useful—nor, indeed, are they said equivocally, but while they are not the same, they are in a way about the same things and from the same things.

1209a31 So if one were to say, "He who loves according to the pleasant is not on this account a friend, for he is not a friend according to the good," such a one is going straight to the friendship of the virtuous, the one that is from all these things, from the good and from the pleasant and from the useful. So, truly, he is not a friend with that friendship at least, but he is with the friendship that accords with the pleasant or with the useful.

1209a37 So, will the virtuous man be friends with the virtuous man or not? For the like, it says,[5] has no need of the like. An argument like this, then, is going after the friendship that accords with the useful, for, since they are friends
b1 insofar as one of them needs the other, the friendship they are in accords with the useful; but friendship in accord with the useful was distinguished as different from friendship in accord with virtue and in accord with pleasure. So the virtuous are even more likely to be friends, for everything belongs to them: good things and the pleasant and the useful.

1209b6 But the virtuous man will also be friends with the base man, for perhaps qua pleasant he is also to that extent a friend. Yes, the base man with the base man too, for insofar perhaps as what is useful for them is the same they are friends. For we see this occurring whenever what is useful is the same, that
b10 they are friends because of the useful. Consequently nothing will prevent the same sort of thing happening[6] to the base too.

In Particular. *The friendship of the virtuous is most lasting and beautiful, not so the friendships of utility and pleasure, which are found among the many and the vulgar, who are therefore not right in being annoyed if their friends are base, for their friendship was never one of virtue but rather of utility or pleasure only. Virtue does not follow on these two though both these follow on virtue, for it would be odd if the virtuous were not pleasant to each other and enjoyed the pleasure of living with each other.*

1209b11 Now most stable and most lasting and most beautiful is the friendship among the virtuous, the one that is according to virtue and the good—reasonably so.

For virtue, on which the friendship is based, is unchanging, so it is reasonable that such a friendship be unchanging. But the useful is never the same, hence b15
the friendship based on the useful is not firm but changes along with the useful; likewise too the friendship in accord with pleasure.

Now the friendship of the best people is the one that arises in accord with 1209b17
virtue, but that of the many is the one in accord with utility. The one in accord with pleasure is among the vulgar and any chance person.

It happens too that when people find their friends are base they get annoyed 1209b20
and are surprised. But there is nothing odd here. For when friendship takes pleasure or utility as principle on which basis they are friends, as soon as these leave off the friendship does not stay either, and often, while the friendship remains, the friend was treated badly (which is why they get annoyed). But this b25
too is not unreasonable. For your friendship with him did not exist because of virtue, which is why it is not odd that he did none of the things of virtue.

So the annoyance is not right. For they made a friendship based on pleasure 1209b27
but they think they should get a friendship based on virtue. But that is not possible. For the friendship of pleasure and that of utility are not connected with virtue, so people are not correct in looking for virtue when what they share in is pleasure. For virtue does not follow on pleasure and utility, but these both follow on virtue.

For it is odd not to think that the virtuous are themselves most pleasant to 1209b33
themselves. For even the base, as Euripides says, are themselves pleasant to themselves, "bad joint to bad is in pleasure melded."[7] For on pleasure virtue does not follow, but on virtue pleasure does follow.

Must there or must there not be pleasure as well in the friendship of the 1209b37
virtuous, for it is odd to deny that there should be? For if you take from them their being pleasant to each other they will get themselves other friends to a1
live with, pleasant ones, for there is no greater thing for living together than being pleasant. It is odd, then, not to think the virtuous must live together with each other most of all. But this is not possible without the pleasant. So the fact of being pleasant must, as is likely, be present most of all in them.

What Friendship Is In

Equals and Unequals. *In answer to puzzles (a) and (b), the friendship of virtue is between the like, while that of utility is between the unlike. So the poor and base are friends with the rich and virtuous from need, and like the most opposite things, as fire and water, are friends from need. Differences arise in friendship if one friend loves more or does more than the other, as is especially evident where they are friends for the same reason but not otherwise. Those superior in a friendship think they should be loved rather than love. But loving is better, for loving is activity and exists in what is alive, and to do good is better. Love of honor makes men prefer being loved because it is a sign of superiority. Superiority is also already a benefit to the inferior who marvel*

at it and expect goods from it. Friendship from likeness of feeling or wishing of good does not include all the features of friendship, such as living together, wishing good things and life and living well.

1210a5 Since friendships were divided into three kinds, and since among these the puzzle was raised whether friendship comes about by equality or inequality, the answer, then, is both ways. For the friendship in accord with likeness is that of the virtuous and is complete friendship, but the one in accord with unlikeness is that in accord with utility.

1210a9 For the poor man is friends with the rich man because of his need of the things that the rich man is well off in, and the base man is friends with the virtuous man for the same reason. For it is because of his need of virtue that he is for this reason friends with the one he thinks he will get it from. So friendship between the unlike happens in accord with utility.

1210a14 Hence also the remark of Euripides: "earth loves rain, what time the plain is dry," because friendship arises between those who are opposites on account of utility. For, further, if you wish to make fire and water the most opposite of things, they are of use to each other. For fire is extinguished, they say, if it does not have the wet, thinking this to be what, as it were, provides it with food of a sort—this food being as much as it may master, for if you make the a20 overmastering wet more, the fire, they say, is extinguished, but if it is commensurate with it, it will be useful. So it is clear that friendship arises because of utility even between the most opposite things.

1210a23 All friendships, both those of equality and those of inequality, are referred to the three that have been distinguished. But in all friendships difference arises between the friends when they are not alike in loving or doing good or giving help or anything else of the sort. For when the one is strenuous in what he does and the other deficient, there is complaint and blame in accord with the deficiency.

1210a28 Of course in the sort of cases where friendship's goal is the same thing, for example, if both are friends with each other according to the useful or the pleasant or virtue, the other's deficiency is very plain. So if you do more good things for me than I for you, I no longer dispute that I should love you more. But in a friendship where we are not friends for the same reason the differences are greater, for what the deficiency is on each side is not plain.

1210a36 For example, if one is friend for pleasure and the other for utility that is where the dispute is. For neither does he whose superiority is in utility think that he is getting in return the pleasure that his utility is worth, nor does he whose superiority is in pleasure think that he is getting back in the utility a thanks that the pleasure is worth. That is why differences happen more in these sorts of friendship.

1210b2 But those who are friends by inequality, being superior in wealth or some other such thing, do not think that they should do the loving but that they

should be loved by those who are the more needy. But loving is better than being loved. For loving is an activity of pleasure and a good thing, but there is no activity happening in him who is loved from the fact of his being loved.

Further, to know is better than to be known. For being known and being loved exist even in lifeless things, but knowing and loving are in things that live. Also, that which does good is better than that which does not. Now he who loves does good qua loving, but he who is loved does not qua being loved. 1210b8

Men, however, because of love of honor, wish more to be loved than to love, because being loved has in it a certain superiority. For he who is loved is always superior in pleasure or in being well off or in virtue, and the lover of honor has an appetite for superiority. Also, those who are superior do not think that they themselves should love. For they think they are making return to their friends in what they are superior by. 1210b13

Further, they think their friends are less than themselves, which is why they do not think that they should love but should be loved. But he who is needy in money or pleasures or virtue marvels at one who is his superior in these things, and loves him because he is getting them or thinks he will get them. 1210b18

These sorts of friendship also arise from likeness of feeling, from wishing good things for someone. But it is not the case that when friendship arises on these grounds it has all its properties. For oftentimes we want good things for another yet we do not want to live with him. 1210b22

Should we say, however, that these things are properties of friendship or of complete friendship (the one that accords with virtue), for they are all present in that friendship? For in fact we would wish to live with no one else (for in the virtuous man there is both the pleasant and the useful and virtue), and we would wish good things for him and life and living well for no other than for him. 1210b26 b30

Oneself. *We want all the features of friendship for ourselves (including fellow feeling), and we refer them back to complete friendship or friendship with ourselves. There is friendship also with all those with whom there is justice, as foreigners, slaves, masters, citizens, sons, fathers, wives, husbands (that with foreigners is most firm). Since we have all the features of friendship with ourselves we can be friends with ourselves in the same way we can be just to ourselves, for the soul has the parts that, when in harmony, make us friends with ourselves. But only the virtuous are thus friends; the incontinent and the base are always fighting with themselves.*

Whether friendship with oneself is also friendship toward oneself[8] let us leave aside for the moment, though later we will speak of it.[9] But we do want it all for ourselves—for we want to live with ourselves (perhaps this is even necessary) and to live well and to live and to wish the good—not for 1210b32

someone else. Further, we have like feelings with ourselves most of all, for if we stumble or have a fall in any other such respect we immediately feel pain (which is why it would seem in this way that one can have friendship toward oneself).

1211a1 So such things—I mean having like feelings and living well and the rest—we speak of by referring them back either to friendship with ourselves or to complete friendship. In both cases these are all present, for in them there is living together and wanting to exist and existing well and all the rest.

1211a6 It might seem further, perhaps, that there is friendship also in the things that there is justice in, and hence that there are also as many forms of friendships as there are of things just. So there is the just that a foreigner has with a citizen and a slave with a master and a citizen with a citizen and a son with a father and a wife with a husband, and all the other communities simply, and there are friendships in each of these.

1211a12 The friendship of foreigners would seem to be the most firm of the friendships, for they have no common goal over which to dispute, as citizens have, who do not stay being friends when they have disputes with each other over superiority.

1211a15 The thing to say next would be whether there is friendship toward oneself or not. Since then we see, as we said in fact a little above,[10] that, on the one hand, the act of friendship is recognized from the particulars, that, on the other hand, we would ourselves most want these particulars for ourselves a20 (for we would want the good things and existence and existing well), that we have like feelings most with ourselves, and that at least living together with ourselves we want most—consequently, if friendship is recognized from the particulars, and if we would want to have the particulars for ourselves, plainly there is friendship toward ourselves.

1211a24 It is, in fact, like the way we said there is injustice toward oneself.[11] For since he who does wrong is one and he who is wronged is another, and the same individual is each one, that was the sort of reason that there did not seem to be injustice toward oneself. But as we said when looking over the parts of the soul, since these are several, there is injustice then toward oneself when they do not agree.

1211a30 So in a similar way there would seem to be friendship too toward oneself. For since a friend is, as we say—whenever we want to call him a great friend—"my soul and his are one," we say. So since there are several parts to the soul, there will then be one soul when reason and the passions are in harmony with each other. For thus they will be one. Consequently, when they become one, there will be friendship toward oneself.

1211a36 This friendship toward oneself will be in the virtuous man. For in him alone are the parts of the soul in a good state with respect to each other because they do not disagree, since the base man is never himself a friend

with himself for he is always fighting with himself. The incontinent man, at any rate, whenever he does something of what accords with pleasure, repents **b1** not long after, and he himself reproaches himself. In like state is the base man as regards the several vices, for he is himself continually fighting with himself and in opposition to himself.

Superior and Inferior. *Companions are friends by equality, but father and son, ruler and ruled, better and worse, wife and husband, are friends by inequality, or by equality of proportion.*

Friendship is in fact by equality. For example, the friendship of companions **1211b4** is by equality in number and power of good, for neither of them deserves to have more than the other, whether in number or power or size of goods, but what is equal. For companions are meant to be a sort of equals. But the friendship of father with son is by inequality, and of ruler with ruled and of better and of worse and of wife and of man and in those simply where there is one **b10** who has the rank of the worse or better in the friendship. For this friendship, the one by inequality, goes with proportion. For never, in the case of giving a good, would anyone give equal to the better and to the worse, but greater always to him who has the excess. And this is equality by proportion. For the **b15** worse in possession of a lesser good is equal in a way with the better in possession of a greater.

Notes

1. The Greek words for friendship (*philia*), to be a friend (*philein*), and friend (*philos*) can also variously be translated as love or dear and sometimes need to be. The etymological connection in Greek is impossible to preserve in English without unwieldy paraphrase; it should nevertheless be kept in mind.
2. The first saying is traditional; the second is from Homer's *Odyssey*, xvii.218.
3. Euripides, Dind. fr. 839.
4. The "it says" 1209a10 refers to the argument just presented.
5. The "it says" 1209a38 refers back to the argument given earlier, at 1208b15ff.
6. There seems to be a pun in the Greek here, 1209b11, for the verb *sumpherein* means both to happen and to be useful.
7. *Bellerophontes*, fr. 298 Nauck^2.
8. Keeping the manuscript readings *poteron d' estin autōi philia kai pros hauton philia* at 1210b32–33, and not deleting, with Bekker, the first appearance of *philia* (friendship). The question is about whether the love a man necessarily has with himself (*philia autōi*), which is what Aristotle immediately discusses, amounts to a kind of friendship toward himself (*philia pros hauton*), which is what he discusses shortly.
9. Below at 1211a15ff.
10. 1210b34–11a6.
11. 1.33.1196a23–33.

Chapter 12

Father and Son. *Friendships arise most in the family and between father and son. The father loves the son more, not just because he has done him good, but because friendship has its activity as its end and the father is, through memory and hope, always active toward his son.*

1211b18 Of all the friendships that have been mentioned, it is the family friendship among them where being friends in a way most of all arises, and these where
b20 a father has friendship toward a son. In fact why is it that the father loves the son more than the son loves the father? Is it, as some say rightly enough as regards the many, because the father has in a way done the son a good deed, and the son owes thanks for the good deed? Now this reason would appear to belong to the friendship that accords with utility.

1211b25 But the way we see things to be in cases of knowledge, that is the sort of way things are here too (I mean as to what it is like).[1] The same thing, then, is both end and activity, and there is no other end beyond the activity. In the case of a flute player, for example, the very activity is also end, for
b30 flute playing is both his end and activity (but not for the art of building, for it in fact has an end other than the activity). Friendship, then, is a certain activity, and there is no other end beyond the activity of loving but this itself.

1211b33 Now the father, over and above the son being his workmanship of a sort, is always active in some further way. We see this is the case in other things
b35 too, for everyone is also somehow kindly disposed toward anything he may have worked at. The father is somehow kindly disposed, then, toward his son, who is his workmanship, drawn on by memory and hope. That is why the father loves the son more than the son the father.

The Kindly Disposed and Those of One Mind. *Kindly disposition is not friendship. But it is a beginning of friendship, if to the kindness is added the wish to do good when one can. Kindly disposition is of character and for character. Being of one mind is close to friendship if it is in practical and not theoretical things, and involves choosing the same things (as for example, whom to choose as ruler).*

1211b39 Of the other friendships that are spoken about and held to be so, it is also necessary to examine if they are friendships. Being kindly disposed,[2]
a1 for example, seems to be friendship. Now being kindly disposed would not seem to be simply friendship, for we often become kindly disposed to lots of people because we see or hear something good about them. Are we therefore

also already friends? Or not? For if one was kindly disposed, as perhaps one was, to Darius in Persia,[3] one did not straight off have friendship as well toward Darius.

But being kindly disposed seems sometimes to be a beginning of friend- 1212a6
ship, and being kindly disposed might become friendship if one adds on a wish to do, when one can, good things for the sake of him to whom one is kindly disposed.

Being kindly disposed is of character and toward character. For no one is 1212a9
said to be kindly disposed to wine or any other lifeless good or pleasant thing. But if someone is virtuous in character, to him one can be kindly disposed. Being kindly disposed is not separate from friendship, but is in the same person. Hence it seems to be friendship.

Being of one mind is close to friendship, if you take being of one mind 1212a14
in the strict sense of the term. For if someone has like suppositions with Empedocles and thinks the elements are what Empedocles thought they were,[4] is he then of one mind with Empedocles or not (since he is if anything else of that sort is)?[5] For oneness of mind is, first, not in intellectual things but practical ones; also, it is in these not as people having the same thought a20
but as having, along with the same thought, a choice for the same things they have the thought about.

For if both have in mind to rule, but the first that he rule and the second 1212a21
that he rule, are they then now of one mind? Or not? But if I wish that I myself rule and he wishes that I rule, we are now in this way of one mind. So being of one mind exists in practical things along with wish for the same thing (appointing the same man, then, as ruler in practical matters is oneness of a25
mind in the strict sense of the term).

Notes

1. Sc. as to what the love of father for son is like. I keep, with Bekker, at 1211b27 the *. . . hoion estin. esti men oun . . .* of the MSS.
2. The Greek for kindly disposed here and throughout this section is *eunoia*.
3. Perhaps Darius III (c. 380–330 BC), who was defeated by Alexander. Athenians, who disliked Alexander's control of Greece, may have been sympathetic to Darius, hoping Darius would overthrow him.
4. Empedocles, a fifth century BC pre-Socratic philosopher, held that there were four elements, earth, air, fire, water, which made up, by being joined together and separated, all existing things.
5. The Greek of what is marked as a parenthesis in the English, 1212a17–18, is obscure and may well be corrupt. The sense seems to be that if oneness of mind is anything like intellectual agreement (although, as we soon learn, it is not), then someone who agrees with Empedocles about the elements must be of one mind with him.

Chapter 13

Self-Lovers

Loving Oneself. *Self-love is to prefer oneself in things of profit, which the base man but not the virtuous man will do. The virtuous man will stand aside for another in things pleasant and useful, but not in things beautiful.*

1212a28 Since, as we say,[1] one can have friendship toward oneself, will the virtuous man be a self-lover? Or not? A self-lover is he who does everything in things of profit for his own self's sake. Now the base man is a self-lover (for he does everything for his own sake), but not the virtuous man. For that is why he is virtuous, because he does it for another's sake. Hence he is not a self-lover.

1212a34 But everyone has an impulse for good things, and everyone thinks that he himself above all should have them. This is especially clear in wealth and rule. Now the virtuous man will step aside from these for another—not as though it did not most befit him but if he sees another more able to use them than himself. Others will not do this, either because of ignorance (for they do not
b1 suppose they will put good things like this to bad use) or because of love of honor for ruling. The virtuous man will not suffer from either of these, which is why he is not a self-lover, at least not in these sorts of goods.

1212b4 But if he is, then, a self-lover, it is in what is beautiful. For it is only in this that he would not stand aside for another, though he will stand aside in useful and pleasant things. So, when the choice is about the beautiful, the virtuous man will be a self-lover, but not when the choice referred to is about the useful and pleasant; that rather will be the base man.

Note

1. 2.11.1211a15–36.

Chapter 14

Loving Oneself Most. *The virtuous man loves his friend most in things of utility and himself most in things of beauty. He is a lover of himself only as good, but the base man is a lover of himself as himself, and he it is who is properly called a self-lover.*

1212b8 Will the virtuous man ever love himself most or not? Now there is a way in which he will love himself most, and a way in which he will not. For since we say that the virtuous man will stand aside from the goods of utility for his

friend, he will love his friend more than himself. Yes, but it is by way of getting the beautiful for himself in standing aside from these things for his friend that he does stand aside from the sort of things they are. There is, therefore, b15
a way that he loves his friend more than himself, and a way that he loves himself most—his friend in utility and himself most in the beautiful and the good. For he will get these things, which are the most beautiful, for himself.

So he is a lover of good and not a self-lover, for if he does indeed love 1212b18
himself, it is only because he is good. The base man is a self-lover, for he possesses nothing that he will love himself for, I mean anything beautiful, but he will love himself qua himself without them. That is why it is he, in fact, who would, in the strict sense, be called a self-lover.

Chapter 15

Self-Sufficiency. *The self-sufficient man will need friends to do good to and spend his life with. The likeness taken from the god is inappropriate, for his self-sufficiency and self-knowledge are different from those of men. A friend is another I, in whom one can see oneself (which is otherwise hard to do) as in a mirror, and whom one will do good to and live with. That is why the self-sufficient man will need friends.*

The next thing to speak of would be self-sufficiency and the self-sufficient 1212b24
man, whether the self-sufficient man will have need further of friendship or not but will be of himself sufficient for himself in this too. For even the poets say things like this, "what need friends when godly spirit favors?"[1] Hence also arises the puzzle whether he who has all the goods and is self-sufficient will need a friend.

Or will he need a friend then most of all? For whom will he do good to, or 1212b30
whom will he spend his life with? For he will not, to be sure, spend his time alone. If he will need to do these things, then, and these things cannot be without friendship, the self-sufficient man would have need further of friendship.

Now the parallel with god that is customarily adopted in discussions[2] is 1212b33
neither right there nor would it help here. For it is not the case, if the god is self-sufficient and needs no one, that therefore neither will we need anyone.

For there is in fact such an argument that is stated about the god. For 1212b37
since the god, it says, has all the goods and is self-sufficient, what will he do, for he will not sleep? He will gaze at something then, it says, for this is most beautiful and fitting. So what will he gaze at? For if he gazes at something else, a1
he will gaze at something better than himself. But that is odd, that there be some other thing better than the god. Will he gaze at himself then? Odd still.

For we would blame as senseless the man who is himself intently looking at himself. The god then will be odd, it says, himself gazing at himself.

1213a7 Now let us put aside what the god will gaze at. Our investigation of self-sufficiency is not being made of the god's self-sufficiency but of man's, whether the self-sufficient man will need friendship or not. So suppose someone were to look at his friend and see what a friend is and what sort of person he is: "Such as to be another I." "And if you were to suppose him a great friend?" "As the saying has it, 'he is another Heracles,[3] another dear I'"[4]

1213a13 Since then it is in fact a very difficult thing, as even some of the wise have said, to know oneself, it is also a very pleasant one, for knowing oneself is a15 pleasant. Now we are not able of ourselves to gaze at ourselves, and that we cannot of ourselves do this to ourselves is clear from the way we blame other people and do not notice ourselves doing the same thing. This happens because of kindly disposition or passion; these things darken correct judgment in many of us.

1213a20 As, therefore, when we want to see our own face for ourselves, we do it looking into a mirror, so likewise, when we want to know ourselves for ourselves, we would do it looking into our friend. For, as we say, the friend is another I. So if knowing oneself is pleasant, and one cannot do this without someone else, a friend, the self-sufficient man would need friendship for himself knowing himself.

1213a26 Further too, if it is beautiful, as it is, to do good when one has fortune's goods, whom will one do good to? Whom will one live with? For one will assuredly not go through life alone, for living together is pleasant and necessary. So if these beautiful and pleasant and necessary things are not possible without friendship, the self-sufficient man would have need further of friendship.

Notes

1. Euripides, *Orestes* 667. The word for godly spirit is *daimōn*, which is also the root of the word for being happy (*eudaimōn*) and has as its own root a word meaning to share out or apportion (*daiō*—hence happiness would mean literally something like good portion in Greek). *Daimōn* was used by the Greeks for divine spirits and even ancient heroes, as well as for fortune and fate, as it was through these that one's portion in life was thought to come. Its transmutation into our word *demon* reflects only the use of the Greek word for evil spiritual influences.
2. The reference might be to discussions stimulated among people generally by the sort of opinions expressed in the poetic quotation just given. If there is a reference to philosophical dialogues, those of Plato might be meant, as the *Timaeus* 34a8–b9.
3. Or Hercules, to use the Latin form of his name. Heracles had another hero, Iolaus, accompany him in many of his adventures who was to him another like himself. Heracles said of Iolaus, "he's another Heracles."
4. The Greek here at 1213a10–13 is disputed. One can, however, keep the manuscript readings of Bekker if one adds quotation marks to bring out the dialogical character of the passage. The Greek for "dear" at 1213a13 is *philos*.

Chapter 16

Number of Friends. *If friends are many one cannot share one's love between them but will be a friend in name only; also since some misfortune is likely to be happening to some or other friend, one will always be in pain. The number of friends should be proportionate to occasion and to one's impulse for love.*

Should one possess many friends or few? To speak simply, then, there must 1213b3
be neither always many nor few. For when there are many friends it is a job to
divide up one's loving between each of them. For in everything else too our b5
nature is, because weak, unable to extend itself over a large range. For neither
with our sight are we up to seeing much, but if you take it further away from
what is commensurate with it, sight falls short because of the weakness of
its nature—so too with hearing and with all the others likewise. So, by falling b10
short in love because of inability, one would both justly get complaints and not
be a friend, as not loving save in name. But that is not what friendship means.

Further, if friends are many, it will not be possible to stop being in pain. 1213b13
For where there are many it is always likely that some misfortune is befalling
at least one of them, which must cause one pain when it happens.

Nor again must friends be few, one or two, but proportionate to occasion 1213b16
and to one's impulse for love.

Chapter 17

Complaints. *How to use a friend relates to complaints that arise where friends do not treat each other equally. These complaints do not arise in unequal friendships. So the question how to treat a friend arises only in friendships among equals.*

It would next be necessary to examine how to use a friend. The examina- 1213b18
tion does not concern every friendship but the one where friends complain
most to each other. They do not complain like this in the other friendships; b20
for example, in that of father to son there is not the sort of complaint they
say is right in some friendships, "as I do to you so do you to me too," and if
he does not the complaint here is fierce.

Among unequal friends, the equal does not exist, and the friendship of 1213b24
father to son is of inequality, likewise the friendship of wife with husband or
servant with master, and of worse and of better on the whole. These will not
have such complaints. But it is in equal friendships and where friendship is

the same that this sort of complaint exists. Consequently it would be necessary to examine how to use a friend in friendship among equals.[1]
b30

Note

1. This examination would require one to go back to study the chapters on virtue and prudence given earlier, which explain how the virtuous, who are the only true equals, should behave.

Epitome of Peripatetic Ethics[1]

(attributed to Arius Didymus)

13. *About the Ethics of Aristotle and the Rest of the Peripatetics*[2]

He says that character [*ēthos*] takes its name from custom [*ethos*]. For we 116.21
get by habituation and right upbringing for ourselves the perfections of things that we have the beginnings and seeds of from nature. Hence the science of ethics [*ēthikē*] is the science of custom [*ethikē*], and it arises only in the case of animals and above all of man. For the other animals are habituated to be like this or like that not by reason but by compulsion, whereas man is molded 5
by reason through custom when a part of his soul is disposed in accord with reason. An irrational part of the soul it is called—not the part that is altogether irrational but the part that is such as to obey reason, which is what the part with passions is like, and this part is receptive also of virtue.[3]

For of the soul, one part is rational and the other irrational.[4] The rational 117.11
is the part that judges, but the irrational is the part that has impulses.[5] Of the rational part, the part that studies eternal and divine things is called the scientific part, while the part that deals with human and active things[6] is 15
called the deliberative.[7] And of the irrational part, the part that has appetite for things up to us is called the desiring part, and the part directed against people nearby, as in defense, is called the spirited part.[8] Consequently virtues have a twofold kind too, one rational and the other irrational, since it is in accord with these that study and action naturally come about. Hence too moral virtue is not science but a habit of choosing beautiful things.[9]

It has so turned out that virtue is made complete from three sources: 118.5
nature, custom, reason.[10] For since man is superior both in his body and his soul to the other animals—because, being between things immortal and things mortal, he has a bond of community with both of them, to rational things by being divine in soul and to irrational things by being mortal in body—reason- 10
ably does he desire the perfection of both. First, then, he has an appetite for existence, for by nature he is akin[11] to himself, and hence fittingly he delights in what accords with nature, and he is annoyed at what is against nature. For he is eager to get health for himself and has a desire for pleasure and makes 15
claim to life because these are in accord with nature and are to be preferred for themselves and good. As regards the opposites, he drives off and deflects

sickness and pain and destruction because they are against nature and are in themselves to be avoided and bad.

118.20 For dear to us is our body and dear our soul and dear the parts of them and dear their capacities and activities, and it is in accord with forethought for preserving these that the impulse for what is fitting[12] and for virtue takes its beginning. For if there happened, once for all, to be no error in choice and avoidance of the aforesaid things, but we were continually possessed of good things and had no share of bad ones, we would never have made further search for right and infallible selection between them. But since we have often been deceived because of ignorance about what to choose and what to avoid, and since we dismiss goods and fall in with bads as though good, we necessarily made further search for firm knowledge in discriminating them. And finding that this knowledge was in tune with nature, we called it virtue because of the magnificence of its activity, and marveling at it with divine awe, we honored it before all other things. For it happens that our actions get their principles, as well as the things said to befit them, from selecting what accords with nature and from rejecting what is against nature. That is why it is in these things and about these things that correctness[13] and mistakes arise. For the whole outline of the sect[14] derives, pretty much, from these things, as I will briefly show.

119.22 That children are not only to be preferred by their parents because of need but also because of themselves is known from its self-evidence. For no one is so savage or bestial in nature as to pay no serious attention to the happiness of his children and to their continuing to live finely, rather than the opposite, after his death. At any rate, it is from this affection of love that those who are about to die write down testaments and make provision for those yet being carried in the womb, leaving them foster parents and guardians and entrusting them to their dearest friends and urging them to look after them. Some indeed die along with their dying children.

120.8 Since children are thus loved for their own sake, necessarily also is friendship with parents and brothers and the partner of one's bed and family members and other relatives and citizens acquired for their own sake. For with these too we have from nature certain sorts of kinship. For man is an animal that shares mutually in love and is social.[15] And if some of our friendships are distant and others close by, that is not to the point. For each of them is to be preferred for its own sake and not only for need.

120.17 But if friendship with citizens is to be preferred for itself, necessarily too is friendship to be preferred for itself with those of the same nation and tribe. Consequently friendship with all men must be so too. For certainly all who act to save others are thus disposed toward those near them, so that most of what they do, they do, not because of the price, but because it is to be preferred in itself. For who would not, if he could, rescue a man whom he saw being overpowered by a wild beast? Who would not give directions

to a man who has lost his way? Who would not come to the aid of someone dying from want? Who, when chancing upon a stream in a waterless desert, would not mark it out with signs for those traveling along the same road? Who would not put great value on good repute after death? Who would not hate, as being contrary to human nature, voices like these

"When I am dead let earth consume with fire."
"I am all right, so it concerns me not."[16]

It is clear, therefore, that we have for everyone a natural kindness and friendship, which makes manifest that which is to be preferred for its own sake and accords with reason. For "there is one race of men and of gods, and we both take breath from one mother," that is, from nature (Pindar, *Nem*. VI 1, 1.2). Since there is in us a common love of mankind, much more is the preferable for its own sake manifest toward those who are friends in habits of life together.

But if the friend is to be preferred for his own sake, then so is the friendship and kindly disposition that come from all those who share a way of life in common, and from the majority of men. Consequently praise too is to be preferred for its own sake, for we are made akin to those who praise us. But if praise is to be preferred for its own sake, then so is good reputation. For the outline has passed on to us that good reputation is not something other than praise from the many. A clear demonstration has consequently in this way been given that good things, which happen from without, are naturally to be preferred for their own sake. How, therefore, can the goods that concern us and that are in us (I mean the goods of the body and the soul) not much more be so?

For if man is to be preferred for his own sake, the parts too of man would be preferable for their own sake. Man's parts are, most completely, body and soul. So the body too would be preferable for its own sake. For how could our neighbor's body be preferable for us for its own sake and our own body not? Or how could our human neighbor be preferable for his own sake and not each of us be thus preferable for ourselves for our own sake? Or how could this be so and yet the parts of our body and the virtues of the parts and the virtues of the whole body not be preferable? Consequently health is to be preferred for us for its own sake, and strength and beauty and swiftness of foot and good condition and good perception—all of them together, practically speaking. For, to be sure, no one of sound mind would accept to be misshapen or mutilated in form, even if no disadvantage at all would be consequent on such hateful form. Consequently, even apart from the disadvantage, avoidance of ugliness seems reasonable. But if ugliness is to be avoided for its own sake, then beauty too is not only to be preferred for its advantage but also for its own sake. For that there is something of itself in beauty that summons us is manifest.

123.9 At any rate, everyone is naturally akin, apart from all need, to those that are beautiful, for everyone is ready to do them good and to bestow on them benefits, which is why indeed it seems that beauty is producer of kindness too. So that, by this argument, beauty belongs to things to be preferred for themselves, and ugliness to things to be avoided for themselves. The 15 same argument applies to health and sickness, to strength and weakness, to swiftness and slowness of foot, to perception and disability. So that, if it has been shown that the bodily things among goods are to be preferred for themselves and their opposites to be avoided for themselves, then the parts of the soul and the virtues of them and of the whole soul must be preferable for themselves.

123.21 For virtue, taking its entry, as we showed [118ff.], from the bodily and external goods, and turning toward and gazing at itself (because, much more so than the virtues of the body, it is itself among things that accord with nature), it is made akin to itself as to something to be preferred for itself, and made more akin to itself than to the virtues of the body. Consequently the soul's virtues are much more honorable.

124.1 What is more, one might reason this out also from what has already been gone through. For if health of the body is to be preferred for itself, then much more so is temperance of the soul, which frees us from the forcefulness of the 5 passions. And if bodily strength is one of the goods, then much more would strength of soul be preferable for itself and something good. Strength of soul is courage and endurance, which makes souls robust. That is indeed why courage too and endurance would be preferable for themselves. Analogously, 10 if bodily beauty is to be preferred for its own sake, beauty of soul would also be preferable for its own sake, and beauty of soul is justice. For "to do naught wrong doth beautify us too."[17]

14. *That the three kinds of goods, those of the body, those of the soul, those external, have an analogy to each other, even though they differ.*

124.18 The like argument applies to the virtues too, because the three kinds of goods, apart from their great difference among each other, are nevertheless held to have a certain analogy with reason, which indeed we will try clearly to explain. What we say health is in body, that is in the soul called temperance and in external things wealth, for this too protects us from many of our 5 mistakes. And what strength is in the body, that in the soul is courage and in external things rule. And what good perception is in the body, that in the soul is prudence and in external things good fortune. And what beauty is in the body, that in the soul is justice and in external things friendship. Con- 10 sequently there are three kinds of goods to be preferred for their own sake: those of the soul, those of the body, and those that are external. And those of soul are much more to be preferred than the others, since soul is more of a leader and more to be preferred than body.[18]

It is plain, therefore, that the virtues of the soul are more to be preferred, 125.14
being likewise superior, than the virtues of the body and of external things. People aim at the other things too, first because these are to be preferred for their own sake, next because they are useful for political and communal life, and indeed for contemplative life too. For one's way of life is measured out in deeds political and communal and contemplative. For, according to 20
this sect, virtue is not something self-loving but something communal and political. But since we said that virtue is akin to itself most of all (123.21ff.), plainly it must also be naturally akin to the knowledge of truth. In consequence of this, one's stay in life is measured out in communal and political and contemplative deeds and one's quitting it from the opposites, so that to 5
exit from life is reasonably a bad thing for the wise to contemplate, but to stay in it is reasonably a bad thing for the base to contemplate. For to those who are able to accomplish communal and political deeds and theoretical studies of things virtuous and base, staying in life is reasonable, but to those who are not able, departing from it is reasonable.

So since there is great superiority in virtue as compared to bodily and 126.12
external goods, both with respect to doing things and with respect to its being preferable for its own sake, the argument says that the end is not full complement of bodily and external goods, nor is it even getting them all, 15
but rather is it living according to virtue among bodily and external goods, whether all of them or most of them or the most important. Hence happiness is activity according to virtue in deeds of the primary sort that we would pray for.[19] Bodily and external goods are said to be productive of happiness 20
because they add to it when they are present. But those who think that they make happiness fully complete are ignorant because happiness is a way of life, and a way of life is made fully complete by action. But none of the bodily or external goods is by itself either action or, in general, activity.

So, in the case of those who possess this argument, their good conduct 127.3
will stand firm, as well as their grace and their good favor and their love of mankind and their love of children and their love of brothers and, in addition to this, their love of fatherland and love of father and love of kindred and, as is fitting,[20] their good companionship and their kindly disposition and their friendship and their equality and their justice and the whole divine chorus of their virtues. Those who despise this chorus are manifestly going wrong in their choice of goods and avoidance of evils, in their getting of goods, and 10
in their using of goods; and, accordingly, they are tripped up by their judgment in choice, by their manner in what they get, and by their ignorance in how they use it.

They go wrong in choice, therefore, whenever they choose what is not at 127.14
all good or what is less strongly good than it should be; and this, in the case of most people, is their putting the pleasant before the useful and the useful before the beautiful, and their lack of measure in going too soon out of the

way because of their impulses. They go wrong in getting whenever they take things too soon, either from sources or in ways or in amounts they should not take them. They go wrong in using (since any use has a reference either to itself or to another) whenever, in reference to itself, they do not bear themselves in a way that suits the things, and whenever, in reference to another, they do not keep to that aspect of propriety[21] which accords with worth.

127.25 But if the base go wrong in these ways, the virtuous go altogether right in the opposite ways, having virtue as their leader in action. At any rate, judging and choosing and doing seem common to all the virtues, for virtue is not lacking in judgment or in choice or in action. Prudence, on the contrary, is what exercises rule as being leader in the things that, falling both under itself and under the other virtues, are to be preferred and to be avoided and to be done and not to be done and the more and less, whereas each of the others cuts off for itself only what belongs to itself.

15. *About virtue*

128.11 Virtue is called the best disposition or that by which what has it is in the best state. This is clear from induction. For a cobbler's virtue is said to be what he can best finish off a shoe by, and a builder's virtue what he is in the best state for building a beautiful house by.

128.15 Now that it belongs to virtue to dispose things best is agreed,[22] but there are, as it were, two principles to the virtues: reason and passion. These things are sometimes in harmonious like-mindedness with each other and sometimes in discordant strife. Their disorder comes about through pleasures and pains. The victory of reason, therefore, has paronymously from mastery the name of continence,[23] but the victory of the irrational part, because of the lack of obedience of its impulse, has the name of incontinence. The harmony and concord of both is virtue, with the one leading to what it should and the other obediently following.[24]

16. *About things to prefer and things to avoid*

128.27 That is said to be preferred that moves impulse toward itself and that to be avoided that moves impulse from itself, when reason gives its consenting vote.[25] For as what is to be willed gets this name in accord with will, so too what is to be preferred gets its name in accord with preference.

129.4 The ancients held the preferable and the good to be the same thing. At any rate, when outlining the good they marked it off in this way: "good is what all things desire."[26] Of good they said some things are to be preferred on our account and others on account of neighbors. Of things to be preferred on our account, some are beautiful and some necessary. Beautiful things are the virtues and the activities they give rise to: prudence and taking thought, justice and acting justly and analogously in the other cases. Necessary things are life and those that tend toward it and occupy the place of producing it,

for example, the body and its parts and the uses of them, and among things said to be external, good birth, wealth, repute, peace, freedom, friendship; for each of these contributes something to the use of virtue.

