Nicomachean Ethics

by Aristotle

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Aristotle's systematic inquiry into human flourishing, virtue ethics, prudence, and civic friendship.

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Introduction vii A Note on the Translation xv Bibliography xix

Outline of the Nicomachean Ethics xxiii

Overview of the Moral Virtues and Vices 303

1. What Is the Highest Human Good or Happiness? (1.1-12)

2. Virtue in General and Moral Virtue in Particular (1.13-3.5)

a. Virtue and Voluntary Action, Choice, Deliberation, Wish

3. The Eleven Moral Virtues (3.6-5.11)

4. The Intellectual Virtues and the Problem of Prudence (6)

5. Self-Restraint and Lack of Self-Restraint (7.1 -10)

9. Happiness and Contemplation (10.6-8)

10. Transition to the Politics (10.9)

Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action as well as choice, is held to aim at some good. 1 Hence people have nobly 2 declared that the good is that at which all things aim. But there appears to be a certain dif¬ ference among the ends: some ends are activities, others are certain works apart from the activities themselves, and in those cases in which there are certain ends apart from the actions, the works are naturally better than the activities. 3

1 • Aristotle introduces several central terms here: tecbne , a technical art or craft, such as shoemaking, and the knowledge that goes together with it ; praxis, action, which issues from the parts of the soul characterized by longing and desiring; and proairesis, choice, closely tied to action. See the glossary for these and other key terms. The verb Aris¬ totle uses here for “is held to” (dokeiti) is related to the noun translated as “opinion” (doxa); it may mean simply that something “seems” to be the case or that it is “held” to be so by opinion.

2 • Kolos : the adverb related to a central term, to kalon, which has a range of meanings for which English requires at least three: “noble,” “beautiful,” and “fine” It denotes (physical) beauty but also and above all, in the Ethics , what is admirable in a moral sense. It will be translated most frequently as “the noble” (“noble,” “nobly,” “in a noble manner”) and, in the rare cases in which it refers unambiguously to physical beauty, as “beautiful.” In the present instance, Aristotle may say that the declaration in question is a “noble” one because it expresses a noble sentiment—that all things aim at the good—but not necessarily a true one: the conclusion drawn does not in fact follow from the premises given in the first sentence.

3 • Another set of key terms is introduced here: tele (singular, telos), the “end” or goal of a thing; see also teleios , n. 37 below. Energeiai (singular, energeia), “activity,” means the state of being engaged in an act or the carrying out of a deed (ergon); it is thus related to the next term, ergo (singular, ergon). Ergon cannot be captured by one English word; it may be translated as “work,” “product,” “task” or—especially when used in contrast to “speech” (logos) —“deed.”

Now, since there are many actions, arts, and sciences , 4 the ends too are many: of medicine, the end is health; of shipbuilding, a ship; of gener¬ alship, victory; of household management, wealth. And in all things of 10 this sort that fall under some one capacity 5 —for just as bridle making and such other arts as concern equestrian gear fall under horsemanship, while this art and every action related to warfare fall under generalship, so in the same manner, some arts fall under one capacity, others under an- 15 other—in allot them, the ends of the architectonic ones are more choice¬

worthy than all those that fall under them, for these latter are pursued for the sake of the former. And it makes no difference at all whether the ends of the actions are the activities themselves or something else apart from these, as in the sciences mentioned.

If, therefore, there is some end of our actions that we wish for on account of itself, the rest being things we wish for on account of this end, and if 20 we do not choose all things on account of something else—for in this way

the process will go on infinitely such that the longing 6 involved is empty and pointless—clearly this would be the good, that is, the best . 7 And with a view to our life, then, is not the knowledge of this good of great weight, and would we not, like archers in possession of a target, better hit on what 25 is needed ? If this is so, then one must try to grasp, in outline at least, what¬

ever it is and to which of the sciences or capacities it belongs.

But it might be held to belong to the most authoritative and most architectonic one , 8 and such appears to be the political art . 9 For it or-

4 • Or, “knowledge” in the strict sense (episteme , here in the plural). We use “science” or “scientific knowledge” to distinguish episteme from the other term Aristotle uses for knowledge, gnosis.

5 • Or, “power” {dunamis), here and throughout.

6 • This is the first instance of the term orexis , which we translate as “longing” and which refers in general to the appetency of the soul, of which epithumia, “desire,” is a species. The term is related to the verb oregein , which we translate as “to long for.”

7 • To ariston: the superlative of to agatkon, “the good.” Although some translators ren¬ der this term as the “highest” or “chief” good, we consistently translate it as “the best” to capture the sense that it is indeed a peak but may also be simply the best of the goods available to human beings.

8 • “One” might refer to “science” (episteme), “art” (techne), or “capacity” {dunamis).

9 • Aristotle here uses substantively the feminine singular adjective politike (the politi¬ cal), without therefore specifying the noun it is meant to modify, as can be easily done

dains what sciences there must be in cities and what kinds each person 1094b in turn must learn and up to what point. We also see that even the most honored capacities—for example, generalship, household management, rhetoric—fall under the political art. Because it makes use of the remain¬ ing 10 sciences and, further, because it legislates what one ought to do and 5 what to abstain from, its end would encompass those of the others, with the result that this would be the human good. For even if this is the same thing for an individual and a city, to secure and preserve the good of the city appears to be something greater and more complete: the good of the individual by himself is certainly desirable enough, but that of a nation 10 and of cities is nobler and more divine.

The inquiry, then, aims at these things, since it is a sort of political in¬ quiry.