17. *The sources of happiness*

Happiness arises from beautiful and primary deeds. That is also why it is 129.19
beautiful through its totality, as the activity of pipe playing is artistic through its totality. For happiness does not exceed the getting of materials for what is purely beautiful, just as neither does the activity of medicine that is skilled in its totality exceed the use of its tools. For every doing is an activity of soul, but since he who acts is making use of certain things for bringing to comple- 5
tion what he has proposed to himself, these things are not to be thought of as parts of his activity, even though the two arts just mentioned each seeks its own tool (not however as a part of their art but as productive of it). For things without which one cannot do a thing are not rightly said to be parts of the activity.[27] For the part is thought of in terms of what is completive of 10
the whole, whereas that without which a thing cannot be is thought of as what produces it, by its bearing on the end and working together toward it.

18. *How many parts of good there are, and about the target*

The good is divided into the beautiful and the useful and the pleasant, and 130.15
these are the targets of particular actions, but what comes from them all is happiness. Happiness is "a use, of the primary sort, of complete virtue in a complete way of life" or "activity of a complete life in accord with virtue" or "unimpeded use of virtue in things that are in accord with nature." The same is also end.

But if being happy is said to be *end*, happiness is said to be *target*; and wealth 130.21
is a *good*, but being wealthy is among things of which there is *need*—that is the way, for some,[28] that they do the definition for the sake of accuracy of words. But one should follow the custom of the ancients and say the end is "what we do everything for but it itself for nothing" or "the ultimate of things to be desired"[29] or "living according to virtue in bodily and external goods, whether 5
all of them or most of them or the most important of them." As this is the greatest of goods and the most complete, it is assisted by all the others. For things that contribute to it must confessedly be said to be among goods, but 10
the opposites must be said to be among neither goods nor bads but among things indifferent (not every beautiful action is happiness making).[30]

They said that happiness is use of "complete" virtue because they said 131.14
that some virtues were complete and some incomplete. Complete virtues are justice and gentlemanliness; incomplete virtues are good natural condition and improvement. What is complete suits him who is complete. Completion then is activity of such virtue as has no part absent from it. And they added 20
"in a complete way of life" wishing to show that happiness arises in the case

of men already advanced. For a young lad is incomplete and his way of life too, which is why happiness would not arise in his case nor, in general, in an
1 incomplete time but the complete one.[31] A complete one is this: the amount that is the most the god has defined for us,[32] and he has defined it in extent as he has defined the size of the body. As therefore a line of verse would not
5 make up an actor's response, nor one move of stretching the hand a dance, nor one swallow a summer, so neither would a little time make up happiness. For happiness must be complete, being made up of a complete man and a complete time and a complete destiny.[33]

132.8 The activity of happiness is "of the primary sort" because of the complete necessity for it to be in goods that accord with nature, since the virtuous man would also use virtue well amid evils, though he will not be blest,[34] and since he would be displaying his noble breeding amid injuries, though he will not be happy. A reason is that virtue by itself is causative only of things beautiful, but happiness belongs to things both beautiful and good. For it does not
15 mean bearing up amid things terrible but enjoying good things, along with preserving justice in community as well and not depriving oneself of the beauties of study or of the necessities of life.

132.19 For happiness is something most pleasant and most beautiful and, like art, does not strain itself over the amount and the getting of tools. Nor is happiness the same for god and man, for it[35] is not something that the virtuous cannot yet lose altogether, for it can be taken away by the number and weight of evils.[36] Hence one might be in doubt whether someone still alive is even to be accounted happy in the authoritative sense because of the obscurity
5 of chance. For the saying of Solon holds good: look to a long life's end.[37] He who accounts men happy in way of life when they are dead testifies to this, that[38] one who is deprived of happiness, just like one who does not wholly have it, is not unhappy but, on occasion, in the middle. For it is possible for a wise man and a non-wise man sometimes to live the so called middle life, the life that is neither happy nor unhappy.

133.11 As for the departed, there is no happiness or, at any rate, not in actuality, for the soul's activity is about being awake. But to this is added "in accord with nature" because not every being awake of the virtuous is use of complete
15 virtue, but the being awake that accords with nature. And this is the being awake of someone who is not mad nor beside himself,[39] since madness and being beside oneself remove[40] one, like sleep, from this use and, perhaps, from the use of reason, and render one a beast. For happiness belongs to those for whom to live is a thing of reason. And not always even to these, but when their life is of the primary sort.

133.22 But as happiness is said to be use of virtue, so unhappiness too is said to be use of vice. Not that virtue is self-sufficient for happiness as vice is self-sufficient for unhappiness, but when the virtuous man possesses things good he is of use both to himself and to others. And for the virtuous their way of

life becomes something to flee from when it is amidst too great misfortunes, but for the vicious it is also something to flee from when it is amidst too great good luck. For they go wrong more. That is why the base, in fact, are not even lucky in the authoritative sense.

19. *In how many ways the good is said*

Since happiness is for us the greatest good, there is need to distinguish in how many ways the good is said. So they say that it is said in a threefold way, for it is the cause of preservation for all things that are, and what is predicated of every good, and what is to be preferred for its own sake. Of these the one is divine, the first, the next is the genus of goods, the next is end, to which we refer everything, which is happiness. 134.8

Also, what is to be preferred for its own sake is said in a threefold way: either what we ultimately do something for, or what we do everything for, or, third, what is a part of these. Of things to be preferred for their own sake, some are final and some productive. Final are exemplary deeds in accord with virtue; productive are the materials for the virtues. 134.14

Of goods some are honorable, some praiseworthy, some capacities, and some useful things: Honorable are, for example, god, ruler, father; praiseworthy are, for example, justice, prudence; capacities are, for example, wealth, rule, power; and useful things are what make and guard these, as health and good natural condition.[41] 134.20

Further of goods some are to be preferred in themselves and others on account of other things.[42] For honorable and praiseworthy goods and capacities are to be preferred in themselves (for capacities too belong to things good for their own sake, for example, wealth and rule, which a good man might use and seek; and things a good man can use well are naturally also good for their own sake, as, for example, things healthy, which a doctor too might seek and could put to use).[43] Useful things are on account of something else. For it is by making and preserving other things that they belong among things to be preferred. 135.1

Another division: among things good in themselves, some are ends and some not ends. Justice, for example, and virtue and health are ends, as are, simply, all general heads of particulars, as health for example, (but not the healthy thing nor care of someone sick). Good natural condition and recollection and learning are not ends. 135.11

Another division: of ends some are good for anyone and some not. For virtue and prudence are good for anyone, for they help whomever they come to. But wealth and rule and power, insofar as it is the use made of them by the good man that determines their being good, are not good for everyone in just any way.[44] They seem to be things to be sought for[45] and to help those who use them, but things that the good man uses well the bad man uses badly, just as the things that the musician uses well the non-musician uses badly. At the same time they harm one who uses them 135.17

badly, just as a horse, being a good, helps a skilled rider but harms greatly a rider who is not.

136.9 Further, of goods some concern the soul, some the body, and some are external. Those that concern the soul are, for example, good natural condition and art and virtue and wisdom and prudence and pleasure. Those that concern the body are health and good perception and beauty and strength and bodily integrity and all the parts with their capacities and exercises. Those external are wealth and repute and good birth and inherited power[46] and friends and relations and fatherland.[47]

136.16 Of goods that concern the soul, some are present always by nature, like sharpness and memory and good natural condition in general. Some come to be present through care, as preliminary education and liberal ways of life. Some arise from completeness, as prudence, justice, and finally wisdom.[48]

136.22 Further, of goods some can be both won and lost, as wealth. Some can be won but not lost, as good fortune and immortality.[49] Some can be lost but not won, as perception and life. Some can be neither won nor lost, as good birth.

137.4 Further, of goods some are to be preferred only for themselves, as pleasure and ease. Some are only productive, as wealth. Some that are productive are also to be preferred for themselves, as virtue, friends, health.

137.8 And goods are divided in many other ways, because there is not one class of them but they are spoken of in accord with the ten categories. For the good is extensive in its ambiguity, and all such things have only the name in common but the account that accords with the name is different.

20. *About moral virtue, that it is a mean*

137.14 So, with these distinctions in place, it is necessary to broach more accurately what is said about moral virtue. For they suppose that this arises in the irrational part of the soul, since, with respect to the present study, they set down the soul as being in two parts, possessing reason in one part and lacking reason in the other.[50] And in the reasoning part there arise gentle-
20 manliness and prudence and quick wits and wisdom and readiness to learn and memory and the like. In the irrational part there arise temperance and justice and courage and the other virtues called moral.[51]

137.24 So the latter they say are destroyed by want and excess. In order to show this, they make use of evidence from the senses, wishing to provide evidence of things unclear from things clear. For strength is at once destroyed when gymnastic exercises are too many and too few; and it is the same in
5 drink and food, for when what is consumed is too much or too little health is destroyed. But when these things are in measured amount, strength and health are preserved. It is similar, therefore, in the case of temperance too
10 and courage and the other virtues.[52] For he who is such in nature as not to fear even thunderbolts is mad and not brave, while he, by contrast, who

fears everything, including even his own shadow, is low-born and cowardly. But a brave man is confessedly the one who fears neither everything nor nothing.[53]

These things, then, increase and destroy virtue, so that measured fears **138.15**
increase courage but those too great or too little destroy it. Likewise too with the other virtues: those that are excesses and defects with respect to these destroy them and those that are measured increase them.[54]

But they define virtue not only by these things but also by pleasure and **138.21**
pain. For because of pleasure, we do base things, and because of pain, we keep from beautiful things. It is not possible to grasp either virtue or vice without pain and pleasure. Virtue, then, concerns pleasures and pains.[55]

In order to show clearly what concerns these things, they think it neces- **139.1**
sary to grasp by reason what things arise in the soul. These things, then, they say are present in human souls: passions, capacities, habits. Passions are anger, fear, hatred, longing, zeal, pity, this sort of thing, on which pleasure and pain also follow. A capacity is that whereby we are said to be such as **10**
to feel these passions, as that whereby we get angry, fear, are envious, feel any one of these sorts of things. A habit is that whereby we are disposed in some way toward these things and because of which our exercise of them is done well or badly.[56]

Hence, if one gets angry so easily that one is angry at anything and in any **139.11**
way, one would manifestly have the habit of angriness, but if in such a way as not to get angry at anything or for any reason, then the habit of being spiritless. Both are blamable, but mildness is the habit that is praised, whereby we **15**
get angry when and as and at what we should.[57] Hence the virtues are habits whereby our exercising of the passions turns out to be praised.

Since virtue belongs to doable things, and it happens that every action is **139.19**
seen to exist in what is continuous, and of everything continuous, as in the case of magnitudes, there is a certain excess and deficiency and mean, whether with respect to each other or with respect to us,[58] then in all actions the mean with respect to us is best, for this is what knowledge and reason command. For it is not under the topic of how much that the mean is defined, but under **25**
the topic of what sort, and that is why in being thus, it is both complete and at the top. But the contraries are somehow opposed to each other and to the mean. The deficiency and the excess are opposites, and the mean has to each of them the same property as the equal has to the unequal, being more than the less and less than the more.[59]

The mean, therefore, is best for us. For example, in social intercourse, says **140.7**
Theophrastus, this man goes into many details and prates in a thoroughly idle way, that man says little and not even what is necessary, but this other only what he should and at the right time. This is a mean for us, for it is fixed by **10**
us with reason. Hence virtue is "a habit of choice, lying in the mean for us, determined by reason and as the prudent man would determine it."[60]

140.15 Next, setting down certain groupings and then, in pursuance of the master,[61] examining the particulars, he[62] endeavored in this way to introduce them. These were taken for the sake of example: temperance, license, insensibility; mildness, angriness, dullness to pain; courage, daring, cowardice; justice; liberality, prodigality, miserliness; magnanimity, smallness of soul, vanity; magnificence, shabbiness, extravagance.[63]

141.3 Of these habits some are base by being excessive or defective in respect of the passions, others plainly are virtuous by being means.[64] For the temperate
5 man is neither he who is altogether lacking in desire nor he who is full of desire; for the former is like a stone in not having an appetite even for things natural, and the latter, by going to excess in his desires, is licentious. But the one in the middle of these, who desires what and when and as much as he should, and draws limits by reason in accord with what is fitting[65] as by a rule, he is said to be both temperate and to be in accord with nature.[66]

141.11 And a mild man [is neither he who is dull to pain and does not get angry ever at anything][67] nor he who is angry at everything, even if it be very small, but he who keeps the middle habit.[68] And a brave man is not he who fears
15 nothing, even if it be a god who is coming against him, nor he who fears everything, even his proverbial shadow.[69] And a just man is not he who apportions more to himself, nor he who apportions less, but he who apportions the equal; and the equal is according to proportion not according to number. [And a liberal man][70] is not he who doles out in any chance fashion, nor he
20 who does not dole out at all. And a magnanimous man is not he who thinks himself deserving of everything great, nor he who thinks himself deserving of absolutely nothing, but he who takes what is due in each case and to the extent that he deserves.[71] And a magnificent man is not he who makes a show everywhere, even where he ought not to, nor he who does so nowhere, but he who adapts to each thing as the occasion requires.[72]

142.6 Such, then, is the form of the moral virtues when studied as being about the passions and as in accord with a mean, which indeed also includes reciprocal implication, save not in the same way, but while prudence follows on the moral virtues according to their proper character, they follow on it
10 incidentally.[73] For the just man is also prudent, for it is this sort of reason that specifies him. The prudent man, however, is not just according to his proper character but because he is in general a doer of things beautiful and good and nothing base.

21. *About passions of soul*

142.15 Of the passions and impulses, some are civilized, some base, and some in the middle. Civilized are friendship, grace, righteous indignation, shame, boldness, pity. Base are envy, joy at another's ill, arrogance. In the middle are pain, fear, anger, pleasure, desire. Of these some are to be preferred all at once and some need to be distinguished.

Every passion is involved with pleasure and pain, and that is why the moral virtues also deal with them.[74] Love of money and love of pleasure and erotic madness and suchlike are habits that become different in respect of their vices. Erotic love is love of friendship and love of intercourse and love of both, which is why one is virtuous, one base, and one a middle. 142.20

22. *About friendship*

Of friendship there are four differences: that of companions, that of relatives, that of strangers, and that of erotic lovers.[75] But if that of benefactors and of admirers is to be numbered in with them, an account is needed. 143.2

Beginning of friendship of companions is common habits, of that of relatives nature, of that of strangers need, of that of lovers passion, of that of benefactors favor and gratitude,[76] of that of admirers power. Of all of them together there are three ends, the beautiful, the useful, the pleasant. For anyone, whoever he is, who enters on a friendship chooses friendship for one or all of these ends. 143.5

Now, as was said [118.11ff.], the friendship one has with oneself is first, and second is that with parents. Next in turn that with other relations and with strangers, which is why in fact it is necessary to guard against excess in friendship with oneself and against deficiency in friendship with others. For the one gets accused of selfishness and the other of stinginess. 143.11

23. *About favor*[77]

Favor is spoken of in three ways,[78] service in a useful thing for the sake of that thing itself, the exchange of useful service, the remembrance of such service. That is why one's way of life announces the three destinies. Favor is said to be in sight or in words, in accord with which the one is said to be well-favored and the other to be winning. 143.18

24.

A life with virtue is what the virtuous man will choose, whether he comes to leadership (when right occasion leads the way), or whether he comes to live with a king or to be a lawgiver or to be politically active in some other way. But if he does not chance on any of these, he will turn himself to an ordinary fashion of life, whether to a studious one or to the middle one of teaching. For he will choose both to do and study beautiful things. But if occasions prevent him from doing both, he will adopt the second, putting the life of study, on the one hand, first in honor, but inclining because of his sociability, on the other hand, toward political actions.[79] Hence he will also marry and get children and be politically active and will be loved with a moderate love and will drink in accord with the company he is with, even if he does not take the leading role. And generally he will abide in his way of life practicing virtue, and again, if he is ever constrained by necessity, he will 143.24 5 10

part from life, making provision for his burial according to law and paternal custom, as well as for all the other things that it is pious to furnish for the departed.

144.16 There are three types of life: the practical, the theoretical, and that composed of both (for the life of indulgence is lower than accords with humanity). And the theoretical life is judged prior to the others.[80] The virtuous man will be politically active as his main concern not as a side issue. For the practical way of life is the same as the political way of life.

144.21 Greatest as way of life is that of virtue in things that accord with nature. Second is that of the middle state, which has most of the natural things or the most important of them. These then are the preferable lives, but the life of vice is to be avoided.

145.3 The happy way of life is superior to the beautiful way of life inasmuch as the first means being throughout in things that accord with nature but the other being also in things against nature;[81] and with respect to the first, virtue is not self-sufficient, but with respect to the other, it is self-sufficient. A certain middle life is that in accord with the middle state, where proper duties[82] are rendered. For right action[83] exists in the life of virtue, error in the life of vice, and proper duty in the life called middle.

25.

145.11 Having studied these things, let us grasp them thoroughly too. For moral virtue is, in general, a habit that is chooser of means between pleasures and pains,[84] aiming at the beautiful qua beautiful; vice is opposed to it.[85] Common
15 to the opining and ethical part[86] is a habit that studies and chooses and does what is beautiful in actions. But the common habit that is from the scientific part,[87] is a common peak of rational training, being theoretical and practical. Wisdom is science of the first causes.[88] Prudence is a habit that deliberates
20 about, and also does, good and beautiful things qua beautiful. Courage is a blameless habit in middling darings and fears. Temperance is a habit in choosing and avoiding things that makes people blameless for the sake of the beautiful itself. Mildness is a habit that is mean between angriness and dullness to pain. Liberality is a mean of prodigality and miserliness. Mag-
5 nanimity is a mean of vanity and smallness of soul. Magnificence is [a mean of extravagance and shabbiness. Righteous indignation is][89] a mean of envy and joy at another's ill. Dignity is a mean of conceit and fawning. Shame is a mean of shamelessness and panicked shyness. Wit is a mean of buffoonery
10 and boorishness. Friendliness is a mean of flattery and hostility. Truth is a mean of self-deprecation and boasting. Justice is a mean of excess and deficiency, of much and little.[90]

146.15 Since there are also many other virtues, some in their own right, some falling among kinds of those mentioned (for example, under justice there is reverence, piety, helpfulness, good association, good exchange; under temperance,

decorum, good order, self-sufficiency[91] [under courage, stoutness of soul, love of toil][92]), it is not out of place to run through the definitions of these as well.

Now reverence is a habit of worshipping gods and spirits,[93] being between 147.1
godlessness and superstition. Piety is a habit of observing justice toward gods and the departed, being a mean between impiety and something nameless. Helpfulness is a habit of voluntarily doing good to men, for their own sake, 5
being between wickedness and something nameless. Good association is a habit making people blameless in common life, being between unsociability and something nameless. Good exchange is a habit of guarding against injustice in contracts, being between refusal to exchange and something nameless 10
(the nameless habit in a way concerns being a stickler in justice). Decorum is a habit guarding propriety in movement and stance, being between lack of decorum and something nameless. Good order is a habit aiming at beauty in order, being between disorder and something nameless. Self-sufficiency is 15
a habit of being sufficient with liberality for passers by, being between beggarliness and lavishness. Stoutness of soul is a habit of being indomitable in abiding things terrible, between lack of soul and war-mongering. Love of toil is a habit that does not give in under toil in carrying out the beautiful, between softness and empty labor.

The virtue that is put together from all the moral virtues is called gentle- 147.22
manliness,[94] and is complete virtue, making good things to be helpful and beautiful, and choosing beautiful things for their own sake.[95]

26.

Now that sufficient distinction has been made about the virtues and 147.26
pretty well most of the heads of the topic of ethics have been taken up, it is necessary next to go through economics and politics, since man is by nature a political animal.[96]

A first regime is a man's and woman's coming together in accord with 148.5
law for the generation of children and in community of way of life.[97] This is denominated a household and is a city's beginning. So we must speak about it.

For a household seems to be a sort of small city—at least when, with the 148.8
marriage increasing according to prayer and children progressing and pairing off with each other, a second household is set up and in this way a third and a fourth, and from this a village and a city.[98] For when many villages have come to be, a city is completed. That is also why the household provides the seeds of generation, as it were, for the city, and thus also the seeds of the regime. For there is in the household an outline of kingship and of aristocracy and 15
democracy. For the pattern of community of parents to children is kingly, of men to women aristocratic, of children to each other democratic.[99]

For the male comes together with the female through longing for chil- 148.19
dren and for the maintenance of the race. For each of them has a desire for

generation.[100] When they have come together and have taken in addition a
1 fellow worker of their community, whether a slave by nature (strong in body for giving assistance and dull and unable to survive on his own, for whom being ruled is an advantage)[101] or even a slave by law,[102] then, from their coming together for the same purpose and from their having forethought about everything for one advantage, they set up a household.

149.5 The man by nature has rule over this. For the deliberative element is worse in a woman, is not yet in children, is not at all in slaves. Household prudence, being management of oneself and of those in the household,[103] is proper to
10 the man.[104] Of this prudence one part has to do with fatherhood, one with marriage, one with slaves, one with business.[105] For as an army has need of equipment, a city of revenues, an art of tools, so also a household has need of necessities.[106]

149.14 These necessities are twofold, those for living in a more common way and those for living well.[107] For the household manager needs first to have forethought about these things, either increasing his revenues through liberal means of procurement or by cutting down on expenses. For this heading is greatest in household management. Hence also the household manager must be skilled in many things, in farming, in herding, in mining, so that he might
20 be able to discern the most profitable and most just returns.[108] Of business one is better and one worse. Better is the one that is by nature, worse is the one that is through trade.[109] Enough.

150.1 About politics these would be the chief points. First that in one respect cities are set up because man is by nature social and in another because of advantage.[110] Next that the most complete community is a city,[111] and that a
5 citizen is he who has share of political office.[112] "A city is a multitude of such persons adequate for self-sufficiency of life."[113] The multitude's limit is such that the city is neither without fellow feeling nor is easy to despise[114] and is provisioned in a way not wanting in things for life and in a way adequate against attackers from without.

150.10 For one part of prudence is economic, one legislative, one political, one military.[115] The economic part, as I said [149.8–10], is management of oneself and of those in the household, legislative […][116] concerns the study and management of things advantageous for an army.

150.17 Rule over cities must be either by one man or a few or all. Each of these can be in a correct or a base state: in a correct state, when the rulers aim at the common advantage, in a base state, when they aim at their private advan-
20 tage. The base is a deviation from the correct. So kingship and aristocracy and democracy desire what is correct; tyranny and oligarchy and ochlocracy what is base.[117] There is also a certain best regime mixed from the correct ones.[118] And regimes often change to the better or the worse.[119] Universally the regime thoroughly adorned with virtue is best,[120] the one with vice worst.
5 To rule and deliberate and judge belongs to everyone in democracies, chosen

either by election or lot; in oligarchies from among the well-off; in aristocracies from among the best.[121]

Factions arise in cities partly in accord with reason and partly in accord 151.9
with passion: with reason when those who are equal are compelled to have [what is unequal, and the unequal to have][122] what is equal,[123] with passion either because of honor or love of ruling or gain or prosperity.[124] Regimes are destroyed by two causes, force or deceit. Those regimes that take care of the common advantage are more lasting.[125]

Law courts and councils and assemblies and offices are distinguished in 151.16
a way that fits the regimes. The most common offices are priestly service of gods, generalship, admiralty, management of the market place, rule over the gymnasia, management of women, management of children, management of the town, treasury, guardianship of laws, exacting punishment. Of these some belong to cities, some to war, some are about harbors and commerce.

It is also a political man's job to correct a regime, which appears much 151.23
harder than founding one, and to distribute the multitude of people, some to necessities and some to things virtuous. For artisans and workers and farmers and merchants are for what is necessary, for they serve the citizen class. The fighting and deliberative parts have more control because they 5
care for virtue and are serious about things beautiful. Of these the senior part deliberates, the elderly part serves the divine, the young part fights on everyone's behalf.[126] This is a very ancient arrangement, the Egyptians being the first to establish it.[127]

Also no less political than the other things is the placing of the temples 152.11
to the gods in the most conspicuous places, and the arranging of one part of private citizens' lands to be near the borders and one part near the city, so that, with each person occupying two allotments, both parts of the land are easy to keep an eye on.[128]

Useful too is to legislate that messes be set up[129] and that attention be paid 152.16
to the common education of children. And as for the strength and perfection of their bodies[130] it is necessary that marriages be made neither when people are rather too young nor when they are rather old, for the offspring of both 20
ages lack completeness and are completely weak.[131] Also to legislate that nothing maimed be nurtured and nothing perfect be exposed or aborted[132] is surely very advantageous. And these are the heads of matters political.

Notes

1. From *Ioannis Stobaei Anthologium* (the *Anthology of John Stobaeus*), ed. Wachsmuth, Berlin, 1958, vol. 2, pp. 116–152. For the most part Wachsmuth's text has been translated without the scholarly additions and emendations he makes to it, since these additions and emendations, even if they clarify the meaning, are not always strictly necessary. The translation has benefited from consulting the new text and translation of the Epitome being prepared by Georgia Tsouni, to whom my very great thanks.

2. The section headings are found in Stobaeus' text, though Wachsmuth doubts they are all original.
3. *NE* 1.13.1102b13, 14, 28–31; *GE* 1.5.1185b12–13; *Pol* 1.5.1254b8. References to Aristotle's writings are taken from Wachsmuth's notes, which are inserted, following Wachsmuth, at the end of the section of the text that he says they refer to. Some of these references overlap in their range backward.
4. *NE* 1.13.1102a27–28, 7.1.1139a4; *GE* 1.5.1185b3–4, 1.34.1196b13–15.
5. The Greek is *hormētikon* from *hormē*, a word frequently used in this text and in the *Great Ethics*, generally translated "impulse."
6. The MSS have *practica* (practical, in the active sense) but Wachsmuth, following Spengel, thinks *phtharta* (mortal) has dropped out and that *practica* should be changed to *practicon* so as to agree with *bouleutikon* (deliberative), thus giving the sense "the part that deals with human and mortal things is called the practical-deliberative."
7. *NE* 7.1.1139a6–15; *GE* 1.34.1196b15–17, 1197b7–9.
8. *EE* 2.4.1221b27–31; *NE* 2.13.1103a3–7.
9. *EE* 7.13/8.1.1246b1.
10. *GE* 1.34.1197b38ff.
11. The Greek is *ōikeiōsthai* from *oikeiōsis*, another word frequently used in this text, on which see Annas (1990).
12. The Greek is *kathēkon*.
13. The Greek is *katorthōsis*.
14. The Peripatetic sect, that is, which is here under discussion.
15. *EE* 7.10.1242a25–26.
16. Fr. Trag. Adesp. n. 430.1, 2, Nauck.
17. Menander frg. fab. inc. 34 Com. IV p.244.
18. *GE* 1.3.1184b2–5; *EE* 2.1.1218b32–36.
19. *NE* 9.9.1169b29; *EE* 2.1.1219a38; *GE* 2.7.1204a28. Wachsmuth regularly changes the MSS *prohēgoumenais* (of the primary sort) and its cognates to *chorēgoumenais* (furnished with equpment) and its cognates, but unnecessarily.
20. The Greek is *proshēkon*.
21. The Greek is *prepon*.
22. *EE* 2.1.1218b37–19a2, 14, 19; *EN* 2.5.1106a14–24.
23. Continence is *enkrateia* and mastery is *kratos*.
24. *GE* 2.7.1206a37–b14.
25. *GE* 2.7.1206b23–25.
26. *EN* 1.1.1094a3.
27. *EE* 1.2.1214b26–27.
28. The text at 131.1 is dubious and there may be a lacuna, since there is no "for others" [*tois de*] answering to what I translate as "for some" [*tois men*]—unless the "But one should follow the custom of the ancients. . . ." is meant to be serving that function.
29. *Meta* α.2.994b9–16.
30. Wachsmuth follows Spengel and emends the text here to read: "For things that contribute to it must confessedly be said to be among goods, but things opposite [to it must be said to be among bads, and things that neither contribute nor are opposite] must be said to be among neither goods nor bads but among things indifferent." However, the MSS reading can perhaps

stand if it is understood as meaning that the opposites, in the sense of the things that do not contribute to happiness, are indeed not good, for they do not contribute to the final good, but yet neither are they bad, for they are, taken simply, good things (e.g., excess wealth is not good, for it is not needed, and yet it is not bad either, for wealth, taken simply, is a good). The same would presumably hold also of any beautiful act that was superfluous.

31. *NE* 1.6.1098a18–20, 1.10.1100a1–4; *EE* 2.1.1219b5–6.
32. *GE* 1.4.1185a4.
33. The Greek word for "destiny" is *daimōn*.
34. *NE* 7.14.1153b16–21; *Pol* 7.13.1332a19–21; *NE* 1.11.1101a6–8, 1.10.1100a5–9.
35. The MSS at 132.22 have "virtue" as the subject of the clause, but the context, and the passage in the *NE* presumably being referred to (see the next note), suggest that this is a mistake and that happiness should be the subject. Hense therefore suggested deleting the word "virtue," but if it is retained, the meaning must be that an accumulation of evils could, in the extreme case, induce the virtuous man even to abandon virtue.
36. *NE* 1.11.1101a8–11.
37. *NE* 1.11.1100a10–11; *EE* 2.1.1219b5–6.
38. The Greek is obscure at 133.5–6 and there may be a lacuna. The translation tries to give a sense to the MSS readings as we have them, but with some hesitation. Wachsmuth's printed text would give more the sense: "One's way of life also testifies to this, accounting men happy when dead. He who is deprived of happiness, just like . . . etc."
39. The Greek for "beside oneself" is the verb *exhistēmi*, which has as noun *ekstasis* or ecstasy.
40. The Greek for "remove" at 133.18 is another form of the verb *exhistēmi*.
41. *GE* 1.2.1183b19–21 (*NE* 1.12.1101b10–12).
42. *Top* 3.1.116a29, *NE* 1.5.1096b13–14, 1097a31–34.
43. *GE* 1.2.1183b28–30.
44. *GE* 1.2.1183b38–4a3.
45. Reading *zēteisthai* with Trendelenburg at 136.3 rather than the bare *zētein* of the MSS. If the latter reading is retained, the meaning will be the odd sounding: "these things seem to seek for and to help those who use them."
46. The Greek is *dunasteia*, which gives us our word dynasty.
47. *GE* 1.3.1184b1–4; *EE* 2.1.1218b32–35.
48. *NE* 10.7.1176a23–24.
49. Following the MSS readings. Scholarly emendations replace good fortune (*eutuchia*) with stoutness of soul (*eupsuchia*) or good counsel (*euboulia*), and immortality (*athanasia*) with lack of wonder (*athaumastia*). Whether the emendations give a better sense and should be preferred is a nice question, but perhaps sense can be made of supposing that good fortune and immortality can be won but not lost if what is meant is, say, the good fortune of winning divine immortality, as in the popular myth about Ganymede, or even some philosophical myths of Plato.
50. *GE* 1.5.1185b3–4 (*NE* 1.13.1102a28), and above n4.
51. *EE* 7.15/8.3.1248b10; *GE* 1.5.1185b5–8; *NE* 1.13.1103a3–7.
52. *GE* 1.15.1185b13–23; *NE* 2.2.1104a11–19.
53. *GE* 1.5.1185b23–26; *NE* 2.2.1104a20–22.

54. *GE* 1.5.1185b26–32; *NE* 2.21104a27–29.
55. *GE* 1.6.1185b33–38; *NE* 2.2.1104b8–11.
56. *EE* 2.2.1220b12–20.
57. *GE* 1.7.1186b9–24; *NE* 2.4.1105b20–28.
58. *NE* 2.5.1106a26–29.
59. *EE* 2.3.1220b27–33.
60. A direct quotation from *NE* 2.6.1106b36–07a2.
61. Aristotle.
62. Theophrastus, who has just been mentioned.
63. *EE* 2.3.1220b38–1a11.
64. *EE* 2.3.1221a13–15.
65. The Greek is *proshēkon*.
66. *EE* 2.3.1221a19–23.
67. There seems to be a lacuna in the text; the square brackets contain Wachsmuth's addition, following Spengel.
68. *EE* 2.3.1221a15–17.
69. *EE* 2.3.1221a17–19; *GE* 1.5.1185b24.
70. Added by Wachsmuth, following Heeren.
71. *EE* 2.3.1221a31–32.
72. *GE* 1.5.1185b35–36.
73. *NE* 10.8.1178a16–19.
74. *NE* 2.2.1104a8–9.
75. *NE* 8.14.1161b12–16.
76. The Greek at 143.7 is the single word *charis*, which admits of no happy translation into a single English word. It means variously grace, favor, gratitude; here, in view of the context, it is translated twice.
77. The Greek is *charis* again.
78. *Rhet* 2.7.1385a17–19.
79. The force of the sentence at 144.5–8 is unclear and an alternative rendition might be: "But if occasions prevent him from doing both, he will adopt one of them, putting the life of study first in honor, because the common life, by contrast, impels into political activity."
80. *NE* 1.3.1095b17–19; *EE* 1.4.1215a36ff.
81. The happy way of life is virtue together with a fullness of natural goods, but one can live a life of beauty, or a life of deeds of virtue, even if one suffers misfortune and lacks these goods.
82. The Greek is *kathēkonta*.
83. The Greek is *katorthōmata*.
84. *EE* 2.10.1227b8.
85. *GE* 1.19.1190a29.
86. *NE* 6.13.1144b14–15, 6.5.1140b26.
87. *GE* 1.34.1196b16; *EE* 2.10.1226b25. The Greek here may be corrupt. The translation follows the readings of the MSS and not Wachsmuth's emendations.
88. *Meta* 1.1.981b28, 982b9.
89. There is a lacuna in the text; the square brackets contain Wachsmuth's addition, following Heeren.
90. *GE* 1.20–33 lists the same virtues and in the same order. Wachsmuth gives special notice to 1.20.1190b9, 1.22.1101b24–25, 1.23.1191b38,

1.25.1192a21, 1.26.1192a37–38, 1.27.1192b18, 1.28.1192b30, 1.29.1193a1, 1.30.1193a11, 1.31.1193a20, 1.32.1193a28, 1.33.1193b25–26.
91. *Virtues and Vices* 4.1250b4–6, 11–12, 5.1250b23–24.
92. Added by Wachsmuth, following Meurer, based on *Virtues and Vices* 5.1250b5–6.
93. The Greek is *daimones*.
94. The Greek is *kalokagathia*.
95. *EE*.7.15/8.3.1248b9–11, 1249a16–17.
96. *Pol* 1.2.1253a2–3.
97. *Pol* 1.2.1252a27–28, b10.
98. *Pol* 1.2.1252b15–16, 28.
99. *NE* 8.12.1160b23–25, 32–33.
100. *Pol* 1.2.1252a26–30.
101. *Pol* 1.5.1254b27–29, 19–23, a14–15.
102. *Pol* 1.6.1255a5.
103. *Pol* 1.13.1260a9–14.
104. *Pol* 3.6.1278b37–38.
105. *Pol* 1.12.1259a37–39, 1.3.1253b14.
106. *Pol* 1.4.1253b23–27.
107. *Pol* 1.8.1256b26–32.
108. *Pol* 1.11.1258b10–19, 31, 35–39.
109. *Pol* 1.9.1257b19–21.
110. *Pol* 1.2.1253a3, 3.9.1280b39–40.
111. *Pol* 3.9.1280b40–81a2 (1.1.1252a4–7).
112. *Pol* 3.1.1275a22–23.
113. A direct quotation from *Pol* 3.1.1275b21–22.
114. *Pol* 7.4.1326b2–4.
115. *NE* 1.1.1094b3, 6.8.1141b23–27.
116. There seems to be a lacuna in the text, since it is hard to see how what follows the word "legislative" is describing legislative prudence rather than military prudence. Political prudence seems missing altogether.
117. *Pol* 3.7.1279a27–39.
118. *Pol* 4.8 & 9.1294a19ff., 30ff.
119. *Pol* 5.1.1302a4–15.
120. *Pol* 3.13.1284a1–3, 18.1288a32–b2.
121. *Pol* 4.14.1298a9–b11, 15.1299b24–27, 1300a31ff., 16.1301a10–15.
122. Added by Wachsmuth, following Spengel.
123. *Pol* 5.2.1302a24–28.
124. *Pol* 5.2.1302a31–32.
125. *Pol* 5.1.1302a13–15. And *Pol*. 4.14–16 and 6.8 for the next paragraph in the translation.
126. *Pol* 7.9.1328b33–29a6, 35–39.
127. *Pol* 7.10.1329b1–4.
128. *Pol* 7.11.1330a9–16, 12.1330a23–30.
129. *Pol* 7.10.1330a34.
130. *Pol* 7.17.
131. *Pol* 7.16.1335a7–15, 26–32.
132. *Pol* 7.16.1335b19–26.

COMMENTARY ON THE *GREAT ETHICS*

Book One: The Science of Ethics in General and in Particular

Chapter 1

Subject Matter and Practical Aim of This Science

Aristotle begins by announcing, without further ado, that his chosen topic is ethics or character. The *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) starts off with the self-evident proposition that activities, whether practical or theoretical, have some good as their object; the *Eudemian Ethics* (*EE*) begins with the particular good that is the manifest object of human activity, namely happiness. The *Great Ethics* (*GE*) does not begin with the good at all, whether universal or particular. It begins, that is to say, further away from what is naturally first in ethics, for the good is first in the case of any activity and ethics is about human activity. But what is first in nature need not be first for us, or for all of us, and by beginning with ethics or character, *GE* does start with what is indeed first for some of us. For it starts with what is first for the serious or decent citizen, the citizen who is good and who cares that others be good so that the city can live well. It begins with moral character. **1181a24–82a1**

It begins too by arguing, on the basis of character, that the study of character, which is what this treatise is about, forms part of the science of politics. The argument may be formalized thus: (1) nothing can act in politics without having some character or other, as a serious or virtuous character; (2) to have a serious character is to have the virtues; (3) therefore, if one is going to act in politics, one must have the virtues; (4) therefore this study of character is part of politics. This argument is only sound if one adds to it further assumptions or, rather, draws out what is implicit in it. The first conclusion (3) needs the assumption that the acting in politics under consideration (as the additional remark in premise [1] insinuates) is good acting or acting well, for seriousness of character is not needed to act badly. Bad men can act in politics as much as good men; indeed those most active in politics seem often rather to be the bad than the good. The second conclusion (4) needs the assumption that this study of character is going to be about good character, as well as the assumption, stated in the antecedent in conclusion (3), that it is going to be about good character with a view to political activity. For even if it be granted that political activity needs good character, it does not follow thereby that good character needs to be active in politics. It could be active at home or at school among friends and family and have no express relation to activity in the larger

city (as is suggested in *NE* 10.9.1180a30–34). These further assumptions, then (that acting in politics is acting well and that such acting is what one want or ought to do) need, if only implicitly, to be in place if the conclusions Aristotle draws are to follow. But these further assumptions are precisely those that the serious minded citizen, young or old, will naturally make and, indeed, will consider it base and irresponsible not to make. *GE*, therefore, by the very structure of its opening argument, as well as by its opening words, is addressed to an audience of decent citizens. It would make little sense if addressed to some other audience, as, say, to an audience of those who are not such citizens or who feel the temptation not to be.[1] These will only be persuaded to study good character and virtue, if they are persuaded, by the sort of arguments (about the good and happiness) that begin the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*.[2]

1182a1–10 On the basis of this argument, with its assumptions, the further conclusions that (5) the first thing to talk about is virtue (for virtue is what makes character), and that (6) virtue is to be studied not merely to know what it is but also to know what it comes to be from. For if this study is about acting well in politics, mere knowledge of what virtue is cannot be enough; there is need to know how actually to get it too. These two questions of the nature of virtue and of its sources form the principle of division for what immediately follows and, indeed, for the whole treatise. For the discussion of the opinions of others that fills the rest of the first chapter is divided into a discussion of opinions about the first question and then of opinions about the second. The same two questions can in fact also be seen to organize the whole treatise (as presented in the analytical outline).[3]

Errors about the Subject Matter and the Aim
About the Subject Matter
Virtue

1182a11–30 The first set of opinions examined, then, those of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, concern their error of confusing virtue with something else. Pythagoras confused moral virtue with numbers, but virtue is not a number (even if, as in the case of justice, numbers can help in its analysis). Socrates spoke better for he talked about knowledge, which, because knowledge is in the soul, gets at least the right locus for virtue. His error was to confuse moral virtue with science, which belongs to the reasoning part of the soul, and so to dispense with the nonrational part of the soul, the passions, and character. But virtue of *character* is what we are here interested in. Plato did not make this mistake, for he did talk of the nonrational part of the soul, as well as the rational, and gave each their proper virtues.[4] His error was to mix discussion of virtue with discussion of the good, which Aristotle glosses as mixing it with discussion of beings and truth. He must mean that Plato mixed virtue, not with discussion of good (for Aristotle does that himself), but with discussion

of the Idea of the Good as the source of being and truth (topics belonging rather to metaphysics than ethics).

The Political Good

What Aristotle says next is ambiguous. The Greek at a32, *autous*, could mean "they" and what these thinkers should say instead, or it could be taken with a "we" understood to mean "we ourselves" and what we should say (the word for "we" appears at 1182b2). Perhaps the ambiguity is deliberate. Aristotle's attention in what follows is as much on "they" and what they said as on "we" and what should be said, for it is on the error he has just identified (confusion over the sciences) and how to overcome it.[5] **1182a30–b2**

As formalized, the argument runs: (1) every science and power has an end; (2) this end is good; for (3) no science or power is for the sake of bad; therefore (4) the end of the best power is a better good; (5) politics is the best power; therefore (6) the end of politics is a good.[6] (1) and (2) are backed up by (3), whose peculiarly negative formulation may be taken as an emphatic way of explicating the sense of the terms, that "end" and "for the sake of" and "good" include each other. But why does (4) say the end of the best power is a better good[7] and not the best good, and why does (6) say the end of politics is a good and not a better good (or the best good)? An answer is suggested by the remark that the good here is not the good simply or the good of gods but the political or human good. The good of the best human science or power might be best among men, but it need not be the best simply or the best among gods. It would be a better good (because better than the goods of the other sciences), but not the best good simply. Also, what matters for Aristotle's argument, and for his clarification of why Pythagoras and Socrates and Plato went wrong, is that politics has a particular good for its object, and a better good is a good even if, as emerges, it includes other goods under it.

The good proper to the present study is our good (not the good of gods), and that good is the political good, or the good to be attained by us through and for political life (the study of morals, as remarked at the beginning, is part of the study of politics). But talk of anything requires dividing the kinds and focusing on the relevant kind (failure to do so was the error of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato). The first division of good springs from discussion of those errors, for there is the good that is the best in each thing's nature (which Pythagoras mixed up with numbers), and there is the good by sharing in which other things are good (the Idea of the Good, which misled Plato into talking of metaphysics). Aristotle considers and rejects each in turn as possible candidates for the good proper to the present study. **1182b2–b16**

The argument that the good proper to politics is not the common good by way of definition may be formalized thus: (1) definition states the substance of a thing; (2) to state the substance of a thing is to say it of all instances universally; therefore (3) the definition of good says good of all instances **1182b16–b30**

of good; (4) therefore the definition of good says good of the ends of all the sciences; (5) but no science says good of its end; (6) therefore politics does not say good of its end; (7) therefore politics does not speak of the common good by way of definition. The sense of (7) must be, not that no sciences *say* their end is good, but that they do not *establish* it as a conclusion within the science; they take it instead as a given of the science and use it to prove or establish other things. A doctor reasons that since health is good, therefore one should do such and such to bring it about; but a doctor does not reason, qua doctor, that since good is such and such (some supposed definition of good), therefore health is good.[8] Medicine reasons about what health is, since sciences do define their subject matter, and politics too spends time establishing what the good of politics is. But neither, qua the science each is, argues that this good of medicine or politics is good or worth pursuing.

A puzzle nevertheless arises. If no science says its good is good but always assumes it, and if therefore no science studies the common good, what science does study the good or by what science has Aristotle studied the common good sufficiently to say that it is not the study of any science? The answer, paradoxically, must be that there is no such good and that no science studies it. If there were, the science that studied it would end up establishing its own end to be good. Aristotle's argument does not proceed on the supposition that there is a common good, but only that, if there is such a good, it is not the good of politics,[9] and metaphysics, which must be the science that studies the good, establishes that good is not common but analogical. Metaphysics knows the goods of all sciences, including its own good, but in different ways. It may establish the good of other sciences by way of argument, but it knows its own good by immediate evidence (in the way presumably that all sciences know their good), and what it establishes is that there is no account of good that applies in common to all instances. So it does not establish anything that involves it in the impossibility of establishing its own good. This point of metaphysics, which must lie behind what Aristotle says here if his argument is not to lead to paradox, is left implicit in *GE*. The point does, however, appear in the other *Ethics*,[10] but it is a feature of *GE* that it avoids the sort of metaphysical excursuses we find in those other works. *GE* has a different audience.[11]

1182b31–83a6 The argument that proves that the common good by definition is not the good of politics proves the same of the common good by induction (if there is one). Induction establishes a general conclusion from known particulars and applies it to the unknown particular. In Aristotle's example, we show magnanimity is a good by showing that certain particular virtues are good, and hence that virtue is good, and hence that magnanimity, being a virtue, must be good too.[12] But if politics studies the good that is common in this way, it will end up establishing of its own end that it is good. For whether politics is assumed as one of the particulars in the induction or as the

particular to which the induction is applied, the induction itself establishes that the ends of the sciences, including politics, are good. The problem will not arise if good is analogical. Any review made by metaphysics of the ends of all sciences (including itself) will not result in a common good that logically embraces metaphysics under it. When metaphysics says of these or those goods that they are good, it will not establish a proposition, which by saying something common of many particulars, logically requires it to establish of its own end that it is good. The meaning of good in each case will be different and no proposition of the sort will result.

1183a6–24 The next error is related: not that there is a single nature of good but that there is a single science that deals with good.[13] Aristotle rejects it by saying good belongs to all the categories. He lists them incompletely: the what (substance), the what sort of (quality), the how much (quantity), the when, the with respect to (relation), and the by something. Susemihl brackets this last phrase (a11) but unnecessarily. It is a summary indication of the remaining categories (action, passion, where, position, having), which are all understood by reference to something else. Action is understood by reference to the thing it acts on; passion, by reference to what acts on it; where, to the surrounding body that locates it in place; position, to the body's parts (whose arrangement it is); having, by reference to what the body is wearing.

Stating the fact of the categories does not prove that there is no single science of good, but it shows that the good is not one, for the categories are not one, and if good is in all the categories, it cannot itself be one. Aristotle makes this argument in *NE* and *EE*,[14] but he does not make it here. He argues, not to the lack of oneness in good, but to the lack of oneness in knowledge of good. The good of "when" is known by medicine in the case of surgery and by seamanship in the case of sailing, and these two sciences are different and neither knows the good of the other. The same is true of goods in the other categories (the doctor and helmsman know, each in his own sphere, not only when to act but also what to do and where and how much). In the other *Ethics*, Aristotle uses the doctrine of the categories to show that good is not univocal. Here he uses it to show that if we take the categories one after the other and consider the good that the different sciences consider in them we will find that in each category the good is different and that the good that one science knows the other sciences do not know. Such remarks are enough to prove that no science speaks of all the goods, but not enough to raise complexities of metaphysics.

1183a24–b7 Against the Idea of the Good, which was the other good listed earlier, several objections are raised. The first objection is the more obvious, that to speak of this Platonic idea is to explain the clear, or things accessible to sense experience (the good of actual life), through the more obscure, or things accessible only (if at all) to abstract intellectual reflection. "*Obscurum per obscurius*" (explaining "the obscure through the more obscure") is how this

fallacy has traditionally come to be named. Like most fallacies, it is not hard to see once noticed. Aristotle wants his audience here to notice it.

The second objection is the same as before: that to talk of the Idea is to make politics establish of its own end that it is good. The argument, which is not quite fully formalized as Aristotle gives it, is the following: (1) the thing that is most good is what must be spoken of when speaking of the good; (2) the thing-in-itself is the most such and such in each case; (3) therefore the good-in-itself is the most good; (4) the Idea is the good-in-itself; (5) therefore the Idea is the most good; (6) therefore the Idea is what must be spoken of. Aristotle does not state (3) and (4) but proceeds at once to (5). The omissions are slight, but they are real. Supplying them requires at least the elements of logic. As to the argument itself, Aristotle denies (6) because no science says of its end that it is good, and so politics does not do so either.[15] The reasoning, which he does not spell out, must be the same as before: the Idea of the Good will say good of every good (all goods are good by reference back to it or by participation in it); so it will say good of the ends of the sciences, but no science says of its own end that it is good; therefore politics will not speak of the Idea.

So much is repetition, but Aristotle is deliberately leaving his audience to repeat it, as also to complete the formalization of the preceding argument. He adds, however, about the preceding argument that, though wrong in its application to politics, it may nevertheless be true. The remark may be referring to premise (2).[16] What is perhaps right about this proposition is that the thing that is most such and such is the thing that is altogether and simply such and such. If so Aristotle's endorsement of (2) would be an endorsement of the principle that that, because of which each thing is such, is itself more such.[17] The thought the principle expresses is intuitive enough, and there is no reason to think that Aristotle, or his audience, would deny it. What Aristotle would deny, and what he would want his audience to deny, is the metaphysics of Ideas with which, in Platonism, it is tied up. By itself the principle is separable from the Ideas, as it is, for instance, in the case of the Aristotelian doctrine of being. That which simply is, substance, is also that whereby other things are, the accidents, and is more a being than they are (though the being of substance is only analogically and not, as the Idea is supposed to be, univocally the same as the being of accident). Aristotle refrains from spelling these points out here, just as he refrained earlier from spelling out the analogy of good. He eschews metaphysical elaborations in this work. But he does not eschew dropping hints about them.

1183a38–b8 The point about (2) being acceptable, provided the metaphysics of Ideas is removed, lies behind Aristotle's third and final objection. It concerns the counter claim of the proponents of the Idea that, even if politics does not speak of the Idea because it does not say of its own end that it is good, yet it should take its start from the Idea and use it to speak about the particular

goods. This response is turning precisely on the truth of (2), which Aristotle seems just to have conceded. His response is in effect to say that to import the metaphysics of Ideas into (2) is to import something irrelevant to the topic in hand. We can talk and argue about goods without talking about the Idea, just as much as we can talk about triangles without talking about the immortality of the soul. Aristotle is harking back to and illustrating the fault of irrelevance that he blamed in Plato earlier.

About the Aim

As the previous paragraph recalled Plato, this paragraph recalls Socrates. It **1183b8–18**
has, however, seemed out of place.[18] Not only does it deal with the same error of Socrates as was discussed earlier, it also does so with unnecessary detail and interrupts the discussion of the good that Aristotle is conducting and that he continues in the next chapter. However, to begin with, Socrates' notion of virtue is another case of taking a principle that does not fit the subject, for if virtues are sciences, as Socrates says, they are not relevant to becoming good. Second, the focus of the discussion is now being changed. Aristotle is passing from errors about the subject matter of the science, the nature of virtue and the political good, to an error about the aim of the science, how to become good. The earlier criticism of Socrates was that his thesis that the virtues are sciences takes away the part of the soul (passion and character), which belongs to the nature of virtue. The criticism now is that the thesis makes the virtues to be of no use for living a good life, which is to take them away as a source for being good. In the case of sciences, knowing what the science is, or what is the case with respect to them, is enough for being describable as a scientist of the relevant sort (anyone who has a doctor's knowledge can function as a doctor, at least as regards giving diagnoses and prognoses and prescriptions for cures). In the case of moral virtues, knowledge is not enough. If someone knows what justice is, or what is the case with respect to justice, he is not thereby describable as just (he could be unjust). Moral virtues are habits of doing the right thing and not just knowing the right thing. But if Socrates were correct, the knowledge would be enough and no habits of right behavior would be necessary. The virtues would be pointless. They would also not be sciences, for the virtues that are habits of behavior cannot be sciences.

Notes

1. Such as Thrasymachus, on the one hand, and Adeimantus and Glaucon, on the other, in the first two books of Plato's *Republic*.
2. Dirlmeier (1958: 154) says the quickness with which the conclusion that ethics is politics is drawn is surprising, but it is not that surprising if the audience is decent citizens whose opinions are being taken for granted. Donini's negative comments (1965: 1–7, 16–18), and Fahnenschmidt's (1968: 39, 48–49), may be answered in a similar way.

3. Dirlmeier's puzzlement (1958: 167–68, 185), and also Donini's (1965: 7–14) and Fahnenschmidt's (1968: 40), about the structure and order of this first chapter, and of chapters 1 to 4 generally, is much lessened if we keep this division in mind.
4. Dirlmeier (1958: 165) notes that there is here an implicit recognition of the existence of intellectual virtues. Aristotle drops several hints about these virtues in *GE* but otherwise downplays them and refrains from calling them by this name.
5. Dirlmeier (1958: 156–57) rightly wonders why Aristotle shifts his attention here to the question of the good instead of proceeding to virtue straightaway as his opening sentences suggested he should; also Donini (1965: 11, 13–14). The translation "they" and the fact that these previous thinkers need responding to may help explain the shift.
6. The logical complexity of this argument, that it is not a simple three-term syllogism, is rightly pointed out, against Brink in particular, by Elorduy (1939: 20–21).
7. The MSS all say "better," but some scholars want to emend them to say "best."
8. In *EE* 1.8.1218b16–24 the same point is made by means of the same example that the sciences do not prove the goodness of their end; proof is not *of* a first principle but *from* a first principle.
9. Cooper (1973: 339–40) and Rowe (1975: 161–65), on the other hand, think that the existence of a common good is here being endorsed, and that the parenthetical remark ("whatever it is that is preferable for itself" at 1182b20) is meant by way of definition. It can, however, be regarded instead as meant merely by way of reference, as a gesturing to whatever preferable thing the proponent of a common good cares to identify the common good with.
10. *NE* 1.6.1096b25–30; *EE* 1.8.1217b25–35.
11. Donini (1965: 25) attributes the relative absence of metaphysics in *GE* to the character of the author who, he judges, is not Aristotle. But the fact can be as easily, if not better, explained by the character of the audience.
12. Dirlmeier comments (1958: 174) that this example of induction must be the most elementary in the whole Aristotelian corpus. If so, then it is suitably placed in an exoteric work.
13. Rowe's criticisms of the argument (1975: 165–66) are misdirected; they miss the fact that the focus has shifted to another, if related, error.
14. *NE* 1.6.1096a23–29, *EE* 1.8.1217b25–34.
15. There is no need to excise this remark (83a35–36) from the text as Susemihl does. The remark repeats what was said before but it repeats it of a different case, namely of the Idea of the Good, whereas earlier Aristotle had said it of the common good.
16. Dirlmeier (1958: 178) takes it as referring to what is numbered here as (1), and he understands what is right for Aristotle about this proposition that politics does speak of what is most good in politics but that this good is happiness and not some hypostatized idea.
17. *Propter quod unumquodque tale et illud magis*, to use the traditional Latin formulation.
18. Armstrong (1947: 459 n), Susemihl *app. crit. ad loc*, Fahnenschmidt (1968: 40); Dirlmeier defends it (1958: 182–83).

Chapter 2

The Science in General
The Subject Matter or the Nature of Virtue
Kinds of Good

From this point to the end of the treatise, Aristotle gives his own account of the science. It can be seen that he divides it not only according to subject matter and aim but also according to general and particular. The particular account begins with the discussion of the individual virtues in chapter twenty. The general account begins here, and first of the subject matter, with divisions of the good.[1] There are several such divisions. **1183b19–37**

The first division, or division one as it shall here be referred to for convenience (83b20–37), is into things of honor, things of praise, capacities or powers, and what preserves and makes goods. It is noteworthy in its human and political character, for what men want as goods are things they honor and praise and the power and means to get and keep them. The examples are all, further, of what good men honor and praise: the gods, the soul, the mind, the deeds of virtue, good use of rule and riches. But there is a difference between honor and praise. Honor seems to be due to what is already best or prior in its kind, as the divine (the best in the cosmos), the soul (the best in the animal), mind (the best in the soul), the elder (the prior in time), the beginning (the prior in nature). Virtue too falls under honor when someone has been shaped in it and has become best. But it falls under praise for the deeds done in accordance with it. The *man* complete in virtue is to be honored but *deeds* from virtue are to be praised. The difference is political: good men may praise a young soldier for his courageous deeds but only give honor to a general of established merit. The latter will, like the gods, receive honor and praise: honor for what he is and praise for what he does.[2] Powers are things that Aristotle later calls good simply but not good for this or that person.[3] Their goodness depends on the contingency that he who has them knows how to use them well. They are good with virtue but not without, and their presence depends on chance. Division one is not exclusive as regards the goods it mentions. Some goods fall into more than one member of it, as "rule" and "beginning" (or "principle"), which appear in the third and first members. But the reasons appear exclusive: what makes rule a power is not what makes it a principle to honor (it will not be honored if it is used badly).

The next divisions are also human and political and use the same examples, but they are exclusive as regards both goods and reasons; they are also ranged hierarchically. Division two (83b37–84a3) is into goods that are wholly and in every way good, as virtues, and those that are not, as powers. Division three (84a3–7) is into goods that are goals, as health, and those that are not, as things for health. Division four (84a7–12) is a subdivision of division three **1183b37–84a14**

and is into goals that are final, as happiness, and those that are not final, as the virtue of justice. Divisions three and four are expressly ranked according to better and worse, and division two implicitly so. Division one has no clear ranking, for some of its goods are in more than one division and may be both better and not better. Is rule better as a thing honored or as a power? Or is it better as both when used well? Divisions two to four correct and organize the goods of division one, and division four leads to a conclusion about the political good (84a12–14): it is the best of goods for us, which is the final good, happiness.

1184a14–25 The next question, then, is how the final good of happiness is best, whether as an inclusive sum of all goods or as the best in the sum or in some other way.[4] Several options are considered. A first is that by the best is meant the best in a sum of goods. But happiness is made up of many goods so if it is itself added up in the sum, then the best will be better than itself, "for 'it' will be best" (a21). The remark is obscure. Aristotle gives the example of health and things that promote health where we have a best total (health plus healthy things) and a best member in the total (health). We could take his meaning in two ways. First, if the best member in the whole is best, and if the whole when taken as including this best member is also best, then if we can add the best member to the best whole (so that the best member is counted twice, once by itself and once as part of the whole), we must get a best that is better than the original best, for it will include the best member twice. But this result is absurd because, *ex hypothesi*, there can be nothing better than the best. Besides the duplication is only of words and not of things (the best member by itself added to the best member in the whole does not add another best but takes the same best twice). Second, we could take the meaning to be that if the best is both health by itself and health plus healthy things, then either: (a) the best (health) is better than the best (health plus healthy things) because it is just the best, but the sum is the best plus things less than the best; or (b) the best (health plus healthy things) is better than the best (health) because it includes more goods. Here we have two bests. But we are looking for the one best that is the object of political science. So we must decide which is really best. If we try to decide by doing another sum and add the best that is health to the best that is health-plus-healthy things, we will end up again with two bests, the best that is health, on the one hand, and the best that is health-plus-[health-plus-healthy things], on the other, and so on indefinitely. Such an endless addition of health with health-plus-healthy things with health-plus-[health-plus-healthy things] is absurd. We must eventually stop summing up bests, or stop summing up the best member of the best sum with the sum itself.

1184a25–38 A second option is to take the best separately and not as a sum of goods. The absurdity here is that happiness is not a good by itself but the goods that make it up, so it makes no sense to ask if happiness is the best of these

goods when it just *is* these goods. A third option (84a29), since happiness is not best either by not being a sum or by being the best member in a sum, is to take it as itself the best sum, and since one cannot call it best by internal comparison (it makes no sense to speak of it as the best member in the best sum), one must call it best by external comparison. Happiness will be the best because, taken as the sum of goods that make it up, it is better than any goods not part of it. The problem now is that if there are goods outside happiness then, even if happiness is made up of several goods, it will be best in the way that, say, prudence is, by being best[5] among goods when these are compared one by one. But prudence, though best in this way, is not final or complete because there are goods outside it, and happiness is final and cannot leave out any goods.

Notes

1. It is the method of science, when seeking to understand or define its subject matter, to proceed by way of division (e.g., *Posterior Analytics* 2.13).
2. Cf. the discussion on this passage in Whiting (1996: 190–93).
3. 2.3.1199a19–b9.
4. This question of the inclusiveness or otherwise of the final good has occasioned a lively dispute among scholars with respect to the other *Ethics*; see the comprehensive review in Caesar (2009). What Aristotle says here, while it will not settle the dispute, does perhaps throw some welcome extra light on it.
5. Note that prudence here is allowed, if only by way of example, to be best, even though prudence is said later not to be praised and, later still, to be praised. The peculiar treatment of prudence in this treatise has been the occasion for much scholarly discussion. See the comments later on chapters 15 and 19.

Chapter 3

The Best Good and Happiness

We seem to have reached an impasse. Politics has as object the best good, **1184b1–21**
which is happiness, but to say that some good is best is implicitly to compare it with goods that are not best. Yet we have failed to find any goods with which to compare it (absurdity results if we compare it with goods that are internal to it, and if there are goods external to it against which it can be compared, it will not be happiness for it will not be final). The impasse, however, comes from the way the goods are being understood, which is after the manner of a mere list, as in Aristotle's division one. His other three divisions, by contrast, give an *organization* of goods, or list goods that are ordered to each other in terms of their goodness.[1] This shift from the first to the other divisions is a philosophical advance—unheralded as such but real. Division two, for

instance, listed goods that are always and wholly good and those that are not always and wholly good, and we might wonder how the latter fit into the best good. They will belong to it, presumably, when they are good and not belong to it when they are not; if so happiness could sometimes exclude them and still be final.

This thought is implicit in another division Aristotle now gives, number five (84b1–6). The division is of goods that fall into a hierarchy and a hierarchy provides a way of comparing goods as better and best that requires neither an adding up of the goods nor an exclusion of any goods. The good at the top of the hierarchy (whether it be one or several) will be best in comparison with the goods lower down, but those lower down will not add any good to the best, nor will the best exclude any good from the lower. The lower goods will only be good insofar as they are necessary for the higher goods, and they will cease to be good when they cease to be necessary. Aristotle's earlier example of health and healthy things is a case in point: medicines are necessary and good if health needs to be restored but no longer necessary or good if it does not. A certain relativity, then, is built into the idea of the final good of happiness. It is always best but it does not always include all or the same goods. Depending on circumstances and need, it will sometimes include lower goods and sometimes not. It will be a *dynamic* and not a *static* whole.[2]

Division five is a hierarchy of goods of the soul, goods of the body, and external goods. The goods mentioned in division one appear again but differently valued. Virtue, which was there the example of things praised, appears among goods of the soul (which Aristotle now expressly says are best, 84b4–5); health, beauty, wealth, and rule, which were there examples of powers, appear among the goods of the body or external goods; honor too appears among external goods. Thus things honorable, which were the first member of division one, seem relegated to external goods, or at least the honor they receive is. The honorable things as such must be goods of another sort: mind and soul are not external goods, nor could the divine, even if external to us, be good because of the honor we gave it. If such things are best, or among the best, they must be goods of the soul or even higher. The goods of the soul are listed as prudence, virtue, and pleasure. Wisdom is not mentioned as such a good—or not yet; it does appear later as a virtue. Later too pleasure is distinguished into better and worse kinds.[3] These goods of the soul are also hierarchical, for happiness, which is goal and final, is identified with doing and living well. It is identified with using goods and not merely having them, and with using them well, which is the work of virtue.

Notes

1. As Dirlmeier rightly notes (1958: 194–95). Donini (1965: 28–29, 42) thinks the lists just disorganized and fragmentary. He misses the development between the lists and the way Aristotle uses the later and more philosophical lists silently to reform and organize the first and popular one.

2. This idea of a dynamic whole could usefully be carried over into the dispute about the finality of happiness in Aristotle's other *Ethics*; see Caesar (2009). Donini (1965: 29–40, 42, 44) seems to have missed this implication of the hierarchy in Aristotle's lists.
3. 1.34.1197b3–10 for wisdom, and 2.7 in general for pleasure.

Chapter 4

Happiness and Living Virtuously

Happiness, then, is a doing and living well. In this chapter Aristotle undertakes to prove, not merely to state, that happiness is a doing and living with virtue (84b22–31): (1) it is by soul that we live; (2) in the soul is virtue; (3) the soul and the virtue of the soul do the same thing, save that the virtue just does what it is the virtue of while the soul does other things; (4) therefore we will live well through the virtue of the soul; (5) living well is happiness; (6) therefore living in accord with the virtues is happiness. The proof is labored, though it also hides an important subtlety. By itself, (3) if read as it needs to be to make (4) follow (that whatever we do, whether good or bad, we do with the soul, but we do things well with virtue in the soul), seems enough. If the proof is needed it is perhaps to reinforce the rejection of the views of Pythagoras and Socrates: the human good is a principle in the soul, not a number, and a principle of acting not of knowing. The subtlety is the transition from the singular "virtue" in the premises to the plural "virtues" in the conclusion (6). The move is not as such justified by the argument. But it is justified by the context. That virtuous activity is the activity of the moral virtues is an assumption that the treatise has made from the beginning, because its citizen audience makes it from the beginning: virtue for them always means moral virtue (as was noted about the opening argument of the treatise, 1.1.1181a24–b27), and moral virtue manifestly comes in several kinds. To prove that virtuous activity is happiness is thus to prove, for the audience, that the activity of all the moral virtues is happiness.[1] Whether happiness might ultimately be the exercise of some single and nonmoral virtue (the intellectual virtue of philosophic wisdom) is not a question that could suitably, or safely, be broached before a citizen audience.[2] Aristotle nevertheless drops hints about it at the very end of this first book (1.34.1198b8–20). **1184b22–85a1**

That happiness is acting from an inner principle is also stressed by the next argument (84b32–36): (7) where there is a having and a using, the using is goal; (8) virtue is a having in the soul and has a using to it; (9) therefore the using of virtue is goal; (10) therefore happiness is found in living in accord with the virtues. The stress is on the *living* as the next remarks show (84b36–85a1): (11) happiness is best and goal, so (12) we will have the best and be

happy by actually living out a life of virtue. The proof is again labored but straightforward: (9) follows from (7) and (8); (10) from (9) with the assumption, stated in (11), that happiness is the goal, along with the assumption (from the beginning of the previous chapter, 84b4–5) that the virtues, as goods of the soul, are best; (12) follows from (11) and (10).

1185a1–13 Happiness is also at a complete age (adulthood) and in a complete time, and a complete time is "as much as a man lives" (85a5–6). The phrase refers perhaps less to length of time than to quality. It is the time at which a man actively lives and not at which he merely survives.[3] Hence the remark about sleeping: to sleep one's life through is not to be happy because it is not to be active (85b12–13).

1185a13–35 The question whether happiness will need the virtues of all the parts of soul, including the nutritive, springs from philosophical and not moral puzzlement. No citizen concerned with a life of virtue will be very anxious to know why the physical process of digestion is not part of such life. A citizen with a less focused concern might be. Aristotle cares enough about such a citizen to resolve the philosophical puzzle but not so much as to give up the concern with character: there is no exercising (*energeia*) of this virtue because there is no impulse or drive in it to action, but moral virtue (*pace* Socrates) is such an impulse to action (85a27–32).

Aristotle cannot mean by these remarks that there is no exercising at all of the nutritive powers of the soul (for manifestly there is, when our body is actually digesting food), but that this exercising is not, as such, *moral* exercising. Thus the implicit limitation in this passage of the term "exercise" (*energeia*) to moral exercise seems to reflect the opinions of the citizen audience being addressed, whose focus is on moral action and on the moral sense of terms, not any larger philosophical analysis (such as we might find within the school).[4] Nor does Aristotle mean by these remarks that we will not feel hungry or go out and look for food if our stomach is empty. He means that the feeling hungry and the looking for food are not a work of the nourishing but of the passionate part of the soul. There can be a virtue to do with food (the virtue of temperance), and this virtue is part of the life of happiness, but it is a virtue in passions and character not digestion. Hence the details of temperance are discussed later but not those of nutrition.

Notes

1. Donini (1965: 46–51) correctly notes the shift in the argument from "virtue" to "virtues" but not the unspoken assumption of the audience that justifies it, nor the reason for Aristotle's not broaching here the possibility, prominent in *NE*, of happiness as the activity of the single virtue of philosophic wisdom.
2. As discussed in the Introduction.
3. The Greek word is *bios*, which connotes activity, and not *zōē*, which can signify mere subsistence. The completeness intended here is likely a

reference ahead to the discussion of the gentleman and of friendship at the end of the next book, for both these are about how virtuous life may be complete.

4. A point Donini misses (1965: 52–60) and so thinks this passage in *GE* could not be by Aristotle because it denies exercise to nutrition. In fact all it denies in the context is *moral* exercise.

Chapter 5

The Definition of Virtue

Parts of the Soul, Excess, Want, and the Mean

The parts of soul relevant to virtue are Aristotle's standard two of the part with reason and the part without reason. But he adds here notoriously (for he says the opposite later)[1] that qualities in the second (temperance, courage) and not the first (prudence, wisdom) are virtues we are praised for (85b9–12). Presumably the second are what we are praised for with a view to political action in the city (the object of the present study). Decent citizens praise and pursue the moral virtues; they do not praise the wisdom either of the master craftsman (the wisdom they will likely be most familiar with) or the philosopher; nor do they praise the prudence of the clever but unscrupulous politician.[2] They do not praise the irrational part of the soul either insofar as it serves the reasoning of master craftsman or unscrupulous politician; they only praise it insofar as it has moral virtue.[3] But wisdom and prudence can have a higher meaning and the fact becomes clearer as this treatise proceeds. When Aristotle says later that praise is due to prudence, and that wisdom is a virtue (and, in the other *Ethics*, that praise is due to wisdom),[4] he need not be seen as correcting what he says here. He can be seen rather as correcting or challenging the perceptions of his audience here. **1185b1–13**

The "moral facts" (85b15) that show that virtue is destroyed by excess and defect are the facts about temperance and courage mentioned shortly (they need not be taken as a reference to *NE*).[5] These moral facts are themselves made evident by even more obvious facts about the body. **1185b13–32**

Notes

1. 1.34.1197a17–18. The puzzle about the conflicting things said of prudence, and wisdom, in *GE* has generated much debate; Dirlmeier (1958: 208–209).
2. Prudence is sometimes used with this meaning, *Ethics* 5/6.13.1144a27–28.
3. Translating the manuscript readings as we have them (85b12–13) and not accepting the emendation that makes them say that the irrational part is not praised *except* as it serves the part with reason.
4. *EN* 1.13.1103a8–10. If Aristotle is following only what he can regard as immediately uncontroversial for his audience, he is not far wrong in his

judgment about what is thus uncontroversial. Even today decent citizens are suspicious of clever people, and Kant, who claims in his ethical doctrine to be following and analyzing decent common sense, is notorious for not considering prudent men, qua prudent, to be morally good.

5. The translation of the words *ek tōn ēthikōn* as "from the *Ethics*" (and not "from the moral facts") was defended by Allan (1957) who pointed out a number of verbal parallels between *GE* here and *NE*; Kenny (1978: 226) has followed Allan in this interpretation. By contrast Dirlmeier (1970, and also 1978: 113, 145–46, 216) has shown, on a variety of contrasting grounds, that Allan's interpretation is very questionable. It is also unnecessary. Aristotle's text has an obvious reading that makes sense without it. The verbal parallels are real but do not, by themselves, show which *Ethics*, if either, is following which.

Chapters 6 to 8

Pain, Pleasure, Custom, Passions, Powers, Habits, Praise, and the Mean

1185b33–86b3 The definition of virtue in these three chapters, that virtue concerns pleasures and pains, that it is generated by custom, that it is a habit in the soul, and that it is a mean, are standard Aristotelian doctrine standardly expressed, and little comment is required. Note only that the point in chapter 8 (1186a36–b3) about debauchery or adultery being a vice of excess not by quantity but by its kind shows, as chapter 9 goes on to confirm, that the mean is more to be judged by praise and blame—the praise and blame of decent citizens—than by calculations of amount.

Chapter 9

The Mean and the Middle

1186b4–87a4 The points made in this chapter, too, that the mean is not equidistant from each extreme but is sometimes closer to one than the other, as well as the reasons given (the thing itself or our own proclivities), are again standard Aristotelian doctrine. But there is a curiosity in the presentation worth noting, for it illustrates what seems a general feature of Aristotle's philosophical style in this work: the great care he takes from time to time to lay out systematic syllogisms but the little care he takes to put them into syllogistic order. So in his argument about our natural proclivities (86b27–32), he lists the following propositions in order: (1) we are naturally more inclined to license; (2) we progress more toward our natural inclination; (3) what we progress more toward is more opposed (to the mean); (4) we progress more toward

license; (5) therefore the excess is more opposed; (6) license is the excess beyond temperance. The argument is incomplete: (4) follows from (1) and (2), but to get from there to the conclusion (5) we need the further, if obvious, premise that (7) we progress more toward the excess (beyond the mean of temperance). This premise follows from (4) and (6), and from it and (3), the conclusion (5) then follows. Aristotle seems to be deliberately throwing his audience logical exercises and not just teaching them the science.[1]

The Practical Aim or the Sources of Virtue

Aristotle has completed his account of virtue in general, and it would be natural next to illustrate it in detail with respect to the several virtues. But his other question about the sources of virtue intervenes first, since it is also in need of a general treatment. He marks the change of topic by again returning to the error of Socrates, that knowledge is virtue. But again he deals with it in a different way. His earlier criticism (1.1.1183a8–18) was that Socrates' view makes the virtues pointless as habits of behavior (for knowledge by itself would make one virtuous). Here he argues that Socrates' view makes the virtues, not just pointless, but impossible, and hence makes achieving the aim of this science impossible too. **1187a5–13**

Socrates' argument, to reconstruct it from what Aristotle says (87a8–13), goes something as follows: (1) no one would knowingly choose to be base or vicious; (2) to be base against what one would knowingly choose is to be base involuntarily; (3) therefore all who are base are base involuntarily; (4) if being base is involuntary, then being virtuous is also involuntary; (5) therefore being virtuous is involuntary. Premise (1) is a statement of the classic Socratic paradox that no one goes wrong willingly. From it, and the seemingly obvious but unstated premise (2), the conclusion (3) follows. Conclusion (5) then follows if premise (4), left unstated, is added. But it is not clear that Socrates himself stated or wanted to state (4), for it is not clear that he wanted to accept (5). So (4) may be an addition insinuated by Aristotle himself to reduce the Socratic paradox in (1) to absurdity. In addition, the seemingly obvious (2) is questionable and is in fact questioned later by Aristotle.

The argument is presented with the crucial premises (2) and (4) left unstated. Aristotle does nevertheless begin it with the conclusion (5) and does state premise (1) and the intermediate conclusion (3), so he gives his readers all they need to find (2) and (4) and to complete the syllogisms by themselves. The presentation contrasts sharply with the presentation of the syllogisms just before about our proclivities in the case of license. There Aristotle stated all the premises even though several are so intuitive it seems tedious to state them. Here he does not bother to state all the premises, even though the two omitted are by no means as intuitive. Why does he use this practice of being tediously explicit in seemingly less important cases, while being not at all explicit in seemingly more important ones? If we are to follow the passage

from Aulus Gellius discussed in the Introduction, we may conjecture that it is one of Aristotle's ways of discerning who in his audience has a curiosity for more technical and theoretical matters and so of discerning who may have the philosophical talent and interest to enter the school.

1187a13–23 Aristotle's response to the Socratic argument is not to attack any of the premises but to show that the conclusion is false (which of the premises are false and why emerges in the larger discussion of continence and incontinence in 2.6 later). He gives as evidence the practice of legislators and the practice of praise and blame, both of which imply that virtue and vice are voluntary. There seems little need in these cases to formalize the syllogisms.

These arguments, if accepted, are sufficient to show that the Socratic conclusion is false, but Aristotle clearly intends no more weight to be put on them than the common sense of his citizen audience would put on them. For, first, while these arguments are indeed sufficient to show that there is something odd about the Socratic position, Aristotle nevertheless says, at least after his first argument (and after the next that he gives shortly), that virtue's being up to us is likely and not, say, irrefutable. Second, he does not think that these arguments end the discussion, for he proceeds, both here and in the next chapter, to give further arguments directed against those who want to say that choice is not voluntary.

1187a23–29 The first such additional argument is a refutation of another error or of another attempt to show that virtue and vice are not voluntary. The attempt is based on the fact (1) that ill-health and ugliness are not blamed. Presumably the reasoning (which is left unexpressed) is that (2) if one set of bads—ill health and ugliness—is not blamed, the other set of bads—the vices—should not be blamed either. This is actually a rather bad argument (for which the authors should perhaps themselves be blamed) because it says nothing (3) about the two sets of bads being sufficiently similar that what is true of the one should also be true of the other. Aristotle is able, however, to refute it without drawing attention to this badness because he draws attention instead to another badness, namely that the premise the argument does express, premise (1) (let alone premises [2] and [3], which it entirely ignores) is false, and then (by way of punishment as it were) uses the ignored premises to draw the opposite conclusion. For ill health and ugliness are blamed when we think that the ill or ugly are themselves the cause of their being ill or ugly (as, say, by overeating or self-mutilation). So if ill health and ugliness are blamed because voluntary, and if vice is blamed, as it is, then, supposing (as this argument must suppose) that ill health and ugliness are sufficiently like vice that what is true of them is true of it, vice must be voluntary and accordingly also its opposite, virtue.

Notes

1. Brink's negative comments (1933: 9–12) about the formal syllogistic manner of *GE* are part of his case against its authenticity. He fails to note

how informal the presentation of the formal syllogisms often is and how deceptively simple but really complex the syllogisms often are—a point on which Elorduy (1939: 19–22) rightly takes him to task.

Chapters 10 and 11

Proof That Virtue Is Voluntary

These two chapters give Aristotle's own proof that virtue and vice are voluntary. He states a general rule and then applies it to human actions. The rule is that things generate as they themselves are, or that what follows from a principle is like the principle it follows from. The point is instructively illustrated, not just from biology, but more so from geometry (that if a figure has a certain feature, the figures composed from it will have proportionally corresponding features). To this principle is added that man generates, not only his own kind, but also his own actions (87b4–7). We thus have the following argument: (1) things generate other things as they and their principles are, and contrariwise; (2) man generates actions; therefore (3) man's actions are as he is or as the principles by which he acts are, and contrariwise. The rest of the argument follows: but (4) man's actions change; therefore (5) the principles whereby man acts change; further, (6) the principles whereby man acts are choice or wish and reason; therefore (7) choice changes as the actions that choice begets change; but (8) the actions that choice begets change voluntarily (as is manifest and is not denied even by those who want to deny that choice is voluntary); therefore (9) choice changes voluntarily; therefore (10) our being virtuous or vicious, which is a matter of the actions we choose, is voluntary. Aristotle states the argument with all its propositions more or less in this order. He makes the validity of its logical structure easy to follow. But it is not, in its content, a simple argument; nor is it, in its context, an unimportant one. It may be one of the most decisive of the whole treatise. If virtue is not up to us, there is no point finding out what virtue is or how to get it, for nothing we could know or do would make any difference. Aristotle seems more concerned in this argument to persuade us of the conclusion than to exercise our skill in logical formulation. **1187a29–b20**

The defense of freedom ends with a sobering remark about moral luck. We can all be more virtuous than we are, but we cannot all be supremely virtuous. The advantages of nature must also be present and these are not up to us. If we are unlucky and have a deficient nature, the degree of virtue we can attain will be low. Perhaps, indeed, we may not be able to rise much above the level of slaves. Moral equality is not an implication or a requirement of moral freedom (a conclusion that may disturb decent citizens in our day but hardly in Aristotle's). **1187b20–30**

Chapter 12

The Nature of the Voluntary
Relation to Kinds of Appetite
Desire and the Voluntary

1187b31–88a15 The next question that obviously arises for discussion is what the voluntary is, since, as just proved, it is decisive for becoming and being virtuous. Thus in the following three chapters Aristotle investigates the voluntary and runs through arguments on both sides. These arguments, which are not all fully spelled out, are worth formalizing for purposes of comparison. Of those about desire and the voluntary, the first is (88a1–5): (1) what we do not do voluntarily, we do under necessity; (2) what we do under necessity, we do with pain; (3) what we do from desire, we do with pleasure; (4) therefore what we do from desire is voluntary. Here the conclusion (4) has to go through the intermediate conclusion, from (2) and (3), that (5) what we do from desire, we do not do under necessity.

The second (88a5–10) is to the opposite conclusion: (6) no one voluntarily does bad things knowing that they are bad; (7) the incontinent man does bad things knowing that they are bad; (8) he does bad things in accord with desire; (9) therefore he does not act voluntarily; (10) therefore the incontinent man acts under necessity. Conclusion (9) follows from (6) and (7), and conclusion (10) from (9) and from the converse of (1) in the first argument, namely that what we do not do voluntarily, we do under necessity. This inference leaves out premise (8) and does not give us, as such, a conclusion opposite to the first argument. But this conclusion (that what is done in accord with desire is done under necessity) follows from (8) and (10).

Aristotle responds on the other side with a repetition of the first argument (88a10–13): (3) what we do from desire, we do with pleasure; (5) what we do with pleasure, we do not do under necessity; therefore (the equivalent of 4) what we do with desire, we do not do under necessity. But (4) does not as such oppose (10). We have to add the further premise that (11) the incontinent man acts by desire, from which follows (12) that the incontinent man does not act under necessity, which is the opposite of (10).

The third (88a13–16) confirms (12), that what is done by incontinence is voluntary, and hence confirms too that what is done by desire is voluntary: (13) those who do wrong, do so voluntarily; (14) the incontinent man is a wrongdoer and does wrong; (15) therefore the incontinent man does voluntarily what accords with his incontinence. This argument is deceptively simple. The conclusion does not, as such, follow from (13) and (14), or rather it only follows from them if (14) is divided and taken in its parts (that [14a] the incontinent man is a wrongdoer and that [14b] he does wrong, 88a15), and if these parts are understood in a certain way. To make the argument valid, they must mean that when the incontinent man does something wrong, he

is doing it by a habit of doing wrong (so he is called a wrongdoer and not just someone who has done wrong), and moreover, that this habit is his incontinence. Consequently, we can analyze the argument more accurately thus: (13) those who do wrong, do wrong voluntarily; (14b) the incontinent man does wrong; (16) therefore the incontinent man does wrong voluntarily; (14a) the incontinent man does wrong in accord with his incontinence; (17) therefore the incontinent man does wrong voluntarily in accord with his incontinence; therefore (15), which is a generalization of (17), the incontinent man does voluntarily what accords with his incontinence.

None of these fuller statements of Aristotle's syllogisms needs to be worked out if they are to be understood (they have an intuitive obviousness that the mind will follow more quickly than it can formalize). But he does give us all we need to work them out. He also gives us all we need on other occasions when, as will be seen, working them out is no longer curiosity but crucial to following what he is doing. He is not only teaching ethics; he is giving exercises that test the ability to follow arguments.

Chapter 13

Desire and the Involuntary

The argument about desire is also worth formalizing. It runs (88a16–24): (1) the continent man is praised; (2) those who are praised are praised for what is voluntary; (3) therefore the continent man does voluntarily what accords with his continence. Here again we have to understand (1) as meaning that the continent man is being praised for what he does by his continence (and not for what he may do in some other way). Further, (4) if what accords with desire is voluntary, then what is against desire is involuntary; (5) the continent man acts against his desire; (6) therefore he acts involuntarily; (7) but conclusion (6) is false, for it contradicts (3), which was proved above; (8) therefore what accords with desire is not voluntary. **1188a16–23**

This argument is complex. It relies on the obvious and logical principle that if a valid argument results in a false conclusion, at least one of the premises must be false. The false conclusion is (6), and (6) follows from (4) and (5). But (5) cannot be false because it is basically a definition: the continent are those who are strong against their base desires and do not follow them. So (4) must be false. But (4) is a hypothetical, with an antecedent and a consequent, and it is the assertion of the consequent (what is against desire is involuntary) that, together with (5), is generating the false conclusion (6). So the consequent must be denied. But to deny the consequent is to deny the antecedent, so the antecedent, that what accords with desire is voluntary, must also be denied, which is conclusion (8).

There is nothing particularly hard here, but not only does Aristotle leave us to spell the argument out, he also leaves us to notice that (4) might be objected to, not because the consequent was asserted when the antecedent should instead have been denied, but because the alleged consequence does not hold and that, even if what accords with desire is voluntary, it does not follow that what is against desire is involuntary. In fact (4) is to be rejected for this reason, as Aristotle argues later (2.6). But it would perhaps be confusing to say so now, for the purpose now is a sort of dialectical airing of arguments and not an unraveling of how the arguments are going wrong.

1188a23–37 The arguments about spirit and wish are similar to those about desire and need no formalizing. What they do in the context is make us increasingly puzzled about the real nature of incontinence and continence. An express treatment will be necessary to clear up the puzzle, and is in fact given in the next book (2.6).

Chapters 14 to 16

Relation to Necessity and to Thought

1188a37–88b31 The arguments about desire and the voluntary have led to an impasse with no clear resolution. Aristotle changes tack and instead of trying to define the voluntary turns to defining its opposite, the necessary. The necessary includes both force and necessity proper, and Aristotle defines both along the same lines as he does in the other *Ethics*. Little comment is needed save that he counts as necessary here (88b19–24) actions that there (*NE* 3.1.1110a4–b1) he counts as mixed (those when circumstances force a choice between evils none of which one would choose otherwise, such as throwing the ship's cargo overboard in a storm). Here he does not need to be so precise. Virtue is voluntary in a way that choosing the lesser of evils is not (the decent citizens of Aristotle's audience are not like the vulgar who prefer vice to virtue and think themselves forced to be virtuous to avoid punishment as the crew is forced to throw cargo overboard to prevent the ship sinking).

The voluntary is concluded to be that which is not forced or necessary, does not spring from any appetite or impulse[1] and is done with thought.[2] Aristotle does not spell out all the details about ignorance and the voluntary, or in the next chapters the details about choice that one finds in the other *Ethics*.[3] Such details, one would think, go beyond the needs of the audience. He says enough, however, for present purposes.[4] To want more would be to want to hear the more professional lectures within the school.

Notes

1. "Impulse," *hormē*, at 1188b25 is presumably meant as an alternative for "appetite," *orexis*.

2. The example of the woman who mistakenly gave her lover poison to drink that is given at 1188b31–37 here in *GE* is also mentioned in the other *Ethics* (*EE* 2.9.1225b4–5, *EN* 3.1.1111b13–14) but with such brevity and lack of detail that we can only understand what is meant by referring back to what is said here.
3. *EE* 2.7–10, *NE* 2.1–5 and especially 2.1.1111a3–6 about what sorts of ignorance make an action involuntary.
4. As Dirlmeier (1958: 246) rightly notes against objections of scholars.

Chapter 17

Relation to Choice
Nature of Choice

Choice was key to the proof in chapter 11 that virtue is voluntary, so a dis- **1189a1–b32**
cussion of choice naturally comes after one of the voluntary.[1] The only thing, perhaps, that needs particular comment here is the claim that we do not choose ends but what is for the end (1189a8–10), as that we do not choose to be healthy but rather what will promote or preserve health. This claim seems false, for we can choose to be healthy, since we can choose not to be healthy, say if we want to die and so deliberately poison ourselves. But if health (or sickness) might be something we can in some sense choose, nevertheless whatever we choose we choose in view of some end that we hope to gain as a result of the choice. The example of health is meant to show that choice is always of something that leads to an end which, qua end of this choice, is itself not the object of choice, even if, in some other context, it could be the object of a choice that was made in view of some other end. Choice always presupposes an end that, within the terms of the choice, is not chosen.

Note

1. See the exact remarks of Dirlmeier (1958: 253–54), especially in opposition to Walzer.

Chapter 18

Choice and Virtue
Means and Ends

Choice is of what is for the end, and error in choice is likewise in what is for **1189b32–90a21**
the end. But if so, a question naturally arises about how mistake happens in virtue, or rather how it comes about that some people are vicious (for avoiding vice and getting virtue was what started this whole treatise going).

This question in turn requires us to ask if virtue concerns means or ends, and whether, if error in choice is about means, error about ends is possible and if so how. Aristotle approaches the question through an analogy with the sciences (90a10–14). How the analogy is supposed to work is obscure. He says that the job of science is to set up the end, as the science of building sets up a fine house to build, and then the builder's job is to find out the way to build it. Virtue, then, should presumably do the same: it will set up the end, and the virtuous will find the way to it. But Aristotle's words (90a15–28) are unusually opaque and the Greek unusually tortuous (at least for this treatise). Scholars are thus inclined to mark the text as corrupt and to look for emendations,[1] but the Greek can be construed as it stands if we add a couple of parentheses (as in the translation). The construal yields the following propositions: (1) virtue has its mark on the end, which it has to set up correctly; (2) no one else but each individual will provide the sources for the end or find what he must make and set up in view of it; (3) it is reasonable that virtue set up the end in matters where the principle of the best is to be found; (4) nothing is better than virtue because (a) other things are for its sake, and (b) the principle is with it or in its presence (in the sense presumably of being it); (5) the end is like a principle and each thing is for the sake of it, but (6) in such a way that virtue, because it is the best cause, aims at the end and not at what is for the end.

There is considerable repetition here as well as obscurity, but the following may be said to emerge.[2] Virtue is both the end and sets up the end, for it is the best principle and the end that it sets up is the best principle: (1), (3), (4), (5). Each individual both finds the means and sets up the end: (2). Virtue aims at the end and not what is for the end: (1) and (6). Virtue, we may therefore conclude, is self-justifying or is its own end and this end is best. We individuals who behave virtuously do so because we set up this end as our end and find out the way to get there. Hence the end must in some sense be something that we choose, for we set up virtue as end for ourselves.

There are then two cases of setting up going on: the setting up of the end, which is done by virtue, and the setting up of virtue, which is done by us. The choosing of what is for the end is also done by us but not done by virtue. The example of house building seems to suggest the same. The science of house building sets up the end, the thing to be built, but the house builder has to set up house building as his aim (he has to decide to build rather than stay in bed, say, or to build a house rather than a temple). The builder also has to choose the means to build it. But now a problem arises: by what power or faculty does the builder choose the means? By the science of building, presumably, for that tells him how to build what he intends to build. So should not the same be true of virtue, that it both sets up the end and is also that whereby the virtuous choose the means? There is another problem too. For if virtue sets up the end, but it is we who set up virtue as our end, by what power or faculty do we set up virtue as our end? The same problem arises about the

builder: by what power or faculty does he decide to build rather than stay in bed or build a house rather than a temple? The answer would seem, in his case, to be whatever or whoever has control of him, himself or his employer. So should we say the same about the virtuous, that whether they exercise virtue and exercise it in matters of courage, say, rather than temperance, is determined by who has control of them? If so, the answer would seem to be, at least for Aristotle's present audience, that the city has this control (the city decides, for instance, to educate the young in courage and, by going to war, when they are to exercise it). Aristotle's argument is thus pointing beyond ethics to politics, or beyond the part of politics that deals with virtue to the part of politics that deals with who should rule. But he says nothing about rule in this treatise.[3] His audience will anyway regard the question as settled because, as decent citizens, they will regard it as settled in favor of the rulers in their city (who will, in most cases, include themselves). Aristotle does nothing here to disturb that conviction. As for the problem by what power or faculty the virtuous choose the means to virtue, no answer is given, but one is obscurely hinted at in the next chapter.

Notes

1. See the long discussion in Dirlmeier (1958: 261–68).
2. Dirlmeier's comments (1958: 266) about how puzzling this passage is, especially in its relation to what is said in the other *Ethics*, are excellent, though they should be pressed rather differently.
3. The question does implicitly rise again in the discussion of pleasure, at 2.7.1206b7–29, where Aristotle opines that the passions rather than reason are the beginning of virtue, for this answer points to the need for education and coercive laws so that the passions follow virtue and not vice. This topic is the theme of *NE* 10.9 and points to legislation and the *Politics*. Donini (1965: 201–207) does not allow that it could be implicit in *GE*.

Chapter 19

The End

Virtue has its eye on the end, which is the beautiful (90a28, as decent citizens will agree) but, Aristotle now adds (90a29–30), it also deals with the means or sources of virtue. He says nothing further in explanation save that the means cannot be what virtue wholly is because, as is clear from the example of drawing, the end has to be a beautiful one and virtue's job is that. We can say, then, that setting up the beautiful as end wholly belongs to virtue, but what belongs to virtue is not wholly setting up the end. Aristotle next raises an objection (90a34) that what he is now saying conflicts with something he said earlier. For earlier (4.1184b31–35) he said that what is best is acting **1190a28–b8**

virtuously and not merely being virtuous, but now he is saying that virtue's job is to set up the beautiful and not to deal with actually getting it. So it looks as if he is not giving to virtue, which sets up the best, what he said before was best, namely activity, and so it looks as if he is now saying that the best is not activity after all. Aristotle answers that he is not contradicting himself but saying the same thing again. He adds a reason (90b1–6), but it is hard to see how the reason explains the answer.[1] It is to the effect that we have to judge others by their actions because we cannot see their state of judgment or their choice apart from what they do, though if we could, we would be able to hold someone virtuous quite apart from his doing anything. But how does this fact answer the objection? It seems to concede it by saying that virtue is best even without activity. All it adds is that those looking on from outside cannot see the virtue without seeing the action. Further, this answer seems to create another conflict with something said earlier about choice. Choice was defined as a sort of appetite (a deliberative appetite with thought, 17.1189a31–32), and an appetite where no action follows is hardly describable as an appetite (it is a bare velleity, as we might say). Virtue could exist, to be sure, without action (for a virtuous man asleep is still virtuous), but choice understood as appetite can hardly so exist, and here Aristotle is purporting to answer the original objection about virtue by appealing to choice.

We seem compelled to suppose that Aristotle is foxing. He is not saying plainly what he thinks. He is, nevertheless, drawing attention to the fact by the peculiarity of his remarks. For while here is the only place in the treatise where he raises an objection that he is contradicting himself, it is not the most obvious place where he does contradict himself. He notoriously contradicts himself over prudence, saying to begin with that it is not praiseworthy and later that it is (5.1185b9–11; 34.1197a17–18). This contradiction over prudence is manifest on the surface, while the contradiction he draws attention to here is not and would, had he avoided drawing attention to it, probably have passed his audience by. It requires a certain amount of extra reasoning to be made evident, which is not the case with the one about prudence. That Aristotle draws attention to this other contradiction should nevertheless alert his audience, or some of them, to the possibility of contradictions and therefore to the contradiction about prudence when it comes up later. But then the fact that he says nothing about that contradiction, while saying much about a less obvious one here, should further alert them to wonder what is going on. If they put the two contradictions together, they will discover that it is prudence, together with the fact that, after all, prudence must be something praiseworthy, which explains what Aristotle is up to. For while he says several times that virtue sets up the end, and while he has just said, though obscurely, that virtue must in some way deal with the means, he does not say that it is not the *same* virtue that does both. He does say it, and quite openly, in his other *Ethics,* where he says that this virtue (the one that

deals with means) is prudence and that prudence is very much praiseworthy (5/6.5, 7–13). Here he studiously avoids saying the same while nevertheless hinting at it (he mentions sense of judgment, *gnōmē*, as also being hidden like choice, and *gnōmē* or its cognate *eugnōmosunē* is associated later with prudence, 2.2).[2] Prudence is the virtue that is manifest in choice; prudence is what, through choice, brings moral virtue into visible exercise; and prudence is what, through visible exercise, realizes the beautiful that virtue aims at and in the actual doing of which, and not in the mere having of virtue, the best lies.

Aristotle is eventually forced to say these things, or some of them, but not before he has done more to prepare his audience to accept them and not be disturbed by the fact that a certain kind of practical intelligence or cleverness,[3] if not better than moral virtue, is on a par with it and indispensable for the exercise that makes it actually best. This preparation consists in extended descriptions and explanations of the particular virtues, and these significantly come next.

Notes

1. Dirlmeier's remarks (1958: 268) are again excellent, though again they should be pressed rather differently.
2. Confirmation comes from a passage in *EE* (2.11.1227b38–8a18), parallel to the one here in *GE*, which shows that Aristotle could make the point clearly if he wanted to; see Dirlmeier (1962: 306).
3. The indifference and even prejudice toward intellectual skill or expertise among decent citizens and gentlemen were discussed in the Introduction. That Socrates fell afoul of anti-Sophist hostility was in part because of his extreme intellectualism (as is shown by the discussion with Anytus in Plato's *Meno* 90–95), and Aristotle goes to some length in this treatise to distance himself as far as possible and often from Socrates. The reason he alleges is that the Socratic knowledge thesis is wrong. The reason is correct but can hardly be Aristotle's only motivating factor. It does not explain why Socrates is attacked so much and without nuance here, while he is attacked so little and with nuance in the other *Ethics.*

Chapter 20

The Science in Particular
The Subject Matter in Particular: The Several Virtues
Courage

The moral virtues are dealt with in the following order: courage, temperance, **1190b9–91a36**
mildness, generosity, magnanimity, magnificence, righteous indignation, dignity, shame, wit, friendliness, truthfulness, and justice.[1] No reason for

this order is given, though one suggestion, not compelling perhaps but worth noting, is that it follows the order of importance of virtues for the citizen in the city.[2] Aristotle himself uses the first three virtues listed (courage, temperance, mildness) to emphasize that virtue has to be focused on the beautiful and that it is a mean between extremes. The remaining virtues, while also illustrating the same two points, make clear as they progress that there is need of thought and calculation in keeping to the mean.

That courage must be motivated by the beautiful is shown through a list of instances of courage, in which something other than beauty is the motive and which cannot, therefore, count as courage (though they may seem to). In these instances, if that other motive is removed, though the beautiful remains, the courage does not remain. So Hector fought out of shame even though the beauty of defending his native city should have been enough. People like Hector, who are not brave though they do brave things, are brave for some passion or other, such as love or enthusiasm or shame, or for some calculation or other, such as knowledge (or ignorance) of the dangers or expectation of good. The brave man must be one who runs risks because of reason for the sake of the beautiful and who is fearless, not by lacking fear, but by not being moved by it against the beautiful (1191a22–30). Obvious cases will be fears and risks of death in battle but, apart from mentioning soldiers and Hector, who are merely experienced or merely ashamed and therefore not brave, Aristotle says nothing about death in battle. The *EE* is similar and only in *NE* (3.6.1115a24–35) is death in battle mentioned as what the brave man is most fearless about. *NE* has this focus because, perhaps, it is directed to legislators whose concern is with the safety of the city and with citizens fighting bravely for the city in battle. If *EE* lacks the same focus, it is because, perhaps, it is aimed at philosophers, who qua philosophers are more likely, after the fashion of Socrates (mentioned by name, though not for his famous death, in the discussion of courage in all three *Ethics*), to face death in a court room than in battle. *GE* lacks the focus, even though it is directed to decent citizens (who have the same concern as the legislator), perhaps because Aristotle can assume that decent citizens will consider death in battle as something that bravery involves. He cannot assume that they will consider Socrates facing death in the courtroom to be bravery. So by speaking as if bravery is facing death simply, as well as mentioning Socrates by name, he is conceivably leaving space for the thought that bravery in facing death elsewhere, provided it is for the sake of the beautiful, is also truly bravery.

Notes

1. The order is more similar to that in *EE* than in *NE*, Dirlmeier (1958: 270–72).
2. The opinion, perhaps, of John Case, if we go by his remarks at the beginning of his commentary on chapters 20, 21, 22.

Chapter 21

Temperance

Courage was used to stress the beautiful. Temperance is used to stress the mean. The end of the chapter nevertheless contains remarks about the beautiful where a contrast with animals is drawn (91b18): if animals can and sometimes do observe a mean in their pleasures, they are not called temperate because they do not have reason whereby to commend and choose the beautiful. That animals lack the sense of the beautiful because they lack reason is controversial (the prevailing modern view is that beauty is recognized by an aesthetic sense and not by reason). But Aristotle's remarks contain an implicit argument: if virtue is about the beautiful, and if the animals do not have virtue or the beautiful, then whatever it is that divides animals from men must also be what denies them beauty and virtue; but reason divides animals from men; therefore the absence of reason is what denies animals, and its presence what gives us, virtue and the beautiful. Hence virtue and the beautiful must be a matter of reason. **1191a37–b22**

Chapter 22

Mildness

The argument Aristotle gives in this chapter that virtues are means between opposed vices is peculiar because it appears to repeat itself:[1] if (1) the best is in a mean and (2) virtue is the best habit, and (3) the middle is best, (4) virtue would be the middle. But the consequent (4) would seem to follow from (1) and (2) alone, or from (2) and (3) alone, so that either (1) or (3) is unnecessary.[2] One way to explain the puzzle is to say that, since what we are given in (1) and (2) together is a conditional statement, we need, in order to infer the conclusion, an assertion of the antecedent. So we could read (3), not as part of the antecedent, but as the assertion of it or the assertion of the main part of it, that the mean or middle is best. Alternatively we could read the argument as resting on a distinction between being in a mean and being the middle.[3] Propositions (1) and (3) could then be taken together to entail that the best is not just somewhere in a mean but is the middle in it. For to say that something is *in* a mean (as [1] says) is not yet to say it *is* a mean (as Aristotle wants to say the virtues are), since perhaps even something that was toward an extreme could be somewhere in the mean if there was another thing further to the extreme. But this something would not be in the mean in the sense of being **1191b23–b38**

the best in it. An angry man who was toward the extreme in anger could be less angry than someone else and so be better than that someone else and yet he would not thereby be best or have the virtue of mildness. To be best is to be in the mean in such a way that one is neither too far one way nor too far the other, which is to say, to be in the middle (though the middle is not the *mathematical* middle but the *moral* middle, the middle that is not one vice or the other even if, quantitatively, it is closer to one vice than the other). Taken in this way, the argument first proves, from (1) and (3), that the best is the (moral) middle in the mean, and then, with (2) added, that virtue is this middle, and hence virtue turns out to *be* a mean and not just to be *in* a mean.

Notes

1. Elorduy notices this peculiarity (1939: 21); Brink misses it (1933: 10).
2. Hence, as Dirlmeier notes (1958: 288) some scholars want to emend the text and delete (3).
3. The view suggested by Dirlmeier (1958: 289)

Chapter 23

Liberality

What Liberality Is

1191b39–92a8 The liberal man is said to be in the middle because he spends on what he should and as much as he should and when he should, which is all very well but tells us nothing about what we should spend money on and how much and when. Aristotle does turn to this question later (in his discussion of prudence in chapter 34), but his silence here is perhaps indicative of his wishing simply to emphasize for his audience that, if the mean requires determination, then it requires a special use of reason, and his not wishing, or not yet, to broach the question of how this use of reason works. The unspoken implication is that this use of reason, since it cannot be extrinsic to virtue, must be part of virtue or itself virtue.

Chapter 24

What Liberality Is Not

1192a15–20 That miserliness has many forms, while liberality has one, is perhaps what prompts the question whether it belongs to liberality also to acquire money

or only to spend it. Misers can be misers not only by not spending when and where they should but also by gaining when and where they should not. So is there a right way to get, as well as a right way to spend, and if so is it part of liberality? Aristotle says it is not, which conflicts with what he says in the other *Ethics*, where he says it is.[1]

One possible reason, worth at least considering, is that an audience of decent citizens or at least gentlemen is likely to look down on the business of making money. They will pride themselves more on their public spiritedness in spending money for the benefit of friends and the city. But Aristotle justifies his answer with an appeal to courage, which does not make its tools but receives them from elsewhere and then uses them rightly. Liberality does the same. There are a number of oddities here. First, the analogy is not complete, for weapons, even if they are the tools of courage when it comes to battle, are not the object of courage or what courage is about, which, as Aristotle said earlier, is fear and daring in the face of death. Liberality, he has just said here, is about the passions that deal with money, so money is either the object of liberality or is the object of its object, as death is the object of the object of courage, namely of fear and daring. So in neither case is money the tool of liberality as weapons are the tool of courage. Second, Aristotle says that what is true of courage is true also of temperance and the other virtues. But what is the tool, as opposed to the object, of temperance or mildness? Or what tools do pleasure and anger use? No doubt the pleasures of taste need food and drink, but are food and drink tools as opposed, say, to the locus of the pleasure? And are hard words or hard fists the tools of anger or the acts in which anger is expressed? The answers are not clear. Third, when Aristotle says that it does not belong to courage to make weapons but belongs instead to something else, the Greek for "something else" is the feminine adjective *allēs* (92a18) for which we have to supply a feminine noun, and the only such noun in the context is "virtue" (*aretēs*, in 92a16). Hence a possible English translation would be that making weapons "belongs to another virtue." Which virtue? Perhaps the crafts, which are intellectual virtues (the teaching of the other *Ethics* but not of this one), or perhaps a moral virtue specially involved with crafts or with making money.

These oddities have no ready explanation and suggest that Aristotle is not speaking according to what he thinks. Is he then speaking according to what his audience will like? He knows he must later speak against his audience's likes in the important matter of praising the virtue of reason that he calls prudence. Does he therefore decide not to speak against their likes, but rather to go out of his way to speak according to their likes, in the unimportant matter (unimportant here anyway) of liberality and money making?

Notes

1. *EE* 3.4.1231b28 and *NE* 4.1.1119b25–26, discussion in Dirlmeier (1958: 292).

Chapter 25

Magnanimity

1192a21–36 A puzzle in this chapter is that Aristotle says magnanimity is "more" (92a24) about honor given by the virtuous than by the many. But if the magnanimous man cares about honor from the virtuous and not from the many, why should he care "more" about this honor rather than care about it wholly and only?[1] A possible answer relates to the opening remark (92a22) that magnanimity concerns both honor and dishonor. Aristotle's meaning may be that the magnanimous man cares more about receiving honor from the virtuous than about avoiding dishonor from the many. The great whom the many honor are not necessarily the great in virtue but the great in power or riches or pleasures. Those who are great in virtue the many may even hate because these despise what the many love and even rebuke them for it. But the honor that the virtuous give, and that the magnanimous man wants, is the honor due to virtue. He does not care about the dishonor that the many may bestow on him instead. Or rather, he would prefer to have the honor of the few and virtuous than to avoid the dishonor of the many and vulgar (for perhaps he would also prefer the many to honor him if that were possible, for thus they would be honoring the virtue that deserves to be honored rather than the external trappings that, in the absence of virtue, do not). Aristotle now adds that the honor that the magnanimous man will be about is only the best honor. If the magnanimous man cares only about this honor, he will not care about other honors, nor care if he does not receive these other honors or even receives the opposite dishonors.

The boastful, by contrast, are those who think they deserve honor when they do not (92a29), and are presumably those above all who crave and get the honor that the crowd bestows on the rich and famous and powerful just because they are rich and famous and powerful. The small-souled man, who goes to the opposite extreme, is perhaps he who is afraid of the scorn of the many and does not want to receive any attention, even from the virtuous, so that he also not receive any attention of the negative sort from the many.

Notes

1. A puzzle that leads some scholars to want to emend the text; discussion in Dirlmeier (1958: 294), whose suggestions are followed here.

Chapter 26

Magnificence

Magnificence is about great expenditures but Aristotle adds that there are other things or behaviors said to be magnificent (as a magnificent gait, 92b13–17). The existence of other kinds of magnificence does not show that magnificence in expenditures is not a virtue deserving of note. Perhaps it shows that the other kinds are splendid in their own though different way. Is there a suggestion here that the number and kinds of virtues or virtuous behaviors need not be limited to those standardly listed (whether in this or the other *Ethics*) but may have a certain indefiniteness of extension, depending on times and persons and places? Virtues that are important with a view to the analysis of political life (which is a view that all three *Ethics* adopt in their different ways) need not perhaps be important, or as important, with a view to the analysis of some politically transcendent life (as, say, in the case of heroic virtue, 2.5.1200b11–13). **1192a37–b17**

Chapters 27 to 32

Indignation, Dignity, Shame, Wit, Friendliness, Truth

The qualities of character discussed in chapters 27–32 are not all listed as virtues in the other *Ethics*.[1] They are not said to be virtues here either, though neither are they said not to be. Is making the distinction explicit, as in the other *Ethics*, of philosophical (or legislative) rather than political significance? About righteous indignation all that is said is that it is a certain pain and nothing is added about it not therefore being strictly a virtue (though the "perhaps" in the description of the righteously indignant man, 92b24, may indicate a certain reservation by Aristotle about the strict accuracy of what he is saying). Whether righteous indignation is a virtue or a feeling, it is of undoubted importance in the city, for the city, if it is to be reliably virtuous, needs to be sensitive to evils, and it is an evil that those prosper who do not deserve to and that those suffer who do not deserve to. **1192b18–93a38**

The shamed shy man, who is defective by having too much shame, is said hardly to be active at all (93a4–5), while the shameless man, who is excessive by having too little shame, is always speaking and doing (93a2–4). The difference is important because the city needs its citizens not to be ashamed to speak and act before others when necessary. Conversely it does not need citizens who are always pushing themselves forward and never stand aside

for those better than themselves. Such judgment about when to speak and when not to speak must be an integral part of the virtue.

As for wit (93a11–29), to be endowed with reason is to be endowed with the ability to laugh, and laughter adds much to the enjoyment of company. So it will be a defect in the city, and an impediment to its friendly converse with itself, if those in it can neither give witticisms nor take them.[2]

As for the friendliness, Aristotle presumably means that the friendly man, while he congratulates others where they deserve, will also keep a discrete silence where they do not. For if the friendly man only says what is fitting and is the case (93a24–27), he must be keeping silent about what is not fitting and is not the case. Doubtless there is a place and time to speak of others' faults, but friendliness is the virtue that makes converse agreeable by pleasing compliments and not the one that exposes faults by disagreeable, if necessary, rebuke. The virtue of giving rebukes perhaps belongs to mildness.

Aristotle does not mention the famous self-deprecation (or irony) of Socrates or his reputation for "hiding his knowledge" (93a32–33). Perhaps Socrates' self-deprecation, since his claims not to know were literally true even if not true in the way his interlocutors typically assumed, was, even in Aristotle's eyes, more apparent than real, or more a case of teaching about knowledge than a denial of knowledge.

The final comment (93a36), that it is matter for another discussion whether these are virtues or not, comes as a double surprise.[3] If they are not virtues, what are they doing in a treatise about virtue, and which are the doubtful virtues (Aristotle does not say)? The standard answer comes from the other *Ethics* (*EE* 3.7, *NE* 4.9): the sort of qualities listed in chapters 27–32 are not strictly virtues because they are more like passions than habits of choice. If Aristotle intends to say the same here, he would leave his citizen audience rather puzzled, and the puzzlement, if it is deflected by the closing remark that those who live in accord with these qualities are praised (93a37–38), is conversely increased by the puzzle whether, if something is a mean and praised, it can fail to be a virtue (for were not means shown to be virtues and virtues means by the fact of praise)? Moreover, why does not Aristotle say which virtues are the doubtful ones if only some are and not all? Or could all the virtues fail to be virtues, or fail to be virtues for those, if there are any, who can and do live beyond the city? We seem forced again to suppose that Aristotle is not saying all he really thinks, or that, if he is not engaging in self-deprecation, he is certainly being reticent. Those who would want him to be more explicit are really wanting the teaching that is proper to the school.

Notes

1. *EE* says none of the qualities listed here in chapter 27–32 are virtues but rather means of passion; *NE* says only shame is not a virtue; see Dirlmeier (1958: 298–302), Plebe (1961: 146–50).

2. Masellis (1954: 180) thinks this virtue and the next two and mildness, along with the way they are described, reflect the concerns and opinions of the refined courtier or the humanist (*raffinato uomo di corte, umanista*) or, as we might say, of the gentleman.
3. Dirlmeier (1958: 299–302), Fahnenschmidt (1968: 27).

Chapter 33

Justice
The Nature of Justice
What Justice Is

Aristotle divides his treatment of justice into three: what justice is, what it is in, and what sorts of things it is about (93a39–b1). To judge by the way he repeats these phrasings in what follows, he deals with each in the same order. **1193a39–b11**

The what of justice is not straightforward because there are two kinds of justice. A first kind is where justice is simply what the law commands, and the law commands that one do the works of the several virtues. The just man, then, is he who acts according to all the virtues and justice is identical with complete virtue (93b6–11). But does law command the doing of all the virtues; or does it command, if not all the works of virtue, then at least some works of all virtues?[1] Its laws about driving, say, command that one exercise temperance and mildness when in a car, for otherwise one will not be able to follow the rules of the road. Its laws about serving in the army command the exercise of courage, for one could not do what a soldier should do if one lacks courage. Fully to follow the law requires, on this view, the exercise of all the virtues, if not all the exercises of all the virtues (for some exercises may go beyond what the law requires, as when one commends people for going beyond the call of duty). But since any exercise of a virtue requires the possession of that virtue, obedience to the law will require possession of all the virtues, and hence the justice that is obedience to law will include all the virtues. Alternatively, one could take Aristotle's meaning to be that the law commands the full performance of all the virtues and understand him to be speaking according to the opinions of the citizen audience he is addressing, who might well be of the opinion that the law should command the full performance of virtue, even if actual law failed to do so.

The first kind of justice has the feature that the acts one performs in fulfilling it need not involve others. These acts, even if done in obedience to law, need only be self-regarding. One's exercising temperance in food and drink need have, in the actual case, no reference beyond one's moral and physical health; and the exercising of courage in the face of the enemy need likewise have no reference beyond holding firm in one's position. They could have **1193b11–19**

such further reference and involve others, and perhaps typically would, but because of their circumstances and not because of themselves. If one's fellow soldiers were dead, for instance, one should still be courageous in facing the enemy, both for its own sake and because it is part of obedience to law. Justice according to law, then, could exist and be fulfilled by oneself with oneself.[2] There is, however, a justice that essentially involves others and can only exist and be fulfilled with reference to the others to which it is a relation. This other justice, says Aristotle, is what he intends to discuss in this chapter (93b18–19).

One might wonder why, in the other *Ethics* (4/5.1–2.1129a26–30b5), Aristotle distinguishes the two kinds of justice, not because the first can be confined to oneself while the second must be referred to others, but because, while both are referred to others, the first is so as general virtue (it refers all the virtues to the good of the larger community) and the second as a particular virtue (it deals with fairness in mutual exchanges and contracts). But, to begin with, there is presumably a difference between an act involving a reference to another in its idea, and an act, or even the same act, directly involving another in its performance. So acts of temperance or courage of the sort just mentioned, while they involve a reference to other citizens as something commanded by the law, need not involve any other citizens when concretely carried out. The other *Ethics* seem to focus on the first point and *GE* on the second. Why, then, is there such difference of focus? A suggestion is to look at difference of audience. A citizen audience outside the school has no need to have the justice that is obedience to law elaborated or explained or even much praised. The fact of it and the importance of it are plain, and so, once it is shown to be simply the exercise, in obedience to law, of all the virtues, everything that needs to be known about it has already been explained in the discussion of the virtues. But the other *Ethics* are addressed to a philosophic audience within the school, and philosophers, both because they are philosophers and because philosophy has a way of transcending the needs and joys of the city, will want to understand that which for the citizen can rest as a given, and will want to have proved to them, and not merely assumed by them, that obedience to law in the city is virtuous. In this treatise all that is said about the justice that is obedience to law is that it is obedience to law, but in the other *Ethics*, the fact that it is obedience to law is made to carry no persuasive force at all.[3] What persuades is that, as obedience to law, it is the performance of virtue for others, and performance of virtue for others is harder and more splendid and more beauteous ("finer than morning or evening star" 1129b29–30), and so more desirable, even for philosophers, than the performance of virtue simply.

1193b19–32 The other kind of justice, that does essentially involve a relation to others, is the equal, which is clearly the "what" of justice. The unjust man wrongs by taking more of the good and less of the bad and the man whom he wrongs is

wronged by having the opposite, so justice will be the equal that brings the too much and the too little into the mean between them.

What Justice Is In

The "what in" of justice is the persons and the things in which there is equality, which, since it involves at least four terms (two persons and two shares), must be the equality of proportion: as A is to B so C is to D. The "what in" of justice is, therefore, persons and things as equalized through this proportion. Aristotle finds an example in Plato's *Republic* (369d-371e). Plato does not use the word proportion, but the description he gives indicates the thing: the farmer exchanging what he has with the builder, the builder with the farmer, and likewise with the cobbler and weaver and so on. The *Republic* does not give a formal statement of the four-term proportion, but then Aristotle himself does not say how the abstract proportion is to be determined in concrete cases (how much grain equals one house so that farmer and builder can exchange and keep the proportion). All he speaks of is price in terms of current coin and of people making exchanges by giving for each thing its price in coin (as does also the *Republic*). Money de facto decides for all of us the varying values of things (though price would seem to be ultimately a reflection of need or demand).[4] **1193b32–94a28**

In describing the virtue of justice, as opposed to the just thing (the equality of proportion in persons and things in common exchanges), Aristotle says it is the habit that has an impulse, along with choice, for dealing with these things in this way (94a26–28). This description is interesting in mentioning impulse and choice as well as habit. An impulse for observing the proportion of justice is the sort of thing that gentlemen citizens would understand and approve, since it is a feature of a citizen and a gentleman to be just, as it were, by inclination of good breeding. It would seem to be only the vulgar utilitarian, or the slave, who is just by calculation. But if justice is a proportion, some sort of calculating cannot be avoided—not, to be sure, about whether to be just but about what the just is. Aristotle indicates the fact by the mention of deliberate choice, for such choice cannot be done by habit or impulse, however good the impulse.

The introduction of the Pythagorean idea of reciprocity, if unanticipated, does naturally follow on. The idea of reciprocity has a natural affinity to the proportional justice of people exchanging in the marketplace, for exchange is a kind of getting back one's own (it is a matter of getting back equal to what one gave), whether the exchange is of goods or of crime and punishment. The Pythagorean way of stating the relation is too simple in focusing on the deed alone and not also on the person (and presumably other things too), but it is right in understanding justice as some sort of reciprocation. **1194a28–b3**

The proportion Aristotle has discussed is an instance of what, in the other *Ethics*, is called corrective justice or commutative justice (the justice

of ensuring that the parties to an exchange have equal after the exchange as before). He says nothing about the other kind of particular justice, distributive justice, or the justice of distributing the community's goods (political office in particular) to those who deserve them (*Ethics* 4/5.2.1130b30–31a1, 4.1131b25–32a2). This treatise is directed to citizens interested in acting well in the political life that actually exists. But such life will already have settled, de facto, the question of distributive justice, since there can be no political life if the distribution of offices has not been carried out. To raise the question of distributive justice is to raise the question, not of how to act well in politics, but of whether the politics in place is just, which is, first, a different question and can, second, be a disturbing one. Aristotle is not averse to asking disturbing questions, but for appropriate audiences (he raises this particular disturbing question in the other *Ethics* and the *Politics*).[5]

What Sort of Thing Justice Is About

1194b3–28 The "about what" of justice refers to whether justice, which is a relation to another, is about relations to all others or only to some. There are relations between masters and slaves and fathers and sons, and there is, by the same token, a just that exists in this relation. Aristotle dismisses justice in these cases as equivocal with the political just. The political just exists in equality, which he then explains means the equality of the citizens in all being alike in their nature as citizens (even if they differ in other respects, 94b5–10). This perspective on citizenship is a citizen one. Citizens consider themselves equals (or if they do not, it is usually because they think some are citizens who should not be). The philosopher or legislator has a more nuanced view according to which not all citizens need be equal, even in political rights, to be citizens (*Politics* 3.11).

Such nuanced inequalities are slight in comparison with the large inequalities between master and slave and father and son and body and limbs (94b10–14). No citizen, qua citizen, exists in dependence on another citizen such that the other citizen determines how he should live and what he should do. The way in which a grown son separates from his father and lives his own life in his own household witnesses to the inequality and dependence before the separation and independence and equality afterward (94b15–17). Political justice (as opposed to domestic justice) requires equality and likeness.

1194b28–39 If we can say, without too much controversy, that justice is equality in persons and things as realized through proportion (the "what" and the "in what" of justice), the same does not seem to be true when it comes to which things and which persons (the "about what" of justice), since here the variations from community to community are many. This problem is typically debated, in Aristotle's day and ours, under the heading of the just by nature and the just by law or convention, and is so debated in a well-known book

that Aristotle has just referred to, Plato's *Republic*. This debate can also raise disturbing questions, for if what is by law is not the same as what is by nature, why abide by the law? Aristotle wholly avoids the question. He baldly asserts that both kinds of just exist, the just by law and the just by nature, and then forestalls any thought of there being a tension between the two by making the just by nature to be as variable as the just by law, or in effect by saying that the just by law is one or other variation of the just by nature (94b30–33).

Things by nature can change, as he illustrates (here and in the other *Ethics*) with an example from the hands (94b33–39). The left and right hands are naturally different and are naturally fitted to do different things, but it is possible, by repeated practice, to make them do the same things and to become ambidextrous. This point is not refuted by the existence of naturally left-handed people. For the same natural difference between the hands appears in them too, only the other way round, and it is their left hand rather than their right hand that is naturally more skilled. Indeed, we could perhaps make Aristotle's point by saying that people, whether right-handed or left-handed, naturally have one hand more dexterous than the other. Skill naturally goes with one hand, and this natural differentiation remains the natural differentiation, even if practice can bring the other hand up to the skill of the first. The reason, Aristotle adds, is that the left and right hands are differentiated as left and right for the most part and for the longer time, or, in other words, that most people have one hand more dexterous than the other and can only become ambidextrous after much practice (few people are ambidextrous from the start, 94b37–39). If so, then one hand being more dexterous than the other is by nature, for the ambidexterity, while it alters the exercise, does not alter the disposition (most people are not ambidextrous and those who are were not always so).

The same applies to justice as to hands, that the changes we make in natu- **1195a1–8**
rally just things do not mean that there is no just by nature, for here as there what is for the most part is by nature (95a1–5). These remarks of Aristotle's are less cryptic than they may seem. He is not talking now of what justice is (equality), nor of what justice is in (persons and things related by proportion), but of what it is about (what sort of persons and things). So the naturally just things must be the sort of persons and things that most people for the most part realize equality of proportion in, or what things they share with which people. Now clearly there can be and is here plenty of variation, for some people share few things (they live mainly in their own households and only come together for war or hunting), others all or most things (as in Plato's *Republic* where wives and children are shared too), and others something in between (as political deliberation and decision but not women or children or property). Some of these variations are rare (as Plato's) and some for the most part (as those in between). The latter will be the natural ones and their laws natural too.

In seeming proof that what holds for the most part is just by nature, Aristotle adds that what we set down and accept as law "is both now just and we call it just by law" (95a4–5). His meaning would seem to be that for the most part and by nature what we set down as law is and is called just, or, equivalently, that it is naturally just that we all for the most part create for ourselves the legally just. Such remarks are compatible with his statement that some of the things we set down by law are naturally just and some are changed by our use, and compatible too with his statement that what holds for the most part is naturally just. For these statements say that it is natural for us to lay down laws and merely add that those laws that hold for the most part are the ones by nature. Therefore, as he also says, the ones by nature are a better just (95a5–6) because (presumably) they are in line with what holds for the most part. But it does not follow that the other ones, which are not by nature, are thereby not just. All that follows is that they are not the norm but require some extra effort or time to establish (as it requires extra time and effort to become ambidextrous), and that therefore the natural ones are better (because they are easily and more effectively reached and are equally good—as is also true of not bothering to become ambidextrous).

The distinction that is being drawn between what is by nature and what is by law (because it concerns the "about what" of justice and not the "what" or the "in what") is not the distinction between the just and the unjust. It is the distinction between the norm (what holds for the most part) and the unusual. The distinction between the just and the unjust is what Aristotle explained earlier, namely the distinction between what accords with proportional equality and what does not. But the things and the persons that this equal is realized in are no longer a question of the just and the unjust but of the norm and the unusual.

Confirmation comes from the concluding remark that the just we are investigating is political, and that the political (just) is by law not nature (95a6–7). Aristotle's citizen audience wants to be virtuous in the political life that currently exists. They are concerned about realizing the proportionally equal in the persons and things that are currently sharers and shared in the community and that are de facto the political just. Whether this political just is also the just by nature (whether it holds for the most part) is not relevant to being just in the here and now. So it is not relevant to anything Aristotle needs to talk about here and now. Enough for him to have pointed out that there is a just by nature and that it allows for variations. For thus he has shown that no questions of the naturally just (such as sophists love to throw out) can really be a problem. The naturally just is already the politically just (most people most of the time share the things that it is natural to share), and the politically just, even if it happens not to be the naturally just, is just and not unjust. That it could perhaps be better (as Aristotle suggests by saying that

what is by nature is better, 95a6) only means that it could perhaps be more in line with what holds for the most part. But that is all. There is no need to be concerned further.

Or there is no need for Aristotle's intended audience to be concerned further. For the larger question of whether it would be better for other things or other people to be part of the sharing, and if so how, does not fall within his audience's purview. It falls rather within the purview of legislators concerned with questions of constitutional law. That Aristotle nevertheless throws out the possibility of a better suggests perhaps that he hopes there may be some potential legislators in his audience who will, whether now or later, want to take up this larger question. For Aristotle does deal with it in his other *Ethics* and in the *Politics*.

The Doing of Justice
Doing Wrong

Aristotle turns from what justice or the just is to the actual doing of the just or unjust thing. One might wonder why, for he did not do the like in the case of the other virtues. However there is an important difference between justice and the other virtues that Aristotle now introduces. The other virtues, as temperance and mildness, are about a mean in the passions and the corresponding actions, and are not determinable independently of the agent and his acting. The mean of temperance, for instance, depends on who one is and how and when one is acting, and it will fall differently for someone at a feast, who is much disposed to the pleasures of food and drink, than for someone not at a feast, who is not so disposed. The just, however, is the mean of proportional equality in things and persons and is determined independently of passions and particular occasions. It is determined, as Aristotle here says (95a9–13), by law, and what is determined by law is determined the same way for everyone. If the law lays down embezzlement as contrary to the equality of justice, it lays it down as unjust for everyone everywhere in the community. The just thing, then, is what the law has determined. The just deed, however, is when someone actually does this independently determined thing. **1195a8–b4**

But if the just thing is determinable independently of the person who does it, the possibility arises of doing the just and unjust thing involuntarily or without choosing to. The temperate thing, by contrast, cannot be done involuntarily. If one does it involuntarily, it is not an engagement of one's passions and so not temperate or the reverse (it is a drinking or an eating too much, say, but not a voluntary giving way to or resisting of one's passion to eat or drink too much). Justice is different, for since the just thing is determined by law without reference to anything in the soul of the doer, it must be possible to do it or its opposite without deliberately choosing to. So the question arises whether he who does the just or unjust thing involuntarily is just or not (95a14).

One does the just or unjust thing voluntarily when one does it knowingly, that is, when one knows the whom and the with what and the why (95a15–20). If one does not know these things then, while in contrast to temperance and the other virtues one can do the unjust thing, one is not thereby unjust. One is merely unfortunate. So if one kills one's father because one is ignorant of who he is and thinks he is an enemy instead (as Oedipus is said to have done), one does something wrong (killing one's father is an injustice and is so defined by law), but one does not commit a wrong, that is, one does not wrong one's father (nor, accordingly, does one break the law). One is, nevertheless, unfortunate (95a20–22). After all an unjust thing has been done, the killing of one's father, but no one has, strictly speaking, committed an injustice, and so no one is unjust. It is as if one's hand, which did the deed, was under someone else's control. Hence one is unfortunate, because one's own body was instrument of one's father's death, but one is not unjust, because one was not in control of the instrument (at least qua instrument of one's father's death). One's body is polluted, as it were, but not one's soul (which is where the poignancy of the Oedipus drama lies).

The reason ignorance can have this effect is because ignorance makes the action involuntary, and where action is involuntary no vice, or virtue, can be in play, and hence no injustice either. Vice can only be in play where the ignorance, if it exists, is itself voluntary, that is, when one is oneself cause of it (95a27–37). A drunken Oedipus who kills, in his drunken ignorance, the man he knows, when sober, to be his father, is not unfortunate or a fit object for a tragedy. Rather he is unjust.

Receiving Wrong

1195b4–35 If it is possible to do the unjust thing involuntarily, then while there is no question about whether it is possible to suffer the wrong thing involuntarily, a question does arise whether it is possible to suffer it voluntarily, or whether it is possible to be wronged voluntarily. The dialectical arguments Aristotle gives on either side need, for the most part, no special comment, save perhaps the fifth (95b25–34): (1) the incontinent man harms himself when doing base things; (2) he does these base things voluntarily; (3) therefore he harms himself voluntarily; (4) therefore he is wronged by himself voluntarily. The main problem with this argument is that it moves directly from (3) to (4), from concluding that someone harms himself voluntarily to concluding that he is wronged by himself voluntarily. Aristotle attacks the argument on this point, saying that one can resist it by adding the distinction that no one wants to be wronged. He might seem to be begging the question, for the issue is whether one can be wronged voluntarily, and to say that no one wants to be wronged is to assert, and not to argue, that no one is wronged voluntarily. But in fact it is the argument that is begging the question. For it proceeds on the assumption that to harm oneself voluntarily is to be wronged voluntarily, or that a

voluntary self-harm is also a voluntary self-wrong. So, if one distinguishes the two and denies this premise, one is properly attacking the argument and not begging the question. It is the argument that is at fault for not giving a reason for the move from harming to wronging.

So much seems enough to show that no one is wronged voluntarily. But the last argument, the fifth, has turned (if fallaciously) on the claim, derived from the phenomenon of incontinence, that one can voluntarily wrong oneself. This claim deserves some direct treatment. Aristotle first gives arguments for the claim (95b36–96a6), and then arguments counter to them (96a6–25). These latter are compelling against the former. The incontinent man, for instance, even if he can harm himself, cannot wrong himself. For if he deprives himself of something or destroys his own property, he may have suffered a loss, but he has not made a gain nor has he been damaged against his will. Yet, without someone gaining at someone's expense and without someone suffering an unwanted loss, there is no injustice. And so with the other arguments: when judging the prohibitions of law, one cannot think away the other person and still have something that could count as unjust; the prohibitions against being immoderate or careless of one's own welfare are wrongs related to the just that is by law and not to the just that is proportional equality, but only in the latter case is there someone against whom one commits the wrong (in the former case, as Aristotle remarked at the beginning of the chapter, 93b12–15, the just by law can be done by oneself and need not involve anyone else). Hence it is false, in these cases, to suppose that if something is wrong by law, there is someone against whom it is wrong. **1195b35–96a33**

These counter considerations also advert to the fact that injustice, or at least the injustice that concerns proportional equality in exchange, involves depriving another of his due equality; so it involves the idea of another or of what belongs to another. But since a man is not other than himself, and his property is not the property of someone else, the relation to another required of injustice in exchange can never be realized in relation to himself. Hence a man can never wrong himself. Hence, too, he cannot be just to himself, since the necessary relation to another would be lacking here as well (save in the derivative sense in which household or psychic justice is meant).

So much concerns doing and suffering wrong. But we can also give or receive something unjust without doing what is unjust and, indeed, without being unjust. The case of the judge who mistakenly awards a prize to the wrong person illustrates the point. It also confirms rather forcefully the peculiarity of justice mentioned earlier, that the just and unjust things are in a way determinable independently of the agent and his acting (while the temperate thing, say, is not). For thereby it is made possible to do the just or unjust thing involuntarily and possible also, as here in the case of judging, to receive the unjust thing, and to award the unjust thing, without acting unjustly or being unjust. **1196a33–b3**

Notes

1. So Rowe (1975: 170).
2. The discussion by Cooper (1973: 342–45) and Rowe (1975: 168–72) on this part of *GE* judges it in light of the discussion in the other *Ethics* where general or legal justice is taken as acts of all the virtues understood as directed to the larger community. But *GE* takes legal justice as acts of all the virtues simply as commanded by law, and nothing further.
3. As Elorduy rightly notes (1939: 49; also his larger discussion 48–51).
4. As he says in the other *Ethics*, 4/5.5.1133a26–29.
5. Fahnenschmidt (1968: 62–66) does not consider how difference of context, or of audience, might explain the absence of an express discussion of distributive justice in *GE*, as well as of the other divergences from *NE* and *EE* that he draws attention to in its treatment of justice. He is, however, not indifferent to context elsewhere (1968: 67).

Chapter 34

The Practical Aim in Particular
Prudence
Nature of Prudence
Prudence and the Soul

1196b4–11 So much completes the discussion of the virtues, as Aristotle now says. The question remaining for detailed treatment is the other one from chapter 1, how to get virtue. We may reasonably suppose that prudence, which is the topic of this chapter, is his answer to this second question. He has been making it clear, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, that the virtues cannot operate without some input from reason, which he now glosses as acting "in accord with right reason" (96b6). The phrase is novel and stated now perhaps precisely because it is novel, so as to provoke recognition of what has been implicitly conceded throughout discussion of the virtues, that they cannot function without some input of reason. The thought, therefore, is not new, only the explicit recognition of it. The input of reason is anyway of "right" reason, a reason that shares in the rightness of the virtues themselves. For any reason that worked along with virtue, which is right behavior, would have to be a reason that was right in the same way.[1] Nevertheless prudence and reason have up to now had an ambiguous status in Aristotle's discussion. This ambiguity is clarified to some extent in this chapter. For while Aristotle does come shortly to say that prudence is a virtue, he never uses the phrase, common in the other *Ethics*, of intellectual virtue. That there are things beside moral virtues that may be called virtues (if not in the same sense of virtue) is not a thesis that is openly expressed in this treatise.

To explain right reason, Aristotle begins (as he does in the other *Ethics* 5/6.2.1139a3–6) by talking again of the parts of the soul. The move is significant. Aristotle is not going to answer the question what right reason is with a formula. He is going to answer it with a faculty of soul. The feeling of his audience that *expertise* is not part of good character will be confirmed (for right reason is not expertise in applying a formula), but not their feeling that *reasoning* is not part of good character. **1196b11–34**

Prudence and Reason

From the list of operations of reason Aristotle gives (science, prudence, intelligence, wisdom, supposition), it is clear he is not intending to discuss the class of intellectual virtues as he does in the other *Ethics* (book 5/6). There he does not list supposition but does list art, and while he does discuss art here, he does not say it is about truth. Supposition is not an intellectual virtue according to the other *Ethics*, because, as he says there, it can be in error (5/6.3.1139b17–18), and the intellectual virtues cannot, qua virtues, be in error. **1196b34–97a13**

Art is introduced, not for its own sake, but as a way of specifying prudence through the standard distinction between making and doing (97a1–13). The reason Aristotle gives for saying prudence deals with doables and art with makeables is that technical skill is found in the latter but not the former (97a12–13). One might wonder, in the light of Aristotle's own example of playing the kithara or lyre, whether kithara playing may not come close in technical skill to things made like houses and statues. One might wonder also whether prudence may not become as highly technical as kithara-playing, or indeed whether kithara playing, since it is a doing and not a making, is really prudence and not art.

Aristotle says nothing about these questions. It is worth noting, though, that decent citizens and gentlemen typically do not play the kithara. They listen to others playing and do so for purposes of cultured leisure, or also moral education (if we go by what Aristotle says in *Politics* 5/8.6.1341a17–b1), and these are doings and very much subject to prudence. The playing of the kithara itself, by contrast, will be the work of some servant or slave who is a living tool for doing, not for making (*Politics* 1.4.1254a5–8). His playing, therefore, will be a subject of the master's prudence and will be a doing and an exercise of prudence, not art. Or if there is art in kithara playing, it is perhaps, as Aristotle implies in that same passage (*Politics* 1253b34–54a2), the art of plucking strings to make sounds, but the sounding and the listening are not makers of anything. It is the sounding not the plucking that we mean by the music.

Aristotle gives a definition of prudence and then concludes it is a virtue, providing two reasons (97a13–20): the prudent are praised and praise is of virtue; and there is a virtue of science, while there is no virtue of prudence, **1197a13–20**

but "virtue is it" (97a19). The definition is like that in the other *Ethics* (5/6.5.1140b20–21), but there are problems with the reasons. As for the first, Aristotle notoriously said earlier that the prudent were not praised. There is a difference, however. He has just given a definition and the praise is of prudence as so defined, not of prudence in any other or broader sense. To choose and do what is of advantage could only be to choose and do what is virtuous, for only virtue and things done with virtue are really of advantage. Or at least such is what decent citizens must think, for to suppose that vice could be of advantage is to be base and not decent. Hence the prudence Aristotle is now talking of must be deserving of praise, even in the eyes of his audience. The prudence he mentioned earlier would be better taken in a looser and vaguer sense where it includes people who are clever or skilled but not also virtuous (as it does at *Ethics* 5/6.12.1144a27–28).[2]

The problem with the second reason is what it means. That there is a virtue of every science is presumably referring to the idea that a science, even if it is always of truth, is not always of good, for knowledge can be put to bad as well as good use. Hence, if it is to be used well, science needs to be subjected to or ruled by virtue (so the science of weaponry, say, would need to be ruled by courage and the science of cookery by temperance). The meaning of Aristotle's second point is disputed. That there is no virtue of prudence seems clear (prudence is already a choosing and doing well), but the Greek words that follow are peculiar. Standard translations make them say that prudence is itself a certain virtue, but while such translation is possible, it does not fit happily with the fact that the Greek for "itself" is neuter and not feminine (the Greek word for prudence, which is the "itself" here, is feminine).[3] Another translation is to say, not that it is a certain virtue, but that virtue is it in a way (where the neuter form will be employed to force the "it" into the predicate place and not, as it would automatically be taken to be if it was feminine, the subject place). If this translation is adopted, prudence is not being said to be another virtue, but to be in a way every virtue, which is not only more accurate to the thought (for prudence is not so much a separate virtue as that which is guide in every virtue), but also accords with what is said in the other *Ethics*, that all the virtues come along with prudence (5/6.13.1145a1–2). Virtue is in a way prudence because all the virtues are somehow caught up in it. Still, for all that, nothing is said, either here or elsewhere in *GE*, about prudence, if it is virtue, being a different kind of virtue from moral virtue.

1197a20–32 What Aristotle says of intelligence and wisdom and supposition, though much less detailed, accords with what is said about them in the other *Ethics* (5/6.3, 6–7). The difference is that supposition is there said not to be an intellectual virtue, while wisdom and intelligence are, and that here none of them are said to be intellectual virtues, though in the next lines wisdom is said to be a virtue (without qualification as intellectual, 97b10–11). Aristotle seems to be deliberately refusing to introduce the idea of intellectual virtues.

Indeed, he seems to be going out of his way to make sure this idea cannot be introduced for, first, supposition is not such a virtue, and yet it is included in the list, and, second, art is such a virtue, and though mentioned, it is excluded from the list. The list, that is to say, has no philosophical unity. It has at most a rhetorical or perhaps a protreptic unity.[4] It is a list of things that belong to reason, including the two that are here of most interest (prudence and wisdom), but not of all the things that are perfections of reason (for supposition is not such a perfection while art, which is omitted, is). That reason has perfections and that these perfections, or wisdom in particular, are superior from the point of view of happiness, are theses that, while themes of the other *Ethics*, are here kept hidden. Hints are thrown out in the next lines but obscurely. Is Aristotle confining himself to saying enough to intrigue the decent citizen who is curious but not enough to disturb any of them who are not?

Prudence and Wisdom

If so, what he says next fits in. Wisdom deals with proof and things that do not change (as the curved and straight, which taken as such, are always what they are, 97a33–36); prudence, by contrast, deals with what is advantageous, and the advantageous is always changing (97a37–b1). A prudence that keeps close to the concrete goods of actual life is a prudence that citizens could admit to be necessary for politics without much fear of thereby finding character subordinated to cleverness. But can they also admit that a wisdom that does not deal with the advantageous but with the curved and the straight and the concave is a virtue? If so, Aristotle is careful to prove it in a way that keeps it within the political realm. If prudence, as he says, is a virtue and if wisdom is better than prudence, and if it is better because it deals with better things, then it too must be a virtue (97b5–10). These better things are said to be the eternal and divine things (97b8). A citizen will naturally think of gods as the eternal and divine, in particular the gods visible in the sky that trace curves round the concavity of the heavens and curves, which, like all curves, we measure by contrast with the straight. Surely, then, if wisdom is the study of these curves, it must be a virtue, and a higher virtue than prudence, even for citizens, because it will turn out to be in the service of religion and all decent citizens know that a city cannot survive without the favor of the gods. Religion, we might even say, is the most advantageous thing, and an advantageous thing that, moreover, does not differ from one day to the next but abides always as the gods abide. Wisdom as religion is thus a sort of divine prudence. We need not be surprised if Aristotle calls it here better than human prudence, nor that he calls it a virtue without saying it is an intellectual virtue. Now is not the time, nor is this treatise the place, for confronting citizen piety with philosophical elaborations. **1197a32–b17**

The problem of prudence for citizens lies in their tendency to reduce it to cleverness. Aristotle responds, as in the other *Ethics*, by reducing cleverness **1197b17–27**

to prudence. The cleverness that is finding how anything doable can be done is not prudence, but the cleverness that is finding how the best doables can be done is prudence. Aristotle explains the difference between good and bad cleverness with the example of a certain Mentor. Scholars hold that the Mentor in question is the Rhodian mercenary captain who was in league with the Persians and was instrumental in the capture and death of the guardian of Aristotle's wife.[5] The identification is not unlikely. But we should not be so quick to dismiss the more famous Mentor in Homer's *Odyssey*, whom Odysseus has left in charge of his home and affairs while he is away at Troy. For this Mentor has singularly failed in choosing and doing the best things, since he has allowed the suitors to take over Odysseus' home and consume his substance. Yet Mentor is undoubtedly clever, at least it is his form that is assumed by Athena whenever she has some clever plan to propose. Another identification, if less likely, is also worth mentioning.[6] There was a famous silver smith by the name of Mentor who is mentioned by several Latin authors and whose works, or many of them, were lost in a fire at Ephesus in 356 BC (Pliny, *Natural History* xxxiii.55). The identification is possible to the extent that this Mentor had the cleverness of art but not, qua silversmith, the cleverness of prudence.

1197b27–36 This dwelling on wisdom, or on intellectuality, might be raising puzzles in the minds of Aristotle's citizen audience, who have come to learn about character and politics, not the expertise of reason. Aristotle raises and answers the puzzles himself but in such a way as to raise other puzzles that he neither poses nor answers. The answer is, first, that since wisdom is a virtue, to talk about it in a treatise on virtue is not alien; second, that it is the mark of a philosopher to consider whatever belongs to the same thing, and since we are now looking at the soul, and wisdom belongs to the soul, to look at wisdom is again not alien.

The first answer implies, in light of the question, that wisdom is a virtue of character and politics, for only thus could it not be alien to a treatise on character and politics. Yet we know from the other *Ethics* that wisdom is not a virtue of character and politics, so Aristotle would seem to be guilty of a *suggestio falsi*. But wisdom perhaps can be relevant to character and politics without being a virtue of character and politics if, say, it is the virtue exercised in leisure (the teaching of *Politics*, 4/7.15.1334a16–25). Wisdom taken in this way would not be alien. But puzzles about citizen leisure are not likely to arise, save in the minds of citizens already puzzled about and inclined toward philosophy. The second answer perhaps confirms this result, for it makes the reference to philosophy explicit. A philosopher qua philosopher should indeed perhaps treat of everything that is found in the same subject, but Aristotle has not been acting like such a philosopher so far in this treatise, for there are many things in the same subject that he has not discussed (as he has not discussed all the parts of prudence, nor earlier, did he discuss all the parts of

justice, or at least not all those he discusses in the other *Ethics*). This second answer, then, might also seem a *suggestio falsi*. But again it might just be a protreptic. Does or must philosophy really deal with everything found in the same subject? If so, and if we also suppose character is one subject (but is it?), has everything that is found in character been dealt with so far, or will it all be dealt with in what follows? And how could we know if it has been? What is more, is it really necessary to treat character comprehensively as a philosopher would in order to understand it for citizen purposes? If these and the like questions arise in Aristotle's audience, the only way to answer them would be to enter the school.[7]

Prudence and Impulse

Beyond such hints Aristotle does not go, but he returns instead to prudence and its relation to virtue. The points he makes about the natural virtues and the need of prudence to make them real virtues and not mere impulses are the same as in the other *Ethics* (5/6.13.1144b1–17), if without all the elaborations.[8] But Aristotle uses them to take the opportunity again to criticize the Socratic knowledge thesis. A difference now is that he uses the criticism to solidify the conclusion that virtue, even if it is not reason, nevertheless needs reason in order to be virtue. For Socrates was in a way right (though Aristotle only implies the fact), for he was right in saying that there is no use doing what is brave or just if one does not know it and choose it as brave and just. Someone who acts without such knowing and choosing is not yet virtuous. Knowing and choosing are necessary for virtue, but Socrates was wrong to exclude from virtue the impulse to beauty and virtue (the nonrational element in the soul); or he was wrong to think that character, and the breeding and upbringing that decent citizens admire, were not integral to virtue.[9] He was not wrong to insist on knowledge in virtue.

1197b36–98a22

Prudence and Action

It now might seem that the virtue is really the impulse and that reason is an added extra, for the virtuous acting comes from the impulse and the reason just informs it. That Aristotle, therefore, returns to the question whether prudence is a virtue is not surprising or a disorder in the text. Besides, the answer he gives is differently focused. Earlier he was content to say that the prudent are praised and that praise is of virtue. But here he must explain how prudence or reason contributes to the impulse. He argues thus (98a24–32): (1) since what makes us praise courage and the other virtues is that they are doers of beautiful things, then (2) prudence must be praiseworthy too, for (3) what courage impels us to do, prudence does as well, because (4) what prudence commands courage does; hence (5) if courage is praised for doing what prudence commands, then prudence must be praiseworthy and virtue too.

1198a22–b8

The antecedent of the conditional in (5) follows from (1) and (4), and the consequent repeats (2). But what is important about a conditional is that the consequent does indeed follow. So (2) must somehow follow on (1) and (4). But it cannot follow unless (4) is equivalent to (3), for commanding beautiful deeds, which is what (4) says, will not show that prudence is praiseworthy, and so a virtue, unless commanding beautiful deeds is the same as impelling to do beautiful deeds. We must, then, assume, as a further premise, (6) that what commands to action impels to action. Aristotle must therefore be assuming (6) since he regards (4) as sufficient for (3).

Premise (6) Aristotle effectively argues for next through an analogy with the arts (97a32–b8). In building, there is a ruling craftsman or architect and then the builder. The latter is the one who actually puts the bricks and mortar together to make the house. But, in fact, the architect is making the house too, since he is deciding what is to go where and directing the builder accordingly. So if the same holds of the virtues, prudence will be to them as the architect is to the builder, and prudence will be active or practical as the virtues are.

The analogy holds as far as it goes, but there is something interesting about how prudence, if it is like the architect, must work. The architect will only build a house if the builder obeys and does as the architect commands. A willingness to obey on the part of the worker, then, must be presupposed. Accordingly, to apply the analogy, prudence will only impel to action by its commands, and so only be a virtue, if those commanded have the pre-existent impulse to follow the commands. Prudence only impels if those it impels are already impelled by something else, by the desires and passions. But prudence will, on this condition, genuinely impel. Only it will impel as reason and not as passion. It will have to be a virtue, then, in the rational part and not the nonrational part of the soul. So there will have to be intellectual virtues and not just moral virtues or virtues of character. But Aristotle refrains from explicitly drawing the conclusion. He also refrains from saying anything about what to do with those who do not obey. Such people are not part of his intended audience nor of what is now the audience's concern.

1198b8–20 But now another question arises. If prudence is architect and gives virtue commands, does it rule over everything else in the soul? Aristotle says that this view is both held and queried: queried when one considers that prudence could not be ruler over what is better than prudence, namely wisdom; held when one considers that prudence cares for everything and has control in giving commands. What is curious about these alternatives is that prudence, a command of reason, must be viewed as either supreme or almost supreme. The virtue of character has now definitely taken second place. What is further curious is that wisdom again (and for the last time) appears in this treatise, and again appears as superior and prudence is denied control over it. Prudence only has control for its sake (as is said in the other *Ethics* 5/6.13.1145a9), in the way an overseer has for the master of the household (as is said here).[10]

What, however, is wisdom's job, if prudence, like an overseer, cares for the other things so that wisdom can be at leisure? Presumably it writes treatises like the present one, which should be enough to persuade decent citizens that wisdom is worth providing for and its practitioners worth caring for.[11]

Notes

1. Dirlmeier's comments (1958: 342) on the absence before 1.34 of the phrase "right reason" but the presence nevertheless of the thing are exact, contra Donini (1965: 104–105).
2. Fahnenschmidt (1968: 69) rightly notes this double sense of prudence in *GE* and that difference of context helps explain the apparent contradiction.
3. The Greek at 1197a19–20 says "*auto ti estin aretē*" and not, if it were feminine, "*autē tis estin aretē,*" which some scholars suggest as an emendation. The word "*ti*," which is neuter, can mean "in a way"; if it is the feminine "*tis,*" it will mean "a certain." The translation "it is the "what is" of virtue" (taking *ti* interrogatively and not as an indefinite or adverbially) is intriguing but also requires *autē* rather than *auto*.
4. Donini (1965: 113–19, 126–27) stresses the absence of philosophical unity, which he attributes to the incapacity of the author of *GE*; he does not raise the possibility of the presence of a rhetorical or protreptic unity attributable to the capacity of the audience of *GE*. Fahnenschmidt (1968: 3, 38, 67–69) also complains that, with the exception of this passage (where alone the word art appears, at 1197a12), *GE* collapses the distinction between science and art and uses the name science indifferently for both. He alleges this fact as evidence that *GE* is not genuine. One might say instead it is evidence that *GE* is not ingenuous.
5. Details in Dirlmeier (1958: 347–48).
6. It is suggested by Case (1596: 105).
7. The protreptic character of Aristotle's discussion here, and the general exoteric form of the *GE*, would explain the puzzles scholars have found in it; Fahnenschmidt (1968: 74–76), Donini (1965: 125–28, and ch. 8 passim), the latter of whom rightly raises several of the puzzles noted about the argumentation in this passage, but without considering any explanation other than that Aristotle could not be the author.
8. Becchi (1960: 218–20) thinks the discussion in *GE* about impulses (*hormē*), while the term and idea are Aristotelian, is not itself Aristotelian because it adapts Aristotelian doctrine in a novel way. The point is forced. He has, nevertheless, some fine remarks about certain passages in the Greek and how to interpret them (1960: 205–14).
9. Aristotle would thus presumably think Anytus had a point in his complaints against Socrates in the *Meno* (90–95).
10. This analogy with the overseer is also attributed to Theophrastus but does not constitute evidence, despite some scholarly contentions, that *GE* was thus composed after Aristotle's death when Theophrastus had succeeded to the headship of the School, Dirlmeier (1958: 354–56).
11. Donini raises the question (1965: 136–45) but does not suggest the answer.

Book Two

Chapter 1

Workings of Prudence
Some Powers of Prudence
Equity

That Aristotle should proceed next to equity seems odd. In the other *Ethics*, **1198b24–b33**
equity is treated as part of justice and along with it (4/5.10.1137a31–38a3). Moreover, the topics that immediately follow equity here (good judgment and good counsel) are dealt with in the other *Ethics* as parts of prudence (5/6.10–11.1142b34–43a24), and indeed all the topics in these first three chapters, apart from the first one, are about prudence in some way and so seem to be a continuation of what has just been discussed at the end of the first book. Hence the treatment of equity looks out of place.

But there are reasons for supposing it not to be so. First, even the other *Ethics* admit that what decides equity (judgment, the topic of the second chapter), if not equity itself, belongs to prudence (1143a19–24), so that including equity under a treatment of prudence has a certain point. Second, the point it has, that prudence does the deciding, is what Aristotle now seems to be concerned with. He has ended the first book by saying that prudence's job is to take care of necessities and hold the passions in check so that wisdom can be at leisure. The first three chapters are all about how prudence does that job, namely what powers it has at its disposal and what sorts of decisions it makes.[1] There is a marked shift of emphasis in the treatment of prudence from its nature in the previous book to its workings here. Third, the placing of equity, to the extent it departs from proper philosophical order, looks to be a function of rhetorical order. It reflects the requirements rather of the audience than of the subject matter. Aristotle has been treading carefully between telling and not telling this audience that there are virtues of knowledge alongside and necessary to virtues of character. But the praise of prudence and wisdom with which he ended the previous book is striking in its directness (the most direct in the treatise). Here he switches back to praise the virtues of character and in such a way as to repeat that the knowledge in question is not technical know-how but something inseparable from virtue. For he talks of virtues where knowledge is central, as equity, and of knowledge where virtue is central, as good judgment and good counsel. But he does not give of them the abstract and philosophical treatment found in the other *Ethics*.

Instead, as befits an audience outside the school, he goes through a series of very concrete puzzles and solutions.

As to whether equity, good judgment, and good counsel are virtues or something else Aristotle is unspecific. He does not say what in the soul equity or good judgment are, and of good counsel he says, rather offhandedly (or perhaps shyly),[2] that it is either a habit or a state or some such thing (1199a7). In the other *Ethics,* he refers to them, along with prudence, as habits and powers (5/6.11.1143a25–31), but the context makes it clear that he is regarding them as intellectual virtues or parts of an intellectual virtue. His refusal to be specific here seems to reflect his whole attitude in this treatise about intellectual virtues. He will not call them virtues, but he will gesture to their being good and necessary to virtue.

As for equity, note that Aristotle gives it the same parts for discussion as justice: the what, the in what, and the about what. Presumably the "what" of equity is that it is a taking of fewer of the things that are just according to law; the "in what" is the particulars that the lawgiver wanted to define but could not and had to be content with generalities; the "about what" is the just by law in contrast to the just by nature.

Notes

1. Dirlmeier's comments (especially his approving references to von Arnim) are exact here (1958: 357–59, 363–66, 370). Equity belongs both to prudence and to justice, and its connection to prudence is what is of interest in this chapter. Contrast Donini (1965: 62).
2. The word is Dirlemeier's (1958: 362). It nicely captures Aristotle's indirection in this treatise.

Chapter 2

Good Judgment

1198b34–99a3 Good judgment must belong to reason, but Aristotle will not say here that it is therefore a virtue of reason. Still, he says enough to suggest that it must be. For he says that the judging belongs to the man of good judgment but the acting in accord with it belongs to the equitable man. So the judgment must be abstractable, at least in principle, from the acting, and thus from equity too. But equity, if it belongs to justice, belongs to moral virtue, so to abstract the judgment from equity is to abstract it from its connection to moral virtue. Consequently, the judgment will be something good and yet not a virtue of character. It must therefore be a virtue of reason.

Aristotle says these things in such a way that, while he does say them, he also hides them, as can be seen from the peculiarity of his argument that good

judgment is not without equity (99a1–3): (1) good judgment is not without equity because (2) to judge belongs to the man of good judgment, and (3) to act according to good judgment belongs to the equitable man. But all that the premises here show is that good judgment is not without equity when it comes to acting (and [3] shows this fact all by itself). They do not show that good judgment is not without equity when it comes to judging. In fact, they show the opposite, that while equity presupposes good judgment, good judgment need not presuppose equity. For (2) ties good judgment to the man of good judgment and (3) ties it to equity only when the man of good judgment is acting. Hence, only when there is acting according to judgment is equity or the equitable man needed. Aristotle fails to draw attention to the fact that (2) and (3) license two different conclusions: the one about good judgment needing equity when it comes to action (which he states); and the other about good judgment not needing equity before it comes to action (which he does not state). Indeed, his indirection is greater still. The first of these two conclusions is after all not really proved by (2) and (3). What these premises prove is that good judgment when acted upon is not without the *equitable man*; they do not prove that good judgment is not without *equity*. Perhaps the move from the first conclusion to the second is fairly straightforward, but, first, this move does have to be made and, second, it requires an additional premise, namely that one cannot act on good judgment without being oneself possessed of equity. But this premise is false, at least in the case of those who act on the advice of someone else who is possessed of equity. For then, while acting according to good judgment will belong to the equitable man (as [3] says), this acting will belong to him, not as something he does, but as something he commands in another.

Two things need to be noted here, the philosophical point and the rhetorical point. The philosophical point would seem to be that equity belongs both to justice and to prudence. It belongs to justice, on the one hand, in two ways: first as the just thing (the equitable thing that the lawgiver would have determined as just for this particular case had he known); second as that part of the virtue of justice whereby the just man chooses and does the equitable thing. Equity belongs to prudence, on the other hand, when it means the good judgment of the equitable man about the equitable thing. The rhetorical point is, first, that Aristotle hides the philosophical point (he does not hide it in the other *Ethics* whence, in fact, it is borrowed).[1] Telling his audience how equity and good judgment fall on the side of moral virtue may be all right but not, apparently, telling them how the two must also fall on the side of another kind of virtue altogether.[2] Second he hints at this other kind of virtue by his peculiar logic, or his presenting of a syllogism that has valid conclusions, which he does not state and an invalid conclusion, which he does state. He went out of his way in earlier chapters to make his syllogisms, by unnecessary repetition, bluntly clear,[3] and yet here he goes out of his way

to present a syllogism that looks just as clear (the premises and conclusion are all stated) but that turns out, on analysis, not to be so at all. Is he then testing his audience to find out which of them notice the difference and are puzzled enough by it to want to learn more? If so these will be the ones who might, on further examination, prove worthy to enter the school.

Notes

1. What the lawgiver determines as the simply or generally just, which equity corrects in particular cases, belongs to the intellectual virtue of prudence, namely to legislative prudence (*Ethics* 4/5.8.1141b23–26). The determining of the just, like the determining of the equitable, is a work of prudence; carrying it out is a work of justice.
2. Recall also the earlier passage (1.19.1190a.34–b8), when judgment (*gnōmē* there, its cognate *eugnōmosunē* here) is first mentioned, where Aristotle goes out of his way to be obscure. Those who noted that earlier obscurity are also the sort of people who might note the obscurity, or indirection, going on here when judgment is mentioned again.
3. So blunt, in fact, as to furnish an argument for scholars that this treatise is not by Aristotle, for a man of Aristotle's dialectical skill could not have been so tedious; Brink (1933 passim).

Chapter 3

Good Counsel

1199a4–19 Good counsel is similar to good judgment in also not being without prudence, but Aristotle is as indirect here as about good judgment. He states how good counsel differs from good judgment, that counsel deals with the best of doable things (99a7–9) while judgment deals with equity, but the argument he gives that good counsel is not without prudence (99a6–9) also only succeeds in showing that good counsel is not without prudence when it comes to action. For that prudence does what good counsel grasps as best does not show that the grasping by itself needs the prudence.

Aristotle perhaps gives his audience another opportunity to notice this fact by the logical peculiarity of his next argument (99a9–14): (1) the sort of thing that spontaneously turns out all right does not belong to good counsel, for (2), where there is no reason looking for the best, he who has something turn out all right is not said to be a man of good counsel but fortunate, for (3) success without judgment of reason is good luck. Presumably (2) is meant to prove (1), and (3) meant to prove (2). Premise (3) is a sort of definition of good luck, but (2) only follows from it if we add the definition of good counsel just given, that it is a habit or state that grasps the best in doable things, and if, further, we gloss this as meaning (4) good counsel is judgment of reason looking for the

best (that is, an intellectual and not a moral quality). But then (1) will follow from (3) and (4), and (2) will not be needed. We only need (2) in order to see that we need to assume (4), but with (4) assumed, we do not need (2). It would seem that Aristotle is fighting shy of stating (4) openly.

The argument has a further curiosity: (4) is not only implied by the structure of the argument, it is also implied by (2) itself. The statement "he who has things turn out all right *without* reason looking for the best is *not* a man of good counsel" is equivalent to "a man of good counsel *is* he who has things turn out all right *with* reason looking for the best" (formally: no not-A is B; therefore no B is not-A; therefore all B is A); but if the man of good counsel is a man of good counsel with or by reason looking for the best, then good counsel is reason looking for the best. The conclusion follows intuitively enough, but the formal structure of it rests on first converting and then obverting premise (2). So, if Aristotle is not writing in such a way as to test logical aptitude by obscuring the argumentation for those who are unable or unwilling to engage in logical analysis while showing it to those who are, it is hard to see what else he is doing.

Puzzles of Prudence

Social Intercourse

In the other *Ethics*, Aristotle deals with more powers or parts of prudence than he deals with here (he deals there also with prudence of the household, of legislation, and of politics, as well as with excellence in deliberation, 5/6.8–9). We may suppose, therefore, that the ones he has dealt with here are given by way of example or illustration and not by way of completeness (an exoteric work only needs to be rhetorically complete, not philosophically complete). The same may be said of what he does next, which is to give instances of how good judgment and good counsel and prudence work in practice, namely that here too he is being illustrative only (indeed, even a philosophical treatment could not deal with, because it could not anticipate, all the puzzles that might concretely arise). We may note, nevertheless, that all the puzzles raised here concern justice in some way, or are at least illustrated through the virtue of justice (if also through other virtues). The dominance of this virtue, in fact, in Aristotle's treatment of the moral virtues is marked. Justice is in a way the virtue par excellence of the citizen, for it is the virtue par excellence of political life. In the other *Ethics*, while justice is also emphasized (a whole book is devoted to the topic), another virtue, wisdom, the virtue par excellence of the theoretical life, is also emphasized. Here wisdom is downplayed and prudence praised and even said, in passing, to be the best good (99a25–26). Virtue is also said to be inseparable from it and it from virtue (1200a8–11). **1199a14–19**

The first puzzle concerns justice and the virtue of dignity (dealt with earlier in 1.28). Aristotle does not mention dignity by name here but he does mention one of its vices, fawning, as well as its subject matter, social intercourse, which

would be enough for his audience to identify it if they wanted to. The puzzle concretely turns on whether the just man should treat everyone equally in social intercourse, that is, whether he should accommodate himself equally to everyone and fashion himself after them in meeting them. The puzzle seems an odd one, but not, perhaps, for a citizen audience whose concern is to be good citizens, since they must certainly want to treat fellow citizens equally. The question is what treating citizens equally means. That it does not mean accommodating oneself to them in the way suggested is shown by the fact that to do so would be to fall into the vice of flattery and fawning, and no serious citizen could want that, or could want not to have the virtue of dignity. Treating citizens equally means treating them according to their worth, and if their worth differs so also should the way one treats them.

What the Bad Man Does Not Know

1199a19–b10 An important point in the second puzzle (99a19–b10) is that the prudent man cannot be unjust. The prudence needed by virtue is not the sort of cleverness that can exist without virtue, nor is it Socratic intellectualism. The point is important in the context. The prudence that is a virtue and praiseworthy is not separable from good character. The clever man who is bad can know all about good things but, precisely as bad, he does not know what is good for himself. Nor indeed does he desire what is good for himself. For what is good for him, and what he should desire, is punishment to make him better, if possible. He is blind in both thought and desire.

It may, however, seem odd that Aristotle adds tyranny to the list of good things, for tyranny would seem to connote something bad, while the other goods (rule, power, wealth) are all confessedly good. But tyranny confers great power (which is a good), and it can seem attractive even to otherwise noble citizens (as Plato's *Republic*—referred to before in the chapter on justice—will remind us). Besides, showing that tyranny, which by definition is unjust, is a bad even for the unjust man (as Aristotle now effectively does), has the advantage both of confirming citizen judgments and of confirming them through philosophy. For the first of these, the audience will thank Aristotle; for the second they will have to thank philosophy. They will therefore have to be more inclined to support philosophy in the city, or at least the sort of philosophy Aristotle teaches, whereby prudence is made inseparable from moral virtue and sharply distinguished, by that very fact, from mere intellectual skill.

Harming the Bad Man

1199b10–b36 The next or third puzzle naturally follows on from the previous one. For it may now seem as if one cannot harm the unjust man. For if (1) injustice lies in the harm of depriving people of good things (like rule and wealth), and if (2) these things are not good for the unjust man (for in fact they harm him because he cannot use them correctly), then (3) to deprive the unjust man

of these things is not to deprive him of good things, and hence (4) to deprive the unjust man of these things is not to do him injustice.

The argument is compelling, though we should presumably note, as Aristotle at least leaves to be noted, that it only concerns depriving the unjust man of things like wealth and power. It does not concern depriving him of all means of life and support, as food and clothing and shelter. Nor does it concern giving him other things that, though bad in themselves, might nevertheless be good for him, as hard labor, for instance, or incarceration (or perhaps, in the extreme case, execution). So the argument does not show that one may starve the unjust man or kill him indiscriminately. Rather it shows, or it allows, that one may give the unjust man means of subsistence along with punishment so that he can, if possible, be reformed.

When Virtues Conflict

Aristotle significantly recalls here that the reasoned choice present in virtue is not without the impulse toward the beautiful. Choice gets its orientation, we might say, from the impulse, while the impulse gets its specification from the reasoned choice. Hence perfect virtues, in contrast to natural virtues, cannot, despite appearances, conflict. For when reason judges the better in the actual case, all the impulses for the virtues go along with reason's decision and so go along with each other in their obedience to it. Aristotle's point cannot be that there will never be occasions when one has to think carefully about what to do, but that when one has, in a difficult case, judged by prudence what is better, the action one does, whether it be an act of courage or of justice, will be simply an act of virtue and not a mix of virtue (justice, say) and of vice (cowardice, say). The act one does not perform, while initially seeming to be virtuous, has turned out after all not to be so, at least in this case. **1199b36–1200a11**

Aristotle's answer thus in a way solves everything and solves nothing. It solves everything because it shows there can never be a conflict of virtue with virtue. It solves nothing because it does not show what, in this or that particular case, one should do (whether the just thing or the courageous thing or something else). But decisions of prudence cannot be anticipated because they concern particulars, and particulars have to be decided on the spot through the exercise of perception (as Aristotle says in the other *Ethics*, 5/6.8.1142a23–30, and says here later, in chapter 10). Prudence is not a technique or a decision procedure. It is a work of character intrinsic to the impulse for the beautiful. The point fits nicely with a citizen's preference for virtues of character, and so with his ambivalence toward reason except insofar as reason is shown to be, as it is here, integral to virtue of character.

Virtue in Excess

The previous puzzle was about whether virtues can conflict and the puzzle before that about whether it was unjust to deny the base man goods like **1200a11–35**

wealth and rule that, if he possessed, would do him harm. The final or fifth puzzle combines, as it were, the previous two and applies the puzzle about wealth and rule to the virtues themselves. Can the virtues, even if they do not conflict, exist to excess, like wealth and rule and the like external goods, and thus cause their possessors harm (which would paradoxically imply that it need not be unjust to deprive people of the virtues)?

Here it is worth reviewing the steps in the argument that set up the puzzle (00a19–23): (1) honor comes from virtue; (2) great honor makes people worse; (3) therefore virtue as it advances will make people worse because (4) virtue is cause of honor; so that (5) as it gets greater, it would make people worse. The argument is repetitious for (4) repeats (1) and (5) repeats (3). Moreover a premise, though an obvious one, is omitted, namely (6) that great virtue is cause of great honor. Aristotle has no problem repeating himself in his arguments in this treatise, but he also has no problem leaving unstated, and forcing his audience to state for themselves, necessary premises of those arguments.

Aristotle responds to this argument (00a23–29) by denying that (2) will hold when (6) holds, that is, when the cause of great honor is great virtue. For virtue, he says, does many things, and apart from causing honor, it also causes, and chiefly causes, its possessor to be able to use goods like honor correctly. Indeed, one of the tests of virtue is that one use such goods correctly. Hence premise (2) is false of the virtuous man, and goods like honor will not make him worse, any more than the virtue that causes them will make him worse.

This response refutes the argument by showing that one of its premises is false. The explanation of the falsehood turns on the nature of virtue (00a30–34): (7) virtue is a mean; (8) the more the virtue, the more it is a mean; (9) therefore virtue will not make one worse as it progresses because (10) the mean is a mean between excess and deficiency in the passions. Premise (8) applies to (7) the principle that the more a thing is what it is, the more it has the features that determine what it is.[1] From (8) and (10) it follows that (11) the more the virtue, the more are the passions in a mean, and (11) is the explanation of why (2) will not hold when (6) holds. For (2) will only hold if he who has honor has excessive or deficient passions, but a virtuous man cannot, by definition, have excessive or deficient passions. Therefore (2) could never hold of the virtuous man, however great his virtue. One notes that Aristotle does not state the key, if obvious, proposition (11), as earlier he did not state the key, if obvious, proposition (6). The treatise continues to be a protreptic, or an invitation to logical and philosophical exercise.[2]

Notes

1. Dirlmeier (1958: 371) helpfully refers to *Topics* 114b40 and *Categories* 10b26–11a14.

2. Dirlmeier (1958: 363, 370) rightly points out that the five puzzles discussed here have, with the exception of the fourth about the unity of the virtues, no parallel in the other *Ethics*. Students of the other *Ethics*, we may therefore perhaps conjecture, either are advanced enough not to need them discussed, or are assumed to be familiar with them already from previous exposure (before they joined the school?) to this treatise.

Chapters 4 and 5

Things Incident to Virtue
As Regards the Subject Matter or the Nature of Virtue
Extremes and Intermediates of Virtue and Vice and Brutishness

Having finished his account of prudence Aristotle has finished his account of the virtues, their nature and their sources, in general and in particular. The treatise might seem to be complete. But the way Aristotle opens this chapter (00a36) indicates that, while it is in a way complete, it is not altogether complete. It is complete enough that this chapter is said to mark a new beginning and not to be a continuation of what has so far been discussed; it is not so complete that a new beginning is not necessary. The new beginning is said here to be about continence and incontinence, but this topic only brings us to the end of chapter 6 and other chapters follow: in chapter 7, pleasure is dealt with; in chapter 8, luck; in chapter 9, gentlemanliness; in chapter 10, right reason; and in chapters 11 to 17, friendship. Reasons for these topics are given by Aristotle at the beginning of the respective chapters: pleasure and luck are to be dealt with because they belong, or are thought to belong, to happiness; gentlemanliness because the virtues have been discussed singly, and it remains to talk of what brings them together; right reason because not enough has been said about it; friendship because it pervades the whole of life and is part of happiness. **1200a36–b19**

Aristotle gives no further explanation of why these topics all need taking up and why in this order, but some explanations can be suggested. Continence and incontinence need dealing with because they have arisen already in the context of several important arguments and so need some sorting out. The other topics are all related to happiness. The life of virtue is the essence of happiness, but pleasure belongs to it as a necessary concomitant or property of virtuous activity; luck as a factor contributory to such activity; gentlemanliness as the comprehensive form of it; right reason as a guide for it; friendship as a constituent and as an aid in realizing it. They are properties of happiness, then, or things incident to it. They are all one in all being *of* happiness, but they are all different in being of it in different ways. They are also things that,

as it were, make happiness complete. They naturally belong to happiness if happiness, as said before, is in a complete life (1.4).

A further point: since the study of virtue was divided, from the beginning, into the nature of virtue and its sources, and if here a new beginning about its properties is being made, we might expect a discussion of them to be divided in the same way. We may speculate then that continence and incontinence are concomitant to the nature of virtue, for their own nature is to be quasi-virtue and quasi-vice. Pleasure is concomitant to the nature of virtue, for it is inseparable from the passions and the passions fall into the essence of virtue. Luck, by contrast, seems to belong to the sources of virtue, for luck concerns the external instruments for the attainment of virtue. Gentlemanliness might also fall under the same heading insofar as it is all the virtues as taken together and so is virtue conceived as the comprehensive, or complete, target to aim at. That right reason falls under this heading (as being the determination of the virtuous thing to do in the here and now) has already been indicated above in the discussion of prudence. Friendship will belong under it as well, since virtuous friends are a chief and an abiding way of realizing and enjoying the virtuous life, and so of being complete in happiness.

That continence and incontinence come first may be understood from what Aristotle has just said, that virtues can be more and less (for he has allowed that people can progress in it). They progress in it, he has said, because they or their passions come to be more in the mean. Continence and incontinence are ways in which the passions are not in the mean (even though reason is rightly pointing it out), and so illustrate how getting the passions into the mean could progress or be more and less, since going from incontinence to continence to virtue would be such progress.

Indeed, here lies the oddness of continence and incontinence, that in them reason and passions are opposed. Aristotle calls the first a virtue and the second a vice (which is like and not like what he says in the other *Ethics*[1]): the oddity of the thing carries over into the oddity of the talk about it. One is not quite sure what to call it.

Brutishness is excessive vice (00b8–11) and within common ken for us and Aristotle. We too have the name and claim to see such people (tyrants are the obvious instances, and Aristotle names some later; we can name our own). The contrary virtue, which is beyond man in one direction as bestiality is beyond him in the other, has no name but Aristotle suggests heroic or divine virtue (00b11–13, 17–19). Nowadays we also use the name saints.

Note

1. See Dirlmeier (1958: 372), who points out that the continence is called both a virtue and different from it in *EE* (3.7.1223b11, 3.9.1227b16), and a sort of mixture that is not a virtue but belongs to the same species in *EN* (4.9.1128b34, 7.1.1145b2). The differences seem more verbal than real or, as Aristotle says here, due to the oddity of the thing.

Chapter 6

Continence and Incontinence
Statement of Puzzles
About the Existence of Incontinence

If what is worse than vice is brutishness and what is better than virtue something divine, and if continence and incontinence are not virtue or vice, then there is nowhere left for them to be located but in between. Here, however, is where puzzles arise. Can there be such a between, and what could be its nature? The puzzles, therefore, turn on the existence and nature of continence and incontinence, and turn on existence in part because of alleged impossibilities in the nature. **1200b20–01a9**

The first puzzles are about existence, as is clear from the introduction of Socrates again and his denial of incontinence because of the knowledge thesis. The thesis is again rejected. Socrates' puzzle opposes the existence of incontinence on the ground that everyone who knows does what he knows (00b26–29). The second puzzles opposes it on the ground that those who follow their passions cannot really know (00b32–38). The effect is the same in either case, and the only difference is how the premise (that knowledge is too strong to be pushed around by something else) is being used, whether to show that those who have knowledge cannot be following their passions or to show that those who follow their passions cannot have knowledge. The third puzzle (00b38–01a6) also concerns existence, for if the incontinent man has opinion and not knowledge he is not really incontinent (he is not blameworthy as not really being sure that what he was doing was base).

About the Nature of Both

The first three puzzles are directed against incontinence alone. Those that follow are directed also against continence, and turn on nature, not existence, or on certain implications that incontinence and continence have if they exist. The fourth puzzle is a dilemma (01a9–16): if the temperate man is continent, he will have to have strong desires (continence is not needed to dominate measured desires); but if he does not have strong desires, he will not be temperate (no one is temperate who has no desire). The problem in supposing the temperate man has strong desires refers back to what was mentioned in chapter 4, that the temperate man, being virtuous, is not supposed to have any desires opposing reason, let alone strong ones (1200b2–3). The problem in supposing that he does not have strong desires is that he would thus have too little feeling for pleasure and so would have the vice of insensibility (1.21.1191b10–13).[1] **1201a9–39**

The fifth puzzle is more complicated (01a16–27). The arguments concern an implication that seems to follow from continence and incontinence being

cases of conflict between reason and passion. For if reason and passions can be opposed, why could not incontinence exist not only when wrong passions prevail against right reason but also when right passions prevail against wrong reason, and contrariwise with continence? As regards incontinence the reasoning runs: (1) let there be someone who (a) is mistaken in his calculating and so thinks beautiful things to be base, but (b) has desires for beautiful things; (2) therefore he will do what he desires against the command of reason, because (3) such is what the incontinent man does; (4) therefore, because of (1), he will do the beautiful things; (5) therefore he is incontinent and praiseworthy because (6) he who does beautiful things is praiseworthy; but (7) being incontinent and praiseworthy is absurd. The argument is straightforward but Aristotle repeats (1) before drawing the main conclusion (7) through conclusion (5) and the additional premise (6).

The same repetition marks the parallel argument about continence (01a27–35): (1) let there again be someone who (a) is mistaken in reason and thinks beautiful things to be base, and (b) has desires for beautiful things; but (2) the continent man does not do what he desires but follows reason; (3) therefore, because of (1), he will stop himself doing what he desires, and (4) therefore he stops himself doing what is beautiful; (5) but he who does not do the beautiful things he should do is blameworthy; (6) therefore the continent man is sometimes blameworthy; (7) therefore this result is absurd. Here too Aristotle repeats (1) before drawing conclusion (7) through (5) and (6).

Aristotle repeats (1) in both cases, perhaps because this premise states the conflict between reason and desire, which these supposed kinds of incontinence and continence assume if they are to be incontinence and continence, and which thus results in the oddity stated in (7). Both arguments are cases of *reductio ad absurdum*, and since the point of a *reductio* is to reduce some premise to absurdity, Aristotle makes the fact clear by repeating the relevant premise. It transpires, however, that what is wrong with premise (1) is not that these cases are psychologically impossible, but that they are not really cases of continence and incontinence.

The sixth puzzle (01a35–39), about the subject matter of incontinence and continence, picks up from the previous one. For if there can be conflict of reason and desire in other matters, as money and honor and anger and glory, then is weakness in these cases also incontinence? This puzzle too concerns the nature of the phenomenon.

Solution to Puzzles
About Existence

1201a39–02a8 The points Aristotle makes solving the puzzles (which need little comment) follow the line of the other *Ethics* (book 6/7.1–10), save that they do not pursue the matter in the same detail. Some comment is needed, however, about Aristotle's reference to the *Prior Analytics*[2] when he explains the

distinction between having the general knowledge and not having the particular knowledge (01b25). First, the reference provides the best evidence within the treatise that Aristotle wrote it.[3] Second, if this treatise is an exoteric treatise, then must not the *Prior Analytics* also be an exoteric treatise, since it is referred to here and facts from it are assumed? Perhaps, for the *Prior Analytics* may be a text from the school also made available to those outside the school, since logic is something that applicants to the school would have to show mastery of in order actually to enter it.[4]

The way Aristotle exploits the distinction between general and particular knowledge (01b26–02a1) helps to illustrate, and perhaps also clarify, what he says in the other *Ethics*. He gives the example where the general premise is that "I know how to make anyone with a fever healthy," the particular premise is that "this man has a fever," and the conclusion is that "therefore I know how to make this man healthy" (01b27–29). That "I," which is a particular (or a singular), appears in the general premise is not a problem, for it is not the general fact under which the particular premise falls. The general fact is "anyone with a fever," and the particular fact is "this man here with a fever." In this case, however, I do not know the conclusion because I do not know (or at any rate, I do not reflect on) the particular premise that this man here has a fever. So I may know how to cure anyone with a fever but, because I do not know that this man has a fever, I do not know how to cure this man.[5] Likewise, in the case of incontinence, I know the base thing only as this and do not make it fall under the general knowledge that such and such is base, for I do not see, or do not keep in mind, that this thing is such and such.

Another example is given (02a1–8). The drunk undergo a change when they cease being drunk, but it is not their reason or their knowledge that undergoes the change. These stay the same and it is only the drunk who change from not being themselves to being themselves. So when Aristotle says that the reason and the knowledge of the drunk are overcome by their drunkenness, he does not mean that the knowledge is thrown away, but that *they* are thrown away, as it were, from their knowledge. The incontinent man is overcome by his passion and passion puts his calculation to rest. But when the passion leaves him, as drunkenness leaves the drunk, he is himself again.

This explanation relies on the difference between having knowledge and exercising the knowledge that one has, as well as on the difference between the general and the particular (as Aristotle said it would, 01a11–22). The point is not that the general knowledge is not being exercised, but that the particular knowledge is not being exercised because it is not being assumed under the general knowledge. Hence the knowledge that this thing here is base is not being exercised because the knowledge that this thing here is such and such (which is base) is not being exercised. The passion for the pleasure that this thing affords takes over (in the way, one supposes, that drunkenness does)

and, through the premise that this thing is pleasant (along with the implicit general premise that the pleasant is to be tasted),[6] influences action instead.

About Nature
Relation to Praise and Blame

1202a8–29 The first three puzzles have been dealt with. Of those remaining, Aristotle deals first with the fifth, second with the sixth, and lastly with the fourth. In addition the treatment of the fourth arises within a treatment of further puzzles and solutions. A reason can be suggested for the ordering from the content of what follows. The fifth puzzle is treated first because its solution comes out of what has just been said. The sixth follows because the solution to the fifth has introduced the idea of different kinds and causes of incontinence, and so it has reintroduced the puzzle of whether these other kinds are really cases of incontinence. But once this sixth puzzle has been resolved in the negative, the question is left of what to say about these other cases of incontinence, and about the contrasting cases of continence, and that question draws with it the larger question of how the standard sense of incontinence and continence compares with other and related conditions and habits of soul. So it is here that the fourth puzzle, about temperance, will arise and be seen to be part of other puzzles that did not arise on their own but have arisen in the course of the discussion.

The fifth puzzle was about whether there can be a praiseworthy incontinence and a blameworthy continence. Aristotle responds that both incontinence and continence assume by virtue of their definition that reason is correct about what is beautiful and base, so the cases supposed are not after all cases of continence and incontinence (02a10–12). He adds an instance of someone whose reason and passions, instead of being one incorrect and the other correct, are both incorrect (the person does not think it shameful to beat his father and desires to beat him, 02a14–16). Yet he follows neither and refrains from beating his father. Such a person is not continent or incontinent, and so he cannot either be praiseworthy for incontinence or blameworthy for continence (though he should be if the original puzzle is right), and hence the cases imagined in the puzzle are not cases of praiseworthy incontinence or of blameworthy continence (02a16–19). Instead they must be cases of diseased continence or incontinence, or of natural continence and incontinence, which are neither owed, nor receive, praise and blame (as in the court case example, 02a23–27).

We might wonder if Aristotle's examples are fair to the original puzzle, for they posit bizarre or quixotic cases. So we might say that it is this bizarreness that makes us think such a case is not one of blamable or praiseworthy incontinence or continence. The original puzzle did not posit anything bizarre, and so it has to be solved, if it is solved, by being directly confronted and not by having bizarreness foisted on it from elsewhere. But Aristotle's examples are

not so much introduced to solve the original puzzle (which is done instead by the definition), but to illustrate the solution, and thereby to show that the definition is not arbitrary but has explanatory power. For it illustrates how the solution and the definition solve also the bizarre examples, and so, if the definition solves bizarre examples, it can, a fortiori, also be used to solve examples that are not bizarre.

Nothing Aristotle says here shows that the cases imagined in his examples or in the original puzzles are not possible. They may be possible and there may be people who cling to or oppose an incorrect reason. The point is that whatever we want to say about such people, they are not manifesting incontinence and continence (except perhaps by analogy).

Relation to Subject Matter

Praise and blame are only part of what is required to fix the relevant kinds of continence and incontinence. Proper subject matter, the topic of the sixth puzzle, serves to fix it further. Aristotle begins with a brief list of some external and bodily goods. These are not all the goods, of course, nor are they all the external or bodily goods; but they are the goods that have been proposed as objects of incontinence (the exception is anger, which is separately discussed shortly). The two bodily goods from the list, touch and taste, are then identified as those that are the subject matter of what is incontinence simply. Incontinence in other things is not incontinence simply. The explanation for this difference cannot be the incontinence as such (that is, not the fact that some passion is against reason), for they are all alike in this respect. It can only be in the underlying subject matter that they are about. And in fact the other subject matters, as honor and glory and rule and money and so forth, are not blameworthy, but the bodily pleasures are. For by bodily pleasures here are meant the pleasures of taste and touch, that is, of food and drink and sex, and these are blamed by everyone, and certainly by good citizens, when pursued to excess (whereas the other things when so pursued are not blamed, or not much). No reason is given for this difference in blame, but a reason seems implicit. Bodily pleasures and pains are felt immediately by sense without any input of reason. Honor, glory, rule, money and so forth require some rational consideration to be appreciated as good; they are not so much goods of sense as goods of thought. Sense or feeling can no doubt be refined or educated toward appreciation of them, but such refinement would already involve some virtue of character. If so reason is the determining factor in whether a given case of incontinence is or is not blameworthy or is or is not incontinence simply.

1202a29–b9

Relation to Other Conditions and Habits

Anger

The point is perhaps confirmed by what is said of anger. Anger is not an external good like honor, but an internal passion. So it might seem that

1202b9

incontinence in anger could also be incontinence simply. The blame in anger, however, is less, for it involves some input of reason (as the analogy with the slave boy illustrates). It requires some recognition and calculation of wrong, and not merely of felt pleasure or pain. In behaving thus, anger is at least taking its beginning from reason. Aristotle does not expressly say so (it is in a way obvious), but it is implied in what he does say in explanation of why incontinence in anger is not much to be blamed while the drive to pleasure is. For the drive to pleasure has reason turning it away from action and it acts nevertheless. Anger, by contrast, has reason raising it to action by telling it of wrong, as has just been explained, and anger errs not so much by opposing reason as by acting on it too quickly or too much. A further fact is that incontinence in anger errs through pain, since anger is always in a way painful (it is a rising up against a perceived evil), whereas incontinence in desire errs through pleasure (which is a rising up for a perceived good). Therefore it is, says Aristotle, with wanton violence (or *hubris*) whereas that with anger is not. The wanton violence is perhaps a reference to the way the desire for pleasure overthrows the command of reason (while anger just anticipates it).

The greater blameworthiness of weakness in desire turns on its greater opposition to reason—a point Aristotle allows to emerge but does not draw attention to. The importance of reason for the morally good and praiseworthy life is something that has cropped up often enough already and in more obvious ways. No need here to do more than let it emerge again, and unobtrusively, by itself. Those paying attention at least will take notice.

Endurance and Softness

1202b29–b38 The topic of endurance and softness is introduced without any particular connection to what has preceded. But it has some particular connection with what follows, for it leads up to the discussion of license, which in turn leads up to the discussion of its opposed virtue, temperance, and temperance is the topic of the only puzzle not yet dealt with. The remark that pleasures make the incontinent man soft (02b37) is a reference, no doubt, to the fact that he who does not withstand pleasures will eventually become unable to withstand pains (he will so want pleasure that he will flee all pain).

License and Temperance

License

1202b38–1203a29 The man of endurance and the soft and the incontinent man are like the temperate and licentious man in being about pleasures and pains (either in accepting both with reason or pursuing the one and avoiding the other without reason), hence discussing license and temperance next in comparison with incontinence and continence makes a certain logical sense. Aristotle treats license first and separately in comparison with incontinence, perhaps because in this way he can highlight the distinct roles of reason and passion, and how

one state is worse than the other. He follows up with some remarks about different ways, sudden or lingering, in which right reason can be challenged by base passion and can resist, or fail to resist, the challenge. Lastly, he treats temperance and license together and of how they unite, rather than divide, reason, and passion, though in opposite directions.

Not much needs to be said about the arguments Aristotle gives, since they seem straightforward enough. One may note, however, that throughout his arguments about incontinence and continence, about endurance and license, Aristotle has been praising reason. Nor could he fail to if he is to speak correctly about them. The length of time he spends on them conforms to his larger purpose. These states furnish him with test cases to stress that reason needs virtue and virtue reason if both are to be complete. Brutishness is a case in point. Despite its name, it cannot be found in the brute animals but only in man, for it is an extreme of vice that only arises when the principle, which brutes do not have, is corrupted. A beast like a lion can do nowhere near as much harm as the wicked tyrants Aristotle mentions (03a22–24). By principle he must mean the power of choice and deliberation discussed earlier (1.10–19). Brutishness only arises when a man uses the principle that he does not have in common with beasts to follow the passions that he does have in common with them.

Sudden and Lingering Incontinence

The next point continues the previous one by distinguishing better and worse states of incontinence. The first, and better, incontinence is a sudden impulse that drives us forward without any advance thought, as when we see a beautiful woman and a feeling suddenly wells up in us toward doing something that perhaps we should not ("perhaps" says Aristotle, because, presumably, the beautiful woman could be one's wife and then, while the impulse would be sudden and without thought and so, to this extent, a bypassing of reason, its objective need not be wrong). The second, and worse, is a genuine weakness in that it does have reason pulling us the other way. The first has little blame attached to it, for it arises even in good men and in those whose physical constitution is hot and naturally excitable. The second is to blame for it has no excitable constitution behind it (rather its constitution is cold and melancholic), and has reason opposed. It is indulged, therefore, against reason, while the other happens before reason.[7] **1203a29–b11**

A further difference is that the first can be prevented by advance preparation. So one says to oneself, if one happens to know, that a beautiful woman is about to come by and that therefore one must get a grip on oneself. Accordingly one does so and feels nothing and refrains from anything shameful. The second and worse incontinence, by contrast, yields to the pleasure against reason and is softened by it (rather than hardened against it). The problem, then, does not lie in reason but in wish or desire, whereby the

incontinent man is, as it were, making himself soft and weak. The hardening against pleasure, if it comes, will have to come from elsewhere.

Temperance and License

1203b11–b29 But if even the sound or good man can feel impulses against reason, though he can avoid them by anticipation, it might appear that temperance, which is the virtue of the good man, is a sort of continence that differs from continence proper only, if at all, in degree. So Aristotle turns to this question about temperance and so to the puzzle from above that still remains to be solved. The answer Aristotle gives is twofold: that the temperate man is continent, but that the continent man is not temperate.

The temperate man is continent because the continent man is both he who has desires and holds them back through reason, and he who, even when he does not have such desires, is such as to hold them back if he did have them. For, no doubt, the continent man who does have desires does not always have them, yet he must always be such as to hold them back if or when they arise in him (else he could not be continent). So the temperate man is so far like the continent in this respect, that he too would hold back desires were he to have them (presumably, indeed, he does have them when they arise suddenly in the way just explained, but he holds them back and takes advance guard against them when he can). The difference is that the temperate man has no base desires and has his reason about them right, while the continent man does have base desires, at least sometimes, but has his reason about them nevertheless right.

This solution recalls and raises the question about license and incontinence. It raises it, however, in a different way. The argument earlier was that the incontinent and the licentious are different and that neither is the same as the other. But the discussion of continence and temperance has raised another possibility, namely whether one of them could follow on the other,[8] for continence and temperance are different, yet continence follows on temperance, though temperance does not follow on continence. The answer to this other question is again no, and for the same reason. The incontinent has his reason fighting against his passions, while the licentious man does not but has both of them on the same side, the side of baseness.

1203b29–04a4 The argument that the licentious man is harder to cure, which is used to prove that he is baser, hardly needs formalizing. But while to be baser is to be in a worse condition, to be in a worse condition is not necessarily to be baser (the diseased and natural cases of incontinence mentioned before, 1202a19–27, are bad, but those who suffer from them are not thereby base for they are hardly to be blamed). The earlier arguments do imply that the licentious man is worse by being in a base condition, and the argument here does the same through the fact of custom. The licentious man is licentious by repeated doing of licentious things. The incontinent man is not similar,

for his reason is still right. The implication is, then, that custom in him has not hardened into nature. The licentious man, we may therefore infer, has made his reason base by repeated following of base passions. Initially, no doubt, his reason was telling him not to follow his passions. So initially he was merely incontinent. But he kept giving in to passion until, eventually, his reason yielded, as it were, to custom and, instead of telling him not to follow his passions, started telling him to follow them. His reason became base when custom hardened into nature, and he became licentious. The incontinent man has not gone so far. His custom is not yet strong, for his reason is not yet base. Hence he is curable, while the licentious man is hard to cure (for custom can be expelled by another and contrary custom, while nothing can expel nature).

Aristotle does not say these things but he implies them. They provide an answer to another question his discussion may prompt. What separates the continent from the incontinent? For since in each the passions are base and reason right, how is it that one is continent and the other not? The answer is custom. The continent has got into the habit of resisting and the incontinent into the habit of yielding. This result is compatible with the continent sometimes yielding and the incontinent sometimes resisting. We may suppose that they both have a fundamental freedom to go one way rather than another on each occasion they are tempted. Which way they go will be influenced by many factors, but the fundamental factor will be the freedom explained and defended earlier (in 1.12–19). This freedom will mean that each new temptation is a new occasion to choose rightly or to choose wrongly. What will set up the habit and make one man continent and another the opposite will be repeated going one way rather than the other. What will make one man licentious and the other temperate will be such repetition that reason becomes base in the first and the passions temperate in the second.

If we raise the further question of how we should go about curing the incontinent, or preventing them from becoming incontinent in the first place (and even, if possible, of curing the licentious), Aristotle provides no answer. His audience will suggest the upbringing of the decent citizen (like Anytus in the *Meno*). Aristotle suggests the same in *NE* 10.9. He also explains the need for training in legislation to get the upbringing right. That training is dealt with in the *Politics* and not here, which is a study of ethics directed to citizens who are not legislators.[9]

Prudence

The discussion of incontinence and continence ends with a puzzle that was not raised earlier, though it follows on naturally enough.[10] The puzzle just discussed about the difference between the incontinent man and the licentious man ended with the former, unlike the latter, still having his reason right. But if he still has his reason right, can he be prudent or can the prudent man be incontinent? The prudent is not only he who has right reason but

1204a4–18

he who also acts according to right reason (cf. 1.34.1197b17–27). He could not be incontinent. But the incontinent could be clever. The clever and the prudent are both concerned with how to realize actions in the here and now, save that the clever is concerned with any action and the prudent with the best actions. The clever man could be incontinent but not the prudent man. The reason is that the incontinent man "is not a doer of what he is clever in" (1204a17).

The meaning of this remark is disputed, as is also the Greek.[11] A suggestion is as follows: The prudent man is characterized not only by his finding out the best things but also by his doing them. In the first way he differs from the clever man, and in the second way from the incontinent man. The question is whether, if the incontinent man differs from the prudent man, he must differ from the clever man. The answer is that he will differ insofar as he finds out the best actions and not just any action, but he will not differ insofar as the clever man may also find out the best actions. To this extent the incontinent man can be clever. But he cannot be prudent, for then he would do the best things that he finds out. He has the cleverness of the prudent man but not the action of the prudent man. He is clever and not prudent because he does not *do* the actions he finds, not because he finds, as the merely clever man may, any actions at all. So while the incontinent man is clever, the clever man need not be incontinent. He may be licentious and do without fail all the bad things he finds. The overlap between incontinence and cleverness concerns only that part of cleverness where cleverness itself overlaps with prudence. But the incontinent man does not do the actions he finds. His cleverness, despite overlapping with prudence, is cleverness only and not prudence.

Aristotle ends his discussion of incontinence and continence with this discussion of prudence. He has been able to repeat the inseparable connection between prudence and character. The prudent man is not he who is good at finding things out, for a bad or licentious man could be that. Nor is the prudent man he who is good at finding good things out, for an incontinent man could be that. The prudent man is he who is good at finding good things out *and* doing them. His cleverness is prudence only because it is realized in his acting according to virtue, the virtue of character that citizens admire. We have to conclude, again, that there is a kind of intellectual skill that is internal to moral virtue and not separable from it, that this intellectual skill must be a virtue, and that we should not be suspicious of it or reluctant to praise it. We are a short step from an explicit statement of the idea of intellectual virtue. Aristotle takes the step in the other *Ethics*, but not here.

Notes

1. Dirlmeier's discussion at this point (1958: 376), while accurate against suggested scholarly emendations, suffers rather from not pressing these points.
2. The reference is to a passage like *Prior Analytics* 1.4.26a17–25.

3. Scholars who deny that *GE* is by Aristotle are embarrassed by this reference, which they somehow have to explain away. But it seems easier to explain away the reasons they give that *GE* is not by Aristotle than to explain away this assertion by the author of it that he is; Dirlmeier (1958: 379–380).
4. As the quote from Aulus Gellius discussed in the Introduction indicates.
5. Rejecting, therefore, Armstrong's interpretation (1947: 596 note a), and so seeing no need to doubt the Greek.
6. This point is made explicit in the other *Ethics*, 6/7.3.1147a29–34.
7. On melancholy and the melancholic and how they both are and are not excitable, see Dirlmeier (390).
8. So Dirlmeier rightly (387, 393; following Bonitz and von Arnim).
9. A possibility, which if noted, would remove most of the puzzles raised by Donini (1965: chs. 9 & 10 passim, esp. 171, 203–204; also 26) about the absence of any serious discussion of habituation in *GE* compared with *NE*.
10. So also Dirlmeier (1958: 394).
11. Some wish to change the remark to mean: "not a doer of what he should" (changing the Greek *deinos*, "clever," into *dei*, "should"); Dirlmeier (1958: 394). I translate the text as is.

Chapter 7

Accompaniment of Virtue
Pleasure

That a discussion of pleasure belongs in a discussion of virtue is reasonable, **1204a19–31**
if only because virtue and vice revolve about things pleasant and painful by moderating each toward the mean. That such a discussion belongs here and not earlier is also reasonable. Pleasure and pain belong to virtue because the passions belong to virtue, so, while the passions fall into the nature of virtue (virtue is a mean in passions), pleasure does not; rather it accompanies this nature as one of the essential features of it. Aristotle says as much himself (after first saying that pleasure must be dealt with because everyone thinks happiness is with pleasure or not without pain).[1] He says that everyone must deal with pleasure because everyone is dealing with happiness, which is virtue, which is about pleasure and pain (1204a26–29). One might wonder why he does not argue for dealing with pleasure directly from the fact that he is dealing with virtue but instead goes back to happiness and returns to pleasure through the middle term of virtue. Partly, perhaps, because of the first reason he gives, that everyone associates pleasure (but not necessarily virtue) with happiness. Partly also, perhaps, because happiness is the prior thing and virtue is aimed at because of its identification with happiness. Virtue may be rhetorically prior for the politically active citizen, but it is not simply prior. Besides, to separate virtue from happiness is a common error, even among decent citizens. It is

an error that needs repeated combating, especially, one would think, when pleasure comes into view. For pleasure too is often separated from virtue in people's minds, especially the minds of those, like the continent just discussed, who profess admiration for virtue but feel only the pull of the baser pleasures.[2]

Puzzles of Pleasure

1204a31–b4 A discussion of the nature of a thing is logically first. Prevailing opinions about pleasure are about its goodness, but they largely rest on premises about its nature. Aristotle lists these opinions and, in dealing with them, considers those that reveal pleasure's nature before turning to the question of its goodness.[3] That the arguments of those who say pleasure is *not* good are what he lists may be because everyone typically holds pleasure so obviously a good that the point needs no arguing. Those who abandon this position are the ones likely to have arguments that need responding to.

Aristotle lists five arguments against the goodness of pleasure but does not state the conclusions of any of them, just the premises. It is not in fact clear what their proponents mean the conclusion always to be. The first argument has as conclusion that no pleasure is good, but the other arguments do not clearly have as conclusion either that no pleasure is good or that some pleasure is not good. The second argument, for instance, if left as it is, would have as conclusion that some pleasures, the base ones, are not good. But if the "never" in its second premise is pressed (the good is never found in the base), one could read it as saying that nothing that is sometimes base can ever be good, and hence, if pleasure is sometimes base, it is never good. The remaining three arguments all have the same ambiguity. Little depends on the ambiguity, however, for the purposes of refutation. If the conclusions are taken universally, then Aristotle refutes them by showing that at least some pleasures are good. If they are taken particularly, he does not need to refute them for they allow that some pleasures can be good. He deals with them in order, save that he does not seem to deal expressly with the fourth, and he adds some additional arguments in dealing with the fifth.

Nature of Pleasure

1204b4–20 The first argument assumes the premise that pleasure is a coming to be. Aristotle argues against it in two ways: from obvious facts that some pleasures are not comings to be, and from less obvious facts that no pleasure is a coming to be.

On the first point he gives examples of pleasures that are not comings to be, as those of study and perception. He adds an argument in support (04b8–18): (1) these pleasures do not come from want, unlike such pleasures as eating and drinking; (2) these other pleasures come from filling up a want or taking away an excess; (3) hence these pleasures seem to be comings to be; (4) want

and excess are pain; (5) therefore a pleasure that comes to be is with pain; (6) there is no pain in perception or thinking because (7) no one is first in pain when getting the pleasure of perception or thinking; (8) therefore some pleasure is not a coming to be.

Premise (1) plays no independent role as it is a less explicit version of (2), and (3) depends implicitly on some such premise as (9) filling up a deficiency and taking away an excess are comings to be. The premise seems evident, but even so (3) does not strictly follow from it, for it need not be the case, if what pleasure comes from is a coming to be, that therefore the pleasure itself is a coming to be. Aristotle makes this point later; he allows it to pass here. Proposition (4) may, for present purposes, be left as intuitive, and (5) follows from (2) and (3) and (4) together, for that the other pleasures are with pain follows from (2) and (4), and that these other pleasures are comings to be was asserted in (3). Finally (6) combined with (5) yields the conclusion that the pleasures of perception and thinking are not comings to be, which is (8). The point of (7), which is an appeal to the empirical facts on which (6) rests, is not that perceiving and thinking cannot be preceded by pain, but that the pleasure of perceiving and thinking is not the pleasure of having pain removed. It is an independent pleasure internal to the acts of perceiving and thinking.

Aristotle's next inference, that pleasures, which are not comings to be, have thus been shown to be good, contains a fallacy. It runs (04b18–20): if (10) pleasure fails to be a good because it is a coming to be, then (11) pleasures that are not comings to be are good. But (11) is not the consequent of (10), or it is not if (10) is taken as saying that if something is a coming to be, it is not good. To say that therefore this thing, which is not a coming to be, is good is the fallacy of the consequent (nothing logically follows from denying the antecedent of a conditional). We must suppose, as his words in a way indicate, that Aristotle is arguing ad hominem and is taking as given that those who say pleasures are not good because they are comings to be are conceding that the prevailing view (pleasures are good) would be correct if pleasures were not comings to be. Hence proposition (10) must be interpreted as saying that pleasures are not good *because and only because* they are comings to be; then (11) will be the consequent.

Those who say that the pleasures associated with the removal of deficien- **1204b20–05a7**
cies and excesses are comings to be are making an unwarranted inference from origin to nature. If these pleasures come to be when there is an intake of something, as of food and drink, it does not follow that they are themselves comings to be. Something needs to be said to justify such a move and no justification is given. Aristotle himself responds with a theory of pleasure that rejects any such move (04b25). The theory is asserted and not argued for, which, if philosophically unsatisfactory, is logically legitimate. The theory does show that the challenge about the difference between origin and nature

of pleasure can be supported by an account of the difference. It is a challenge to opponents to come up with a rival theory that does justify the move from origin to nature, and it forces them into silence until they have done so. One might say that Aristotle's position is thus made hostage to the results of future debate. But more debate he would welcome, for any in his audience who were stimulated to continue the discussion would thereby show themselves likely candidates for entry into the school. Once in the school, they would find themselves confronted with what is not provided here, a philosophical defense of the theory that pleasure is not a coming to be (6/7.11–14, *NE* 10.1–5). In either case, whether they enter the school or not, they will find Aristotle logically ahead of them.[4]

The Goodness of Pleasure

Response to Arguments That Pleasure Is Not Good

1205a7–16 Aristotle has dealt with the first of the arguments he listed earlier. He does not come immediately to the second argument, or not in its specific form. He first considers it, and the remaining arguments, in their general form as asserting that not every pleasure is good (05a7–8). This phrasing preserves the ambiguity of those arguments: "not all" is only strictly equivalent to "some . . . not," but it is loose enough in ordinary speech to be taken as equivalent to "none." The general argument is (05a8–14): (1) the good is said in all the categories; (2) some pleasure follows in accord with every actuality of good; (3) therefore, given (1), pleasure would be a good; therefore, given (1) and (2) and also (4), that the pleasure from good things is pleasure, it follows (5) that every pleasure is a good.

This argument looks bizarre,[5] but perhaps some sense can be made of it. First, in (2) Aristotle speaks of *energeiai* and not of *praxeis*. Hence the translation "actualities" and not "activities," for although "activities" is a way of translating *energeiai*, "actualities" is not a way of translating *praxeis*. A *praxis* is an activity in the sense of a doing, while an *energeia* is any sort of actuality and not just a doing, and Aristotle wants to speak about an actuality that could follow good in all the categories (and not just in the category of action). Hence if good is in every category, as (1) says, then (6) the actuality of good is in every category too. So if in accord with every actuality of good a pleasure follows, as (2) says, then, given (6), it follows (7) that pleasure is in every category (the vague "in accord with" allows for pleasure to be intrinsic and not extrinsic to actuality).[6] But Aristotle does not state (7) even though (7) is entailed.[7] Instead he says that (3) pleasure would be a good given (1), that the good is said in every category. But if (3) means that pleasure simply would be good, it does not follow from (1); it only follows if it means that the pleasures in every category in accord with the actualities of the good that are in every category—the combination of (1) and (2) and (6) and (7)—would be good. And this result too only follows if pleasure gets its goodness from

the goodness of the actuality (which it will do if [2] is taken in the strong sense that the teaching of the other *Ethics* would give it).

But if there can be pleasures that are not actualities of good, they would not be shown, by this argument, to be good. What Aristotle says next serves to rule out this possibility (05a14–15): since (8) in these things are the goods and pleasure, and (9) the pleasure from the goods is pleasure, therefore (10) every pleasure would be good. Note that (10) is not the same as (3), for (10) speaks of every pleasure and (3) of pleasure without the addition of "every." Hence we do not have to suppose that they are repetitious or that the two instances of "consequently" are a redundant doublet.[8] Note too that (9), despite its phrasing, does not have to be taken as redundant either.[9] It can be taken as a sort of definition to mean that pleasure is always "pleasure-from-a-good." Perhaps (8) is meant to show that (9) is to be taken in this way. For there is ambiguity about what "these things" in (8) refers to; some take it as referring to the categories that have just been talked about, but then the Greek word for "these things" should properly be feminine (the Greek word for "categories" is feminine), whereas it is neuter (or masculine). Aristotle is not always strict in his grammar and anyway it is not untypical of Greek to refer back to a group, whatever its gender, with a neuter "these things."[10] Sometimes, however, Aristotle is careful in what he says and an important point of philosophy can hang on a slight point of grammar.[11] A suggestion is to take the neuter of "these things" seriously and understand it as referring to the good things in the categories and not the categories themselves. Accordingly (8) will say that in the good things are the goods and pleasure, which may be taken to mean that the goodness and the pleasure are joined in the good thing, or that the pleasure is in the goodness (which is implied by what has already been said, especially if we follow the theory in the other *Ethics*, where pleasure is identified with actuality).[12] Hence (8) will be repeating what (2) was saying (provided (2) is taken in the strong way suggested), that the pleasure of a good thing must itself be good since it is intrinsic to the goodness of the good thing. If (8) is taken in this way, and if it is combined with (9) taken as a definition, we get the argument: (8) the pleasure found in good things is good; (9) pleasure as such is pleasure found in good things; therefore (10) pleasure as such is good, or every pleasure is good. This argument is valid and gives the conclusion Aristotle himself gives.

The trouble with this analysis is that it requires an involved detour through a metaphysics and a theory of pleasure found only in works of Aristotle confined to the school. Yet in the text here the argument covers a minimum of lines with barely a hint of the detour. As before, Aristotle is throwing out in this treatise simple looking arguments that hide complications of philosophy. Why? To see which members of his audience get puzzled enough to want to learn more? Or if the argument here is too complex for his audience to follow, perhaps Aristotle can be regarded as providing exercise for those in

the school also listening to his exoteric lectures, so that they can work out, in the light of what they know from the school, what he is up to here. In either case the argument as presented is the surface of something much deeper.

1205a16–25 A corollary of what Aristotle has argued is that pleasures must differ in kind, for if the categories differ in kind and if pleasures are in all categories, then those in one category differ from those in another. The opposite view, that pleasures are all one kind (though popular in Aristotle's day and since),[13] is rejected with an example. A science in one person, grammar in Lampros, disposes that person in the same way as it disposes some other person, Ileus, who has the same science.[14] But the pleasures of being drunk and of conversation—or sex (the Greek is ambiguous)—do not dispose people in the same way; hence pleasures differ in kind. This argument rests on the move from instances that differ individually (grammars) to those that differ specifically (drunkenness and conversation or sex), and sets up the following *modus tollens*: (1) if different pleasures did not differ specifically, they would, like instances of grammar, dispose people in the same way; (2) but different pleasures do not dispose people in the same way; (3) therefore different pleasures differ specifically.

1205a25–b28 The corollary provides what Aristotle needs to answer the second and third arguments first listed. He directs his remarks against a premise that appears in the second argument (that some pleasures are base), but since the premise overlaps with that in the third argument (that pleasures are found in base things), his comments can be taken as applying to the third argument too. The pattern of his discussion is first a *reductio ad absurdum*, showing that the premise is false, and then an explanation as to why it is false. He repeats the same pattern several times in what follows. That some pleasures are base is not in conflict with the earlier argument and conclusion that all pleasures are good or pleasures from a good. As Aristotle himself implies, base pleasures are good for base natures, and some base pleasures, such as sex, are not base in themselves but in the way they are pursued.

It is a supposition of Aristotle's application to pleasure of the analogy with sciences and natures that pleasures differ in kind and can be virtuous as well as base. Otherwise there will be no point saying that we should judge pleasure by its best instances instead of its base ones, because there will be no such instances. All pleasures will be the same. Hence the corollary just drawn, that pleasures do differ in kind, has to be assumed.

The argument that the pleasure of a base nature will be a base pleasure also proves that the pleasure of a virtuous nature will be a virtuous pleasure, which the opponents wish to deny. So here too the corollary must be assumed to block any criticism to the effect that different natures cannot have different pleasures because pleasures do not differ in kind.

A conclusion that Aristotle leaves hidden under the images of nectar and wine (05b14–15) is that those who say pleasure is bad because base must,

with respect to their own state of virtue, be continent rather than virtuous. For those who oppose base things but think pleasure is base must be failing to feel the pleasures of virtue but not failing to feel the pleasures of base things. Hence they are only continent (for the continent resist the base pleasures that they nevertheless feel). Thus perhaps arises their hostility to pleasure: in order to strengthen themselves in their resistance to the only pleasures they know, which are base, and perhaps also out of envy toward the truly virtuous (who seem to have joys that pass their comprehension), they say all pleasures are base.

At this point Aristotle finishes his discussion of the second argument and also of the third argument, to the extent it is similar. But the third argument was different in that it said, as the second did not, that what exists in, and is common to, everyone is not good. The oddity is why one should suppose that what is common to all cannot be good. The good considered by itself should be good whether it is common or rare. So if one holds the view that the good, to be good, must be rare, some extraneous reason must be driving one to do so. The obvious reason is ambition or love of honor, the desire for something that sets one apart from others. Hence pleasure cannot be good if it is something that everyone can possess. A fault of character, not reason, is driving the argument (05b31–32). Reason as such supports the opposite conclusion: everything by nature desires the good, so if everything desires pleasure, pleasure must be good (the good by definition is what all things desire, *NE* 1.1.1094a2–3). **1205b28–37**

Aristotle comes next to the fifth argument rather than the fourth. A reason for this change of order may be that the fifth raises an issue (the pleasure of virtue) that prepares the way for what looks to be his response to the fourth, and his response to the fourth raises an issue (the dominant factor in human behavior) that prepares the way for the rest of the treatise. He replies to the fifth argument after the same pattern as before: first a *reductio* and then an explanation. **1205b37–06a31**

Aristotle uses the virtuous as a test case for the goodness of pleasure: if the virtuous are impelled by pleasure, and yet they cannot be impelled by base pleasures, they must be impelled by pleasures proper to virtue itself. These pleasures, far from impeding the good, will be spurs to it. He also uses them as a test of virtue: to do the beautiful things of virtue with pain is not to be virtuous, for it is to do them under constraint, and he who does virtuous things under constraint does them against wish, and to have wishes against virtue is not yet to be virtuous (06a12–16). Aristotle thus comes close to saying again that those who find no pleasure in virtue (as they must who oppose pleasure because it is an impediment) are continent but not virtuous. That they may have high thoughts (as not sharing the common joys of the majority) is no commendation, but it is presumably not untypical. A puritan hatred of pleasure no doubt went as naturally with contempt of others in

Aristotle's day as it has since. At all events, virtue is in passion (it is the mean of passion), and passion is in pain and pleasure. Hence virtue must be with pain or pleasure; it cannot be neutral. But it cannot be with pain, for no one who is virtuous is pained by virtue. So it must be with pleasure. So pleasure must be a spur to virtue (06a17–25). Pleasure then is virtue's *protreptic* (to use Aristotle's word, 06a23).

These remarks must give rise, one would think, to objections and puzzles not only from those who do not enjoy being virtuous (and are afraid to admit it), but also from those who, in line with what Aristotle said earlier, hold that virtue has the beautiful as its end. For should the virtuous man be moved to virtue by pleasure rather than by love of the beautiful? The short answer would seem to be that to be moved by the pleasure of virtue is to be moved by the beautiful, for such pleasure is beautiful. Aristotle implies this answer shortly, but first he introduces another argument that he has so far not mentioned and that did not appear in the original list (06a25–30).[15] The argument has the character of a parenthesis both grammatically and logically. If virtue is always with pleasure and if virtue is also always with some science, there must be some connection between science and pleasure. And there is, for the sciences of cooking and decoration and perfumery have pleasure as their express end. But anyway, as Aristotle adds, all sciences cause pleasure, whether pleasure is their end or not. The point is obvious to experience. It also follows from what was said earlier, that every actuality of good has its pleasure. For science is such an actuality.

Response to the Argument That Pleasure Is Not Best

1206a31–b29 Commentators suppose that the discussion of reason and passion that ends this chapter is not part of the discussion of pleasure or part of the discussion of the fourth argument.[16] But in the discussion of the fifth argument, it has just been asserted that virtue has its own pleasure spurring one to virtuous action, which naturally raises the thought that pleasure is strongest in spurring to virtue. Further, the fourth argument against pleasure was first stated in such a way as to deny that pleasure is either best or strongest (the Greek *kratiston* means both and so is translated here as "greatest"). Aristotle's answer to the fifth argument, then, has already suggested an answer to the fourth argument, and an answer that is intriguing and puzzling enough to call for special treatment. The treatment is his discussion of reason and passion that follows the *reductio* and is marked as a "passing on" (06a36). The phrase may be taken to indicate a change of focus, but not an entire change of focus, for the topic is still about one thing being greater than another, either reason than passions or passions than reason (as in the continent and incontinent). But if the unreasoning part of the soul, when vicious, can be greater than well disposed reason, will the reverse be true and will a base reason be greater

than virtuous passions? If so, then the puzzle arises that a base reason could use virtue badly, which would be odd.

We should bear in mind, since Aristotle has expressly recalled continence and incontinence, that base passions being greater than good reason is pleasure being greater than reason (for the incontinent yield to the pleasure wanted by the passions). So base reason being greater than good passions, if such be possible, is reason being greater than pleasure. Pleasure, then, seems to be sometimes greater and sometimes not. Aristotle raises this puzzle in the form of whether passion is greater when vicious and not greater when virtuous. His remark about "passing on" may be taken to mean this shift of focus from the topic of pleasure to that of passion, which both reinforces the suitability of a discussion of pleasure in a treatise on virtue and returns the discussion to virtue.

Once the shift is made an answer to the puzzle is easy (06b7–17). For virtue is defined as the union of right reason with virtuous passion, where reason always commands what is best and passion does easily what reason commands. Accordingly, if one of these elements of the definition is removed and reason is bad but passion good, then there is no virtue. Thus bad reason can never use virtue badly by overruling good passion, for good passion without good reason is not virtue.

But if virtue needs both good reason and good passion, is one of them greater than the other? Simply speaking the passions are, for there must first be an impulse without reason for the beautiful and then reason can come along and cast its vote and pass judgment(06b17–21).[17] Those, like Socrates, are wrong who say the opposite.

Aristotle's position is the same as in the last chapter of the *NE* (10.9), where he argues that training in virtue must begin with compulsion under good laws and then reason can play its role. That chapter also prepares the way for the *Politics* where the same doctrine is repeated both with more force and more explicit instruction about how to realize it (*Politics* 4/7.15–5/8.7).[18] Pleasure is greatest at the beginning of life; only thereafter is reason greatest (06b22–29). Hence, if the fourth argument is correct in its premise, that only what is greatest is good, then pleasure turns out to be good after all, for it is greatest. But Aristotle refrains from openly stating the conclusion. Some in his audience, those who have to struggle to resist the base pleasures, which are the only ones they know, might be too scandalized by a conclusion that says pleasure is greatest. He is not afraid to say it in the other *Ethics* (6/7.13.1153b7–14).

Notes

1. As Dirlmeier points out (1958: 396), the remark (1204a21–22) about happiness as involving absence of pain, which, as a definition of happiness, is particularly associated with later Hellenistic thinkers, is not evidence that this treatise belongs to a time after Aristotle (contra Allan for instance,

1957: 7), for the same thought is already in Euripides, fr. 196 Nauck, in Isocrates *Panathenaicus* 233, and in Plato's *Philebus*, as well as *EE* 1.4.1215b14; it is, besides, obvious enough of itself.

2. We can ourselves think of Kant and Kantians whose moral earnestness strenuously rejects the connection of virtue with happiness and pleasure (and for whom, in effect, virtue is only ever continence). Donini (1965: 65–66, 73–74) notes the indirection or oddity of Aristotle's arguments about pleasure in this treatise, which he again attributes to the incapacity of the author. He does not allow for the possibility that the indirection and oddity may be due to a desire not to offend the continent, among whom, perhaps, not a few of the decent citizens who constitute the audience of *GE* will be found; see further the comments below on 1205b13 and 1206a7.
3. The list of puzzles that Aristotle gives here, while presented as a list, nevertheless has a sense of logical connection. In general Aristotle gives lists that can be followed readily because they are not full of remarks about connection and development, but they are connected if we look closely. Ramsauer thinks the absence of connection a point against *GE*. (1858: 31), and also Fahnenschmidt (1968: 7, 184). Contrast Elorduy (1939: 33–41), Dirlmeier (1958: 370).
4. I take the aside at 1204b36, about pleasure being a perceptible restoration of nature, as the way the opponents themselves speak of pleasure as a coming to be, and not as a separate or additional point. Dirlmeier's remark (1958: 402) that there is nothing new in this paragraph is thus correct, though I am less sure that his further remark, that Aristotle is deliberately recalling, and rejecting, what is said in Plato's *Philebus*, is also correct. Such reference is not necessary to explain Aristotle's procedure here.
5. Scholars propose emendations to the Greek, see Dirlmeier (1958: 403–404); Allan (1957: 10–11) thinks the argument shows lack of ability on the part of the author of *GE* who, in his view, is not Aristotle.
6. Pleasure is intrinsic to activity in the other *Ethics*. Dirlmeier (1958: 404) says (2) is not to be taken in this way, but without compelling reason.
7. Some scholarly emendations to the Greek do make Aristotle state (7).
8. Contra Dirlmeier (1958: 403).
9. Again contra Dirlmeier (1958: 404).
10. Dirlmeier thus understands the Greek here (1958: 404).
11. See the remarks above on 1.34.1197a19.
12. Armstrong seems to take the Greek in this way (1947: 623), but he also adopts Rassow's suggestion to emend "these things" (*toutois*) to "the same things" (*tois autois*). The emendation, although elegant, is not necessary, since the relevant sense is provided by *toutois* alone.
13. Epicurus held this view, as did Kant.
14. The individuals whom Aristotle mentions here, Lampros and Ileus, have excited scholarly interest, because another reading puts Neleus for Ileus, which, if correct, might refer to Theophrastus' nephew and heir and so put this treatise to a date late in Aristotle's life or even after his death and so prove it not to be by him at all; Dirlmeier (1958: 134, 404–405), Donini (1965: 146). The argument is not compelling. Besides there is no necessity to prefer Neleus to Ileus, Masellis (1954: 174); Armstrong (1947: 623), for instance, retains Ileus. That nothing is known of Ileus is no more a problem

than that nothing is known of Lampros, the correctness of whose name is not disputed.

15. The scholarly speculations this fact has led to, especially about the authorship of this treatise, are reviewed and rightly rejected by Dirlmeier (1958: 410–411).
16. See Dirlmeier again for the details (1958: 412–414); also Donini (1965: 75 n22, 222).
17. Becchi (1960: 214) has a nice discussion on the meaning of the Greek word used for voting here. He says it means rather "put to the vote" than "cast a vote," so that reason does not come along and cast its vote with passion but that it assesses and judges passion and then decides. Donini (1965: 189–90, 198) ignores this point and, in part as a result, rather misunderstands the passage. Reason, whatever else it does, certainly has to judge the rightness of the passions. Stock (1915: xxi) says of the passage of *GE* in question here, in direct opposition to Donini, that it is "the crowning word of Peripatetic Ethics, for which we wait in vain in the *EN* or even the *EE*."
18. A lot turns on hearing and performing the right music, see Simpson (1998: 270–73).

Chapter 8

As Regards the Practical Aim or the Sources of Virtue
Luck

The previous chapter has ended with the conclusion that passion is the beginning of virtue. Luck is now shown to be, in a way, the beginning of this beginning. This chapter too is about the sources of virtue. *NE* and the *Politics* answer this question in terms of law and regimes, about which nothing here is said. If this treatise is for citizens wishing to learn how to act well where they already are, their sources of virtue must be sources that exist and have an effect in political arrangements already established. Luck and nature (which are always operative) must be among these. Other sources will include the example and influence of models in virtue (gentlemen), the exercise of their own good sense, and the company of worthy friends. The chapters that remain cover these topics. They fit the logic and order of the treatise. **1206b30–07a26**

Aristotle introduces this chapter as he had introduced the preceding one, by speaking of what everyone associates with the happy life (06b30–34). But there is this difference: pleasure belongs to happiness as a good internal to it, while luck belongs to happiness as furnishing it with goods that are external. Goods characterized as external were listed before as wealth, rule, honor, friends, and glory (1.3.1184b3–4, 2.6.1202a30–31). Little has been said about their role in happiness, save that too much wealth or rule or honor can make one proud (2.3.1200a13–17); that wealth, like strength but unlike

the virtues, is not good either wholly or in every way (1.2.1183b39–84a2); that chance is cause of rule and wealth (1.2.1183b34–35); that the good man will use rule and wealth well, and strength and beauty, but the bad man will use them badly (1.2.1183b27–30); that certain of the virtues are concerned with the right use of external goods (as liberality with money, magnanimity with honor, magnificence with expenditures, justice with fair exchange of money and possessions). External goods are thus objects and tools of virtue and part of happiness because part of the exercise of virtue. But Aristotle is unconcerned about making this fact explicit or recalling the things on which it is based. Further, the luck he most talks about concerns internal impulses and has little to do with external goods. This narrowness of attention has a possible explanation: an audience interested in acting well in politics already knows that wealth opens the way to public office and that both it and honor attend public action. What they need to know and to acquire are the virtues that make action good. If there is a luck that plays a role in good action, it will deserve study here.[1] So the topics must be who the simply lucky man is (lest we mistake luck's relation to virtue), and what luck concerns, or what it is in and what it is about (06b34–36).

The puzzles that first arise logically are puzzles about what luck is, and matters of definition are best approached through a division of the relevant subject matter. So as chance was said to be cause in external goods (it was said to have control over them, 06b33–34),we should consider the divisions of causes, as nature, art, reason, god. But it is quickly seen that chance is none of these, yet it must be for there are no other causes (06b36–07a11).

We may wonder why Aristotle does not conclude that chance, if it is none of these causes, is not properly a cause at all (as he does in *Physics* 2.5–6). He does come to that conclusion at the end of the chapter, but obliquely. For the moment he says that luck is nature for that alone of the causes is, like chance, not in our control (the god is in our control in the sense that if we make ourselves good he will care for us, 07a12–20).

It may seem he is contradicting himself: first arguing that chance cannot be nature and then that it must be.[2] But instead there is dialectical advance. If chance is going to be a cause it must be one of the three, and the only one it could be is nature, for only nature is, like chance, not in our control. If chance is not nature, then chance is not a cause at all. In fact Aristotle does say at the end of the chapter that there is a chance that is not cause but the result of how things fall out. What he is doing here is showing that chance must be said in several ways and that questions about chance are not rightly resolved until the several senses of chance are distinguished. His process of reasoning through the chapter—from chance not being nature, to chance as a cause being nature (but irrational nature), to chance not as a cause being how things fall out, to chance being both the getting of a good one did not expect and the not getting of a bad one did expect—is an example of how to

solve questions by distinguishing senses. It is also at the same time an exercise for his audience to distinguish senses, for he uses chance or luck per accidens in two different ways, once to distinguish luck as happenstance from luck as cause (07b12–13), and once to distinguish luck as not getting a bad from luck as getting a good (07a33–35). The difference of sense is obvious enough, but his audience has to mark and note it to avoid confusion. Aristotle expects them to be able to do so.

Luck consists in something happening against reason, either getting a good or not getting a bad, but the former is per se luck and the latter only per accidens (the former improves one's lot by adding an unexpected good to it; the latter keeps one's lot as it is by not adding an expected bad to it). Luck then, if it is nature, is irrational nature. The lucky man is he who has, of his nature, an unreasoning impulse for good things and gets them (07a35–b5). **1207a26–b19**

Strictly, however, luck is not a name for this irrational impulse of nature but for the good things themselves that it causes. The same too with the good things that happen, or the bad things that do not happen, where there is no irrational impulse. Luck is not a name for the cause but for the results (whatever the cause may be, 07b5–8).

There are two kinds of luck then: good things happening because of nature, and good things happening, or bad things not happening, without nature or by the way things fall out (07b11–13). The latter is the luck Aristotle speaks of in the *Physics*. Here he says it is luck per accidens (it has no direct cause), while the other is luck per se (it has a direct cause). Luck as far as happiness is concerned is the latter: it is a reliable way of getting the external goods happiness needs, but the other is unreliable (07b13–19).

The conclusion leaves many questions unanswered. How will those be happy who are not lucky as the lucky man is lucky? If happiness is essentially virtue, and if knowing how to get virtue is as important as knowing what virtue is, how will we know how to get the luck that gets the goods that virtue and happiness require? What about divine care? If such care does not care for the luck that is mere happenstance (for that falls on the good and bad indifferently), does it care for the luck that is the irrational impulse? Indeed, if this impulse is to us irrational because it escapes our reason, is it irrational to the god or does it escape divine reason? If so, does divine care have control over the nature that we do not have control over?

No answers are given to these questions in this treatise even though it implicitly raises them. Answers can be suggested from the *Politics*: chance is spoken of as in control of the external goods that the best city needs, and Aristotle prays for these goods to be present (the best city is the city one prays for, *Politics* 4/7.13.1332a28–32). In the *EE* (8.2) he repeats much of what he says about luck here, but he says explicitly that the god is cause of the irrational impulse and also of nature and of mind. The *Metaphysics* (12.6–10) says things about the god who rules the cosmos that have the same implication.

Such a cosmic god cannot be any of the gods of pagan religion, for they inhabit the earth that this god transcends by transcending also the heavens that revolve about it. He must be some new and unknown god. One is not surprised to find Aristotle saying nothing about this god in an exoteric treatise. The Athenians famously slew one native-born philosopher for impiety and prosecuted two foreign philosophers on the same charge, forcing both into exile (Aristotle himself being one and Anaxagoras the other).[3] Yet all three believed in the cosmic god. Even centuries after Aristotle's death, Athenians could still mock another foreigner when he came speaking of an unknown god who ruled the cosmos and cared for human happiness. But by then politics had changed enough, and the foreigner left Athens soon enough, that a charge of impiety was not preferred.

Notes

1. Donini (1965: 87, 98) again notes, and rightly, the puzzle about external goods and happiness in this chapter (as also in *GE* more generally), but he again fails to note the possible explanation in the rhetorical demands of addressing a citizen audience.
2. Donini (1965: 82–87), Fahnenschmidt (1968: 79–85), who both think this whole chapter is disordered and confused. However, it is better seen as a stimulus to logical exercise and deeper thought; Dirlmeier (420–21).
3. See the discussion in Broadie (2003: 68–69) and contrast Fahnenschmidt (1968: 88, cf. also 126), who does not consider this possibility.

Chapter 9

Gentlemanliness

1207b20–08a4 Luck concerns the external goods, and the impulse for them, that are, as it were, the tools for happiness; virtue is the essence of happiness, which the pursuit of happiness has as end. This end must be set up as target if the pursuit is to be successful, as luck must be present to furnish the external goods and as passions for the beautiful must be present to furnish its beginning. So Aristotle now speaks of virtue as target, that is, as a whole and universally, or as a crowning perfection or completion, and no longer in its particulars. The gentleman, the man perfectly beautiful and good, is the target of morals, as the perfectly healthy man is the target of medicine. Or at least he is when the morals are those of the citizen. Hints have been dropped by the way that there is more to the target than moral virtues, for wisdom has also been spoken of and has also been praised. Perhaps the perfect gentleman, who combines all the beauties and all the goods, is not just a gentleman but also, as we say, a scholar. Such a gentleman is the target in the best city of

the *Politics*, for philosophy is the chief of his virtues, being the virtue of his leisure (4/7.15.1334a11–25). The gentleman who is a scholar or man of leisure ("scholar" comes from the Greek *scholē*, meaning leisure) is less evident in this treatise, but he is there.

A gentleman is the combination of beauty and goodness. Any virtue makes one beautiful and good in that virtue, so he who has all the virtues will be beautiful and good in all of them. He has complete goodness and beauty and is the perfect gentleman (07b20–27). Aristotle provides a proof (07b27–33): (1) the good is divided into two, things simply good and things not simply so; (2) the beautiful is the virtues and the deeds of virtue; (3) the things simply good are rule, wealth, glory, honor and the like (just spoken of in the chapter on luck); (4) therefore the gentleman, the man beautiful and good, is he to whom the simply good things are good and the simply beautiful things beautiful because (5) such a man is beautiful and good. Now (4) says that the beautiful divides, like the good, into the simply so and the not simply so, and (2) mentions two things as beautiful but does not say which, if either, is simply so. I take it that the deeds of virtue are simply beautiful but not beautiful for everyone. Virtue is beautiful for everyone, whether now possessed or not, for only virtue will make a man beautiful. But the deeds of virtue are only beautiful for those who already have the virtue—at least in the case of deeds of great virtue, if not of the lesser deeds by getting accustomed to which we become virtuous. To try to perform a deed of great virtue (as a deed of magnificence) when we do not have the virtue will likely make us ugly. To the gentleman the deeds of virtue will be good and beautiful for he is good and beautiful without qualification.

Confirmation comes from the contrast with the man for whom the simply good things are not good and who needs first to be made beautiful and good, as the sick man needs to be made healthy, before the simply good things, like the simply healthy things, are good for him (07b33–08a2). Only that man can be good for whom all the real goods, as wealth and rule in particular, are good and who is not destroyed by them. The phrase "all the real goods (or: all the goods there are) (08a2–3)"[1] is peculiarly emphatic and gives, perhaps, the reason that this sort of man must be the gentleman. All the real goods must exclude goods that are only good if one is morally or physically ill, because these goods are good in relation to something bad, which they are meant to cure. The man for whom all the real goods are good must have no such deficiencies. He will be altogether and simply good.

Note

1. The Greek needs to be translated in some such way, for merely to translate as "all goods" or "all good things" misses the peculiarity of the Greek, which reads (1208a2–3) *tagatha* (the goods) *panta* (all) *onta* (real, existing).

Chapter 10

Right Reason

1208a5–20 Aristotle has dealt with the beginning of virtue (passion), the tools of virtue (the goods of luck), and the target of virtue (gentlemanliness). He now turns to the actual getting of the end, which requires knowing and doing what, in the here and now, the virtuous thing is and continuing thus through a complete life (for happiness is in a complete life, 1.4.1185a4–9). The first of these belongs to right reason and the second, presumably, to friendship.

Aristotle's discussion of right reason is specified as about acting in accord with right reason (08a5–7). The phrasing is significant. To deal with *right reason* would be to deal with what right reason discerns; to deal with *action* in accord with right reason is to deal with how to follow right reason. The difference is shown by the difference between the questions Aristotle imagines someone asking and how the chapter begins. The questioner asks what is in accord with right reason and where right reason is, but the chapter begins by saying that to act rightly in accord with the virtues is to act in accord with right reason (08a5–9). Now an answer that fits what the questioner asks would be what was said before, that what accords with right reason is the advantageous (the advantageous for virtue, which is the beautiful), and that the deliberative part of the soul is where right reason is (1.34.1196b15–34, 97a13–16). Aristotle's answer about how the irrational part of the soul relates to the deliberative part does not fit those questions. Further, the imaginary speaker is said to be someone "who does not know it is this" or, alternatively, "who does not know this very thing" (08a7). If the Greek is translated in the second way, what is not known will be the questions the imaginary questioner asks. If the Greek is translated in the first way, what is not known will be the proposition with which the chapter begins. The first reading should be preferred. Aristotle's interest is in doing the virtuous thing, not merely knowing it (the incontinent man knows the virtuous thing but does not do it). The answer he gives, which does not fit questions about knowing what right reason says, does fit a question about *acting* in accord with what right reason says. For the answer is that there will be such acting when the irrational part of the soul does not prevent the calculating part from doing its own activity. The activity of the calculating part is to discern the advantageous and to direct action in accordance with it. The first must be relatively common, for even the incontinent man has it and only the vicious man lacks it, and presumably the number of vicious men is smaller than the number of incontinent, continent, and virtuous men. The second activity is difficult, for it requires a state of soul that not even the continent man has. The prudent man alone has his psychic parts in proper working order, and it is this psychic order, not right reason by itself, which is decisive for virtue. The imaginary questioner, who wants to know how to

act rightly, is mistaken in asking a question about how to *know* instead of one about how to *act*. Aristotle answers the question he should ask.[1]

The explanation of the answer is that the irrational and calculating parts of the soul relate as worse to better, and always the worse is for the sake of the better, as is evident from the body and the soul. For the body is for the sake of the soul and is beautiful when it is so disposed as to contribute to and promote the work of the soul (a healthy, able, supple, and well-toned body is best suited for being moved by the soul). The like must hold of the soul's parts and they are beautiful when the passions, which are worse, are most adapted to the mind, which is better, and to its work (08a12–20). Then they will be in a virtuous state and what accords with right reason will be done.

This account privileges mind as better over the passions as worse, but it does so only by privileging character at the same time. Mind cannot do what it should and what it is fit for if the passions are not informed by character so as to be subordinate and obedient to mind. Thus, just as prudence is a virtue of mind that enables character to be active in beautiful deeds, so character is a virtue of passion that enables mind to be active in beautiful thoughts. The point was already made by Aristotle in his comparison of prudence to an overseer or bailiff (1.34.1198b12–20). The implication is that one can no more be active in thought without moral virtue than one can be active in moral virtue without thought.[2]

Aristotle's questioner, seeking to justify himself as it were, asks further **1208a20–b2**
when and how the passions are so disposed as not to get in the way of mind. Aristotle responds by continuing his analogy with the body. A doctor can say what to do for a man in a fever and can even say what color to look for as a sign of fever, but he cannot say how to see the color (08a20–26). The questioner's asking how to see a color is absurd; he wants a prescription that he can follow mechanically without having to judge for himself. The doctor must realize the questioner is just playing with him. Common speech about things presupposes that those who are speaking already share perception of the things in question (08a26–30). The same holds of the passions and of knowing when they are so disposed as not to interfere with mind. Direct perception must take over (as it must also take over where the discernment of the beautiful is concerned).[3]

The questioner further asks whether, if he has the relevant knowledge of the passions, he will then be happy (08a30–32). He is like many other people who also suppose that knowledge is enough.[4] But Aristotle has already shown that this supposition is not correct and that the knowledge must go along with action if there is to be true virtue. Indeed there must even be action in the case of knowledge by itself. Learning a science only gives one the habit of the science; it does not give the activity. The activity one must realize oneself by exercising the habit. So knowing the sources of happiness (the topic of the present chapters) is necessary for achieving happiness, but it is not sufficient.

One must put knowledge into practice and no one can do that but oneself (08a32–b2). If one asks further what happens if one fails to put it into practice, then the answer has been given before in the discussion of incontinence and pleasure. The impulse to action just has to be there.

Notes

1. Scholarly doubts about this chapter, as Fahnenschmidt (1968: 40), that it is out of place or a doublet of what was already said in 1.34, can thus be dissolved, for these doubts spring from misidentifying the point of the chapter.
2. A dispute in recent scholarship concerns whether, in Aristotle's view (at any rate in *NE*), one needs to be morally virtuous to be a philosopher, see, for example, Broadie (1991: ch.7), Caesar (2009: ch. 5); the question was, in fact, discussed at least as far back as Feliciani (1562: preface). Aristotle's answer to it here seems to be a clear yes.
3. The point is made clear in the other *Ethics* 5/6.11.1143b11–14, 12.1144a31–b1. Prudence is like perception and if one does not have an "eye" for what is beautiful here and now, one will not see it.
4. Cf. the remark, in *NE* 2.4.1105b9–18, about listening to what the doctor says but not following it.

Chapter 11

Friendship

Puzzles about Friendship

1208b3–26 This impulse to action comes best, no doubt, from within but it can be provided from without, either by coercion and law[1] or the influence of family and friends (as is stated later on, if only incidentally, 1210a11–13). Aristotle implies the fact here in the reasons he gives for studying friendship, which are that friendship extends through the whole of life and is a good because friends give each other good things, for the chief such good must be the exercise of virtue, and the exercise of it, moreover, through the whole of life, or completely. Friendship with virtuous friends (including family and fellow citizens) must therefore be the chief way (after the internal impulse) of putting virtue regularly into practice. Accordingly its treatment here is a suitable continuation of the previous chapter and a suitable ending to the whole treatise, whose purpose was to get people to be thus virtuous.[2]

The questions to discuss about friendship are similar to those listed for justice: what it is, in what it is, and about what it is (08b4). The second question could also be read as "in whom" friendship is, for the Greek is ambiguous, and in fact Aristotle does mainly discuss the kinds of people, the like and the unlike, in whom friendship is. But since the like and the unlike are also

found among animals and things, as jackdaws and earth and rain (08b9, 16), it is perhaps better to leave the Greek as "what," provided this "what" is not understood as excluding "whom."

The first task as always is to list the puzzles and from these to confront the questions about the nature of friendship. Five are listed (08b8–26): whether friendship is in things that are alike; whether it is in things that are unlike; whether it is difficult or easy to become a friend; whether the virtuous and base man can be friends; whether the base and the base can be friends. The answer that the puzzles are pointing to, and the answer that does in fact explain them, is that friendship is many things not one.

What Friendship Is

1208b26–36

This paragraph might also be regarded as a puzzle (the sixth), whether all possible kinds of friendship are now to be discussed or only some (08a26–36).[3] Perhaps, however, it is better to take it as about what friendship is and to be proceeding (as a search for definitions does) by way of division. Aristotle now posits a division of friendships and eliminates two of them as not relevant to the present discussion,[4] friendship with the god and with lifeless things like wine, because they do not involve any loving back (08b35–36). Friendship as it is now under discussion, between fellow citizens especially, is necessarily a matter of loving and loving back.

That lifeless things like wine do not love back is obvious, but as evidence that there is no loving back in the case of the god Aristotle mentions the oddity of saying we are friends with Zeus (08b30–31). But the poets spoke of certain great men being "befriended of god" (*diiphiloi*),[5] and Aristotle himself elsewhere speaks of those who devote themselves to the contemplative life as being "most befriended by god" (*theophilestatos*, *EN*.10.8.1179b24). His meaning, therefore, when he says there is no loving back in the case of the god, must be that there is no befriending back of the god by us, but that there is, or can be, a befriending of us by the god.[6]

What Friendship Is About
The Kinds of Lovable Things and of Friendships
In General and in Answer to the Puzzles

1208b36–09a3

To solve the puzzles raised at the beginning, Aristotle proceeds to ask what it is about the friend that is loved. One might say that it is just the friend himself, but such an answer is imprecise. Not everything about one's friend need be loved or lovable, if only because one of the best things one can do for a friend is to give him goods that will make him better than he is. One must specify what it is about friends that make them love and love back. Accordingly we should say that the topic Aristotle is now discussing is the "about what" of friendship (the word for "about," *peri*, is used later of the lovables Aristotle now distinguishes, 1209a30).

The answer to the question what is loved can only be the good (the bad, qua bad, cannot be loved, but only qua capable of being made good). The good is said in many ways, but not every such way is relevant in every context. In this context, what is being asked for is not concrete instances of good, as wealth or honor or rule, but ways of being good that respond to ways of loving. Loving itself can be focused on what is simply lovable or on what one should love, just as wanting (which is a sort of loving) can be focused on what is simply want-able or on what one should want (08b37–09a3). The two need not be the same because the simply good is lovable, but what one should love (for oneself) is the good that is good for oneself. Aristotle said before that not everything simply good is good for everyone but only for those who are fit for it (2.3.1199a26–99b36). The simply good is the lovable but the good for oneself is the good that one should love. The lovable is therefore also to be loved (those who are fit for it should love it), but the to-be-loved is not also the lovable (what is to be loved by me because of my imperfect condition need not in itself be lovable).

1209a3–10a5 The difference between the simply good and lovable, on the one hand, and the good for me and the to-be-loved, on the other, helps immediately to explain the fourth puzzle from the beginning, whether the virtuous man can be friends with the bad man. He cannot be as with someone lovable and virtuous but he could be as with someone to-be-loved and useful and pleasant (09a3–15).

Friendship is not a single thing but a systematically complex one (09a18–19). The discussion of friendship must take account of and explain this complexity, even for decent citizens, who if they prefer virtuous friendships, must find lesser friendships useful since a city contains many who are not virtuous but who are necessary to its life.[7] The explanation is in terms of the doctrine of analogy, but Aristotle does not mention that doctrine by name (as he did not either when speaking of the categories twice earlier, 1.1. 1183a10, 2.7.1205a9). All he says is that the three friendships are the same in all being articulated from the same point but different in being articulated from it in different ways. He takes an example, the standard one drawn from medicine (09a23–27), and lets it do all the work for him without the addition of any philosophical elaboration.

The same holds of friendship, which, to apply the analogy with health, must mean that all the friendships are about the good and the pleasant and the useful but in different ways. The friendship of the virtuous is about all three while the other friendships are about the useful and the pleasant only. They are all friendships insofar as they all focus on the good but different insofar as they focus on it differently, whether wholly or partially (09a27–31). In the light of these remarks one can readily explain the puzzles raised at the beginning, as Aristotle now does for all the puzzles save the third, about whether it is difficult to be a friend (09a31–b11). This puzzle seems to be left to the final chapter.

In Particular

The preceding remarks have been about all three friendships in general and with a view to explaining the puzzles in general. The remarks that follow here are still about all three friendships but in more particular detail and for their own sake and no longer just for the sake of the puzzles. These remarks concern the stability and lastingness and beauty of the best friendship of virtue; the distribution of the three friendships (the friendship of the best people is the friendship of virtue; of the many the friendship of utility; and of any chance and vulgar person, the friendship of pleasure); and the changeability and ugliness of the friendships of utility and pleasure (which is not just that these friendships can be with base persons but also that the people in them have absurd expectations, wanting friendships not based on virtue to be conducted as if they were). **1209b11–10a5**

That virtue is useful most people will not doubt (for most people find it useful for others to be just and temperate and mild toward them), but they will doubt whether virtue is pleasant. Indeed, most people are inclined to think that virtue is not pleasant but only necessary. However, if virtue is not pleasant to the many, who are not virtuous, it is absurd to think that it is not pleasant to the virtuous or that the virtuous are not pleasant to themselves in being virtuous. Pleasure does not bring virtue with it, but virtue does bring pleasure with it (09b30–10a5).

What Friendship Is In
Equals and Unequals

Aristotle comes now, it would seem, to the question in what things and in whom friendship is. He indicates as much by returning to those puzzles he posed at the beginning, whether friendship is between the like or unlike, which are about the "in what" of friendship. Aristotle responded to these puzzles in his explanation of how the virtuous are friends with the virtuous and the base, but his response was then in terms of the "about what" of friendship (the good, the useful, and the pleasant), and was limited to the instance of the virtuous and base. Now he generalizes his response to all cases. He restates the puzzle in terms of equality and inequality but responds to it in terms of likeness and unlikeness (10a5–7),[8] because, perhaps, his citizen audience uses the terms unlike and unequal indifferently of the rich and poor and virtuous and base. In other contexts being careful about the distinction between unlikeness and inequality might be important, as in the formal context of metaphysics, where Aristotle does note and explain it (*Metaphyiscs* 5.6, 9), but hardly here. The point is confirmed by one of the problems he raises, which is about *like* friendships where one friend is *unequal* to the other (10a6–8). But it would be needlessly precise to use "likeness" only for the friendship and "equality" always for the friends. The words in common speech overlap. **1210a5–14**

1210a14–23 The example of fire (the hot and dry) needing water (the cold and wet) to help it burn used in illustration of useful friendships between unlike things is interesting in its own right. Water does not always extinguish flame, as firemen know and so they have recourse also to other materials (like liquid foam) to put out fires. Indeed it would seem they know, as Aristotle's contemporaries did, that water can in some cases feed flames.[9]

1210a23–b2 Aristotle has not mentioned the friendship of pleasure in talking of unlike friendships, but he implicitly mentions it now, because he speaks of another unlikeness, not between the friends, but between what the friends (whether like or unlike) put into the friendship. Some friends put in more than others and hence differences and complaints arise between them on this account. But it is hard to see how friendships between the like who are virtuous could be deficient in this sort of way, since the virtuous would then not be virtuous. Friendships between the like who are pleasant could be thus deficient, for the pleasant need not be virtuous. The virtuous too could be deficient, perhaps, if they were not fully virtuous or if one friend was advancing in virtue more than the other, which possibility Aristotle raises here along with the more obvious unequal friendships of utility and pleasure (10a28–b2).

1210b2–32 In the course of the explanation a point was made that the lesser of the two unequal friends should love the greater more, which contains the puzzle whether being loved is better than loving, for if the better should be loved more, then perhaps being loved is better. Hence Aristotle's dealing with it here.

The upshot of all the arguments about the superior wishing to be loved (10b2–22) rather than to love is that the friendship in question must be merely one of utility, since the superior have the inferior as friends for the sake of honor and the inferior the superior for the sake of gain. A further upshot is that the superior men in question cannot be superior in virtue, for then they would not care for the honor they receive from the inferior. For honor is an external good that is given as a sign of worth, and the man virtuous about honor, the magnanimous man, wants to be honored by the virtuous who are his equals and know his worth. He will care little for honor from inferiors (1.25). He will, however, care to do inferiors good, for in doing good he is being active and exercising love and not being passive in merely receiving it. He will not care, however, for the honor he receives from them (though he will not begrudge it since he knows it is all they can do for him in return). He will only care for the honor he can receive from his equals, and he will want to find such equals to be his friends, for thus he will have the good of activity in loving, and receive a worthy honor in being loved back.

These conclusions are merely implied but Aristotle seems now to pick up on them, for he says that the friendship between superiors and inferiors he has just been talking about may be little more than a certain fellow feeling and a wishing good for others (10b22–26). It need not have all the features of friendship, and in particular not the feature of wanting to live with one's

friend. For one can want good things for another but not want to live with him (as the superior want to give gifts to the inferior and the inferior want to give honor to the superior, but neither will want much to live with the other).

We may deduce from what Aristotle has said about equality and inequality that friendships can be equal and unequal, like and unlike, in three ways: they can be between the like and the unlike; they can involve unequal exchange; they can have more or fewer of the features of friendship. Moreover, the friendships that can exist between the unequal and the unlike will themselves be unequal. Only the complete friendship of virtue can be equal in all respects (10b27–32).

Oneself

The discussion thus far of those whom friendship is in has taken a general view of the question and has related equality and inequality to the differences between the friendships of utility and pleasure and virtue. The discussion turns now to the sorts of communities of persons in which equal and unequal friendships may be found, as citizens and foreigners and fathers and sons and the like. But this shift of focus necessarily also brings into view the question of whether and what sort of friendship a man may have with himself. For if such a friendship is possible, and since no closer community can exist than that between a man and himself, it must in some sense give the measure to friendships between a man and others than himself. **1210b32–11b3**

Aristotle raises this question first but in a certain order because the question contains an ambiguity within it. For whether or not a man can have friendship with himself in the way of having himself as a friend as he has his neighbor as a friend, he surely can have friendship for himself in the way of treating himself as he treats a friend, by loving himself and wishing and doing good things for himself. Moreover this sort of treatment of a man by himself can serve as a measure for friendship whether or not it also counts as itself a sort of friendship. That there can be such ambiguity in a question about self-friendship is plain, and that this ambiguity is what Aristotle now takes note of makes best sense of what is otherwise a puzzling text. For the manuscripts contain the word for friendship twice and a question is dismissed for later consideration that seems to be treated at once (10b32). Both puzzles are explained on the basis of the ambiguity.[10] The first part of the question, whether there is friendship for oneself (*autōi*), is quickly answered in the affirmative, for we want for ourselves everything we want for our friend (10b32–11a15. The second part, whether there is friendship with oneself (*pros auton*) is also answered in the affirmative (at 11a15–25).

Aristotle insinuates (11a12–15) both that his own status in Athens, where he was a resident foreigner, is no hindrance to complete friendship (nor thereby to the happiness of which it is part), and that political life can be such a hindrance. But a treatment of how the nonpolitical life of a philosopher is

happier than the political life of a citizen deserves no open place in an exoteric work to citizens. It belongs in the esoteric *Ethics* of the school.

The base man fights with himself, not because his reason disagrees with his passions as in the incontinent man (11a40–b2), but because his vices and actions do not agree with themselves (11a36–40, 11b2–3). Either one vice fights against itself, as gluttony fights against the health that it needs in order to satisfy itself (a sick man cannot eat how and what the glutton eats), or as one vice fights against another, when a man by his greed courts the rich, or by his ambition the honorable, whom his cowardice and his deceit repel.

So much of friendship with oneself as based on the particulars of friendship and of justice. But the comparison of friendship with justice (11a6–7) carried with it the comparison of friendship with the kinds of community and their respective justice (11b4–17).[11] Aristotle suitably adds some remarks relative to these kinds of justice and friendship.

Notes

1. As in *EN* 10.9.1180a4–14.
2. The different location of the discussion of friendship in the other *Ethics* does not argue against the suitability of its location here. Different purposes can suitably require different orderings, as Dirlmeier rightly remarks (1958: 433–34).
3. So Dirlmeier (1958: 436).
4. As Dirlmeier indeed also remarks, *ibid*.
5. A not uncommon epithet in Homer.
6. Dirlmeier's comments here (1958: 436–37) are exact. Worth noting is that the reason Aristotle gives in *EN* 8.7.1158b33–9a3 for there being no friendship of man to the god is the great superiority of the god to man. This reason leaves open the possibility that if men, or some men, were raised to the divine level without thereby ceasing to be men, they could be friends with the god.
7. The point is enlarged on in *Politics* 4/7.8–9 on the parts of the city.
8. The shift here from likeness to equality has generated considerable scholarly debate. The debate is nicely summarized and its significance rightly downplayed by Dirlmeier (1958: 444–45); see also Armstrong (1947: 658 note c).
9. In a curious letter to the *New York Times* dated Jan. 12, 1912, Mr. G. H. Benjamin declares that if water directed at a fire is divided into a spray by wind or an obstacle, the spray does not reduce but adds to the fire. He opines as a reason that the water is thus broken up into its elements, oxygen and hydrogen, whereof the oxygen aids combustion and the hydrogen burns as a separate gas. Mr. Benjamin claims to have seen this event occur at a number of fires, "particularly during the fire in the Equitable Building."
10. One of the occurrences of the word friendship is universally dismissed by scholars, see Johnstone in his *app. crit.*; also Armstrong (1947: 664n1), Dirlmeier (1958: 453–54), Fahnenschmidt (1968: 116–17). If the word is, however, retained and the difference of question noticed, the scholarly doubts about this passage are readily dissolved.

11. Such would seem to be the connection of these lines to what has gone before, but Dirlmeier (1958: 458) wonders if there is any clear connection.

Chapter 12

Father and Son

Aristotle's opening statement in this chapter is not at first clear, for it is not at first clear what he says most arises in family friendship, whether the number of friendships or their intensity or their superiority or something else (11b18–19). However, it is more plausible to suppose he is saying something obvious than something obscure and something true than something false. But what is obvious and true about families is that friendships do arise in them most and most intensely, but not that these friendships need be the best friendships in the sense of the most virtuous friendships. For families put people from birth into living together with parents and siblings and other family relations, for whom, if one survives at all, one is necessarily going to wish life and good life and good things in general. All families, except the most depraved, will have this effect, but only virtuous families will make their friendships also to be virtuous ones. Moreover, friendships outside the family (of all three kinds) will develop and increase in number as life advances. So one need not suppose that family friendships will remain the most important or most intense throughout life, but only that these friendships will be the first and, if they are at all good, the most long lasting. Other friendships may become more important later (as, in the present context, friendships with teachers and fellow citizens). **1211b18–12a27**

Aristotle's point about the family (provided it is as described) remains true, but he does not develop it save in respect of the friendship of father and son and who loves whom more (11b20–39). Elsewhere he develops family friendships according to the divisions of political regimes (*NE* 8.11). Such a development would seem to have no place in a treatise before citizens already active in cities with settled regimes, but only before legislators and philosophers who may, without danger to their political activity, take a larger view. Citizens active in settled regimes will, however, be keen for sons to continue their work after them and so keen to learn how fathers and sons relate in friendship. Aristotle focuses on the love that fathers have for sons (it is from and by such love that sons will follow after their fathers).

The Kindly Disposed and Those of One Mind

In turning to states that are close to friendship but are not yet so, Aristotle is still dealing with what friendship is in, but showing now rather what it is **1211b39–12a27**

not in, or not yet in but can be in. He considers first those who are kindly minded to others, perhaps because kindness has already emerged in friendship of father and son; then he considers those who are of like or one mind with each other.

Kindness can, to be sure, be a beginning of friendship and can become friendship if to the kindness is added the wish actually to do good when one can—not, indeed, that such wish would itself make the friendship, for friendship requires being loved back, but that such wish, especially when realized in action, might provoke the loving back when the other saw and was grateful for the benefit.

Being of one mind is like kindness in also being close to friendship, but being of one mind must be taken strictly to concern practical and not theoretical matters, and to concern people who do not merely have the same thoughts but the same choice about them too. The example of two people each wanting himself to rule neatly illustrates the point.[1]

Note

1. An interesting example is the Emperor Henry IV who said jestingly of himself and his brother, with whom he was at war, that they were in perfect agreement because both wanted Rome.

Chapter 13

Self-Lovers
Loving Oneself

1212a28–b8 The topics that Aristotle deals with in the final chapters of his treatise are not given any obvious location in terms of the division of things to examine in the case of friendship.[1] But since the "in what" of friendship has been the topic in the immediately preceding chapters, and since the "what" and the "about what" have been dealt with already, the likelihood is that these chapters are all to be understood as still dealing with the "in what." The likelihood is strengthened by the actual content, which does fit under that heading. So in the chapters 13 and 14 the topic is the friendship of self-love in the virtuous. In chapter 15 it is friendship in the self-sufficient, and in chapter 16 it is friendship in the number who can be friends. The topic in chapter 17 is a little less obvious, for it is professedly about how to use friends, which seems a different topic. But since what is actually discussed there is the friendships in which complaints arise and why, one may regard the chapter as still dealing with the "in what" of friendship but with the "in what" of easy and hard friendships. This suggestion can perhaps be confirmed by noting that of all

the puzzles raised in chapter 11 about friendship, only one has not yet been dealt with, that about whether it is hard to be a friend or not. Things have been said along the way, to be sure, that relate to it, as about complaints in the friendships of utility and pleasure, but only in chapter 17 are complaints made a direct, as opposed to an incidental, theme. We may perhaps suppose, then, that this chapter is returning to the puzzle about the difficulty of friendship and is answering it in terms of the "in whom" of the several friendships.

Chapters 13 and 14 take up the theme of self-love because, as Aristotle at once recalls (12a28), love of self was said earlier to be a kind of friendship. He focuses his discussion on the "in whom" of self-love, namely how differences in the "in whom" differentiate this friendship into virtuous and base. One may well wonder, however, whether this aspect of the question should not have been dealt with before when friendship with oneself was first introduced. A possible response is that friendship with oneself was before discussed with respect to the self as such. Now it is being discussed with respect to the self according to distinctions into virtuous and base. The focus is different.

The common understanding of self-love locates self-love in things useful and profitable, which are the goods that most people most of the time think of and pursue. But there are other goods, the beautiful goods of virtue and of the works of virtue. The virtuous man will be a self-lover as regards these beautiful goods, and if he stands aside for others in goods useful and pleasant, he will not stand aside in virtue. So here he will be a self-lover. The difference between the base man and the virtuous is not that the base man is a self-lover while the virtuous man is not, but that the base man is a self-lover in useful things while the virtuous man is a self-lover in beautiful things (12b4–8). Of course, as Aristotle does not say but as his audience will certainly conclude, the virtuous man by preferring self in virtue is preferring the city too, for the good of the city is that the citizens be virtuous.

Note

1. See Dirlmeier (1958: 465–66).

Chapter 14

Loving Oneself Most

That the virtuous man is a self-lover may seem paradoxical to the many, who measure self-love by things useful and pleasant and not by things beautiful. Aristotle adds to the seeming paradox by showing that the virtuous man will love himself most. The paradox is only seeming. It is dissolved by the same distinction between the useful and the beautiful. Insofar as the virtuous man **1212b8–23**

stands aside for his friend in things useful, he loves his friend more. Insofar as he does not stand aside in things beautiful (as virtuous he always chooses to do the virtuous thing), he loves himself more (12b8–17). But in this way he is also, at the same time, useful for his friend, since virtue always benefits the virtuous. The virtuous man is a not self-lover in any bad or selfish way, for who could blame, or consider selfish, someone who sought always to excel in virtue—in courage, generosity, justice? But most people think of what is useful and pleasant when they think of good things and so, since taking these for oneself means taking them away from others who may need them more or deserve them better, they think that those who love themselves are selfish (12b20–23). Were they to shift their focus to the beautiful things, they would see that love of self is good and not bad, provided it be love of self in beautiful things and only love of self in useful and pleasant things where these are made beautiful by virtue (12b17–20).

Chapter 15

Self-Sufficiency

1212b24–13b3 The friendship of virtue has been shown to be part of the good and happy life, and the friendships of utility and pleasure (even where there is not virtue on both sides) have been shown also to be part of it in a way. The implication might therefore seem to be that the happy man will be dependent on others and will not be sufficient for himself by himself. He will not be complete in happiness, then, which is in conflict with the notion that the happy man is complete. There is, to be sure, a certain fallacy lurking in this inference, for it assumes that self-sufficiency means self-sufficiency by oneself alone, so that friendship would be an external addition, whereas in fact friendship might be internal to self-sufficiency as helping to constitute what it is. Aristotle does expose this fallacy as he proceeds, but the possibility of falling into it is sufficient to motivate, under the "in what" of friendship, a discussion of whether friendship exists in the self-sufficient man.

Aristotle's first answer is pitched directly at the fallacy, for as the question assumes that the self-sufficient man will not need friends to provide him help from outside, so Aristotle responds by ignoring that assumption and taking the opposite assumption that the self-sufficient man, precisely because he is self-sufficient, will need friends on whom to bestow help and with whom to spend his time (12b30–33).

This answer is in a way dialectical, for while it exploits the fallacy it does not expose it. The fallacy arises from a false analogy with the self-sufficiency of the god, who is supposed to be self-sufficient without friends (12b33–37).

The analogy is used, says Aristotle, in certain discussions (12b33), and he might therefore be referring to things said in Platonic dialogues.[1] Or he might be referring to things commonly said or supposed in debate among people generally. For the common supposition about Zeus and the other gods is that they never need any help for themselves. The quotation just given from Euripides (12b27–28) seems to have that supposition implicit in it, for it assumes that he who is complete in the goods of fortune has no further need of friends.

The thought, on which the analogy rests, that the god is self-sufficient without friends is not correct because it cannot give a satisfactory explanation of what the god does. The god must do something but this something, if he has no friends to do good to, must be a contemplative and not a practical doing (12b37–13a7).[2] The god's contemplating will consist in his gazing at something, but what? For if he gazes at something else, that something else will be better than he, which is contradictory, for the god by definition is the best thing. If however he gazes at himself he will seem senseless, for self-absorption seems senseless. That the god is self-sufficient without friends cannot, then, be correct, since it leads to absurdities, but Aristotle does not elaborate. The matter goes beyond his subject. We can speculate, in line with what he has said about self-friendship, that the god will be friends with himself and will enjoy being with himself and loving himself and wishing himself life and good life and all good things. So the god will not be self-sufficient without friends, for he will have himself as friend, even if, or rather especially if, his activity is to gaze at himself. For since the god is perfect, his gazing at himself will be a simply perfect gazing at what is simply perfect and thus nothing will fall out of his gaze.[3] Such would not be true of human self-gazing, for even if a given man is perfect as a man, human perfection does not embrace all perfections, and many perfect things will fall out of his gaze if he gazes only at himself. Moreover, since it is absurd to think that the gods care for the bad rather than the good, we may suppose that the god has friends too in the good men on whom he bestows his gifts (as *NE* 10.8.1179a22–32 suggests).

But nothing prevents the god being self-sufficient in ways that we are not, and if so the god's self-sufficiency is different from ours, and an analogy drawn from him to us would not be reliable (13a7–10). When we come, by contrast, to ourselves and our own friends and ask what and what sort of thing our friend is, the answer is that our friend is another I, another self. The answer remains the same even if we consider a very great friend, save that here we can appropriately appeal to the common saying that such a friend is another Heracles, someone so like and so close to oneself as to be, as it were, another self (in the way that Iolaus was to Heracles, 13a10–13).

Human need for another I is different from anything that may be true of the god. For he, being perfect, will know himself perfectly and easily. We do

not know ourselves easily or perfectly, though such knowledge is of necessity sweet (for we want to live with ourselves, which we cannot do if we do not know ourselves). Knowledge of ourselves must come in another way, and that way would be to look into another who is like ourselves and who reflects ourselves back to ourselves like a mirror (13a13–26).[4]

The argument is self-focused: the self-sufficient man will, on these grounds, only need friends for his own personal completeness. Hence Aristotle adds further implications about how friendship is needed for the sake of the friend, either through bestowal of gifts or living together, which is sweet for both friends (13a26–b2). What I get from the friendship, especially by seeing myself in him, I will at the same time give back to my friend, as he sees himself in me.

Notes

1. *Timaeus* 34a8–b9; see Dirlmeier (1958: 469).
2. If one supposes that the god, as in Plato's *Timaeus*, is engaged in making and ruling a world, then one supposes he does have friends of a sort, for the things he makes and rules will be his friends, at least perhaps as sons are to a father.
3. Such is one reading of the famous passage about the god in *Metaphysics* 12.9; cf. Dirlmeier (1958: 469). Donini (1965: 139–41) rejects the applicability of any such reading to the argument about the god in *GE*, but without compelling grounds; see also Fahnenschmidt (1968: 130–32).
4. Further discussion of this argument in Cooper (1977: 279–301).

Chapter 16

Number of Friends

1213b3–17 If friends are necessary for virtue and happiness, we might think there need be no limit to the number of such friends. But our nature is weak. An example is drawn from the senses that cannot take in much all at once but only in measure (13b7–10). I take Aristotle to mean that we cannot see well a very large object or hear well a very loud sound. Other scholars seem to suppose he is speaking about smallness, and that we cannot see something far away or hear a slight sound.[1] Both points are true but both are not equally relevant. The examples are supposed to show how we cannot divide our love among many friends, which I take to mean that many friends will be too big for our love to take in. Accordingly we need examples that are also about things too big for us to take in, as a large object, but not a distant object, would be for sight, or as a loud sound, but not a slight or faraway sound, would be for hearing.

Both reasons given for fewness of friends are what we would call altruistic and not selfish reasons, for they concern how the friend can be present to and

sympathize with his friend for the friend's own sake (13b13–16). But strictly the distinction between altruism and egoism is out of place. The friends love what is beautiful and good in each other because it is beautiful and good, not because it is his or mine. The selves of the friends become fashioned after the beauty and the goodness on which their love is founded, and thus only do they love either themselves or their friend.

The same applies to fewness of friends. One should not have many friends, but one should have as many as possible. The possible is measured by occasion and by impulse or inclination (13b17). The occasion, no doubt, concerns how many like-minded people there happen to be around with whom one could be friends. The inclination is the impulse one has for friends, for since some will have an impulse for more friends and others for fewer, and since the antecedent impulse is so important in behavior and the generation of virtue, one should follow that impulse in friendship too, provided it is always governed by prudence.

Note

1. Armstrong (1947: 683), Stock (1984: 1921), Dirlmeier (1958: 89).

Chapter 17

Complaints

The first reason just given for limiting friends was the difficulty of giving many friends the love they deserve. Friends must be treated well if they are both to be friends and to stay being friends. A distinction must further be drawn between all complaints generally and complaints of equality—those that arise from one friend not doing for his friend what his friend has done for him. Aristotle is only talking of these latter complaints (13b18–24). **1213b18–30**

The sort of equality that allows for complaints of equality does not exist in unequal friendships, as of father to son, wife to husband, servant to master, worse to better. No doubt complaints can and do exist in these friendships, but not on the basis of equality (13b24–30). One might wonder why Aristotle confines the question so narrowly. But equal friendships are those that exist most and are most important among the citizens active in politics who are his audience. Further, complaints in other friendships could be reduced to these, as all friendships are reduced to the primary one of friendship in virtue between friends of virtue. To say how equal friends of virtue should deal with each other will be the first step to saying how all friends of all kinds should deal with each other.

But why does Aristotle not answer the question of how equals should treat each other instead of ending the treatise with the mere raising of it? Possibly the treatise is incomplete and the remainder of it is lost or was never written.[1]

Possibly, though, the answer has already been given in the preceding discussion about the virtues and prudence. For since virtuous friends will treat each other with virtue, they will treat each other in all the ways that have been explained under each virtue, and either no complaints will arise (for then one or other friend will not really be virtuous) or if they do, a ready solution to them will be available in a return to deeper study of the specific virtue that the complaint concerns and of the relevant prescriptions of prudence. In either event, friendships of virtue will be as hard or as easy as virtue is itself. Hence the only puzzle raised earlier that has not yet been answered, whether friendship is easy or not, will be answered here. For it will be answered by asking whether virtue is easy or not (for, in view of his audience, Aristotle is not concerned here with the other friendships).

This treatise may well conclude, therefore, as Aristotle intended and nothing is missing. If any in his audience have further questions about how to treat virtuous friends they should in the first instance go back to what has already been said about the virtues and prudence and seek answers there. If any of these find, further, that what is said in this treatise is not sufficient for their questions, then they must seek assistance from discussions that go beyond this one, as those conducted in the school. Aristotle has either provided the answers or the way to the answers.

Note

1. The view of Armstrong (1947: 685), Thomas (1860: 54–57), Casaubon in Johnstone's *app. crit. ad. loc.*, but not of Dirlmeier (1958: 474–75).

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