The inquiry would be adequately made if it should attain the clarity that accords with the subject matter. For one should not seek out precision in all arguments alike, just as one should not do so in the products of crafts¬ manship either. The noble things and the just things, which the politi- 15 cal art examines, admit of much dispute and variability, such that they are held to exist by law 11 alone and not by nature. And even the good things admit of some such variability on account of the harm that be¬ falls many people as a result of them: it has happened that some have been destroyed on account of their wealth, others on account of their courage.

It would certainly be desirable enough, then, if one who speaks about 20 and on the basis of such things demonstrate the truth roughly and in outline, and if, in speaking about and on the basis of things that are for the most part so, one draw conclusions of that sort as well. Indeed, in the same manner one must also accept each of the points being made. For it

in Greek. “Science,” “art,” or “capacity” are all grammatically possible. We will trans¬ late the word consistently by (the) “political art”; the ending -ike generally indicates that an art (techne) is involved.

10 • The MSS add at this point the word practical (or sciences “related to action”: prak- tikais), but Bywater, followed by Stewart and Burnet, deletes it. One MS omits the word translated as “remaining ”

11 • Or, “convention,” “custom” (nomos); this is the first appearance of this important

belongs to an educated person to seek out precision in each genus to the 25 extent that the nature of the matter allows: to accept persuasive speech from a skilled mathematician appears comparable to demanding demon¬ strations from a skilled rhetorician. Each person judges nobly the things he knows, and of these he is a good judge. He is a good judge of a particu- 1095a lar thing, therefore, if he has been educated with a view to it, but is a good

judge simply if he has been educated about everything. Hence of the po¬ litical art, a young person is not an appropriate student, 12 for he is inex¬ perienced in the actions pertaining to life, and the arguments 13 are based on these actions and concern them.

5 Further, because he is disposed to follow the passions, he will listen pointlessly and unprofitable since the end involved is not knowledge but action. And it makes no difference at all whether he is young in age or immature in character: 14 the deficiency is not related to time but in¬ stead arises on account of living in accord with passion and pursuing each passion in turn. For to people of that sort, just as to those lacking self- 10 restraint, 15 knowledge is without benefit. But to those who fashion their longings in accord with reason and act accordingly, knowing about these things would be of great profit.

About the student, and how one ought to accept [what is being said], and what it is that we propose, let these things stand as a prelude.

Now, let us pick up again and—since all knowledge and every choice have 1 5 some good as the object of their longing—let us state what it is that we say

the political art aims at and what the highest of all the goods related to ac¬ tion is. As for its name, then, it is pretty much agreed on by most people;

12 • Akroates, literally, “listener” or “auditor,” perhaps of spoken lectures, perhaps of such lessons as are conveyed by listening—to the poets or to one’s father, for example (consider 1 . 4 , end and 1 . 13 , end).

13 • Logoi (singular, logos). The term will be translated as “argument,” “reason,” “speech,” or “definition,” depending on the context; see also the glossary.

14 • The first appearance of this important term (ethos), which appears, as a plural ad¬ jective, in the title of the work and is there translated as “ethics,” but is literally “things pertaining to character.”

15 • That is, those who are unable to do the correct thing, though in some sense they know what it is. Aristotle will analyze both “self-restraint” and “lack of self-restraint” (enkrateia and akrasia) at 7 . 1 - 10 .

for both the many 16 and the refined say that it is happiness , 17 and they sup¬ pose that living well and acting well 18 are the same thing as being happy. 20 But as for what happiness is, they disagree, and the many do not give a re¬ sponse similar to that of the wise. The former respond that it is something obvious and manifest, such as pleasure or wealth or honor, some saying it is one thing, others another. Often one and the same person responds differently, for when he is sick, it is health; when poor, wealth. And when they are aware of their own ignorance, they wonder at 19 those who say 25 something that is great and beyond them. Certain others, in addition, used to suppose that the good is something else, by itself, apart from these many good things, which is also the cause of their all being good.

Now, to examine thoroughly all these opinions is perhaps rather point¬ less; those opinions that are especially prevalent or are held to have a cer- 30 tain reason to them will suffice. But let it not escape our notice that there is a difference between the arguments that proceed from the principles 20 and those that proceed to the principles. For Plato too used to raise this perplexity well and investigate it, whether the path is going from the prin¬ ciples or to the principles, just as on a racecourse one can proceed from 1095b the judges to the finish line or back again. One must begin from what is known, but this has a twofold meaning: there are things known to us, on the one hand, and things known simply, on the other. Perhaps it is neces¬ sary for us, at least, to begin from the things known to us. Hence he who will listen adequately to

the noble things and the just things, and to the 5 political things generally, must be brought up nobly by means of habitu¬ ation . 21 For the “that” is a principle, and if this should be sufficiently ap-

16 • Hoi polloi: literally, “the many” or “the majority,” but in Greek as in English, the expression often carries a decidedly negative connotation.

17 • Eudaimonia, the first appearance of this central term; see the glossary and intro¬ duction.

18 • The expression Aristotle here uses (eu prattein) means in the first place “to act well,” but carries the extended meaning “to fare well,” with the implication that those who act well will indeed fare well: Aristotle’s investigation of happiness emphasizes the centrality of good action to happiness.

20 ■ Or, more simply, “beginning points,” “origins” (archai> the plural of arche).

21 • Some MSS, and the ancient commentator Aspasius, read here “by means of cus¬ toms (usages, [moral] characters)” (ethesin) rather than the “habituation” (in the plu¬ ral: ethesin) of one MS; Burnet accepts the former on the grounds that “[w]e have not settled yet that ethos comes from ethos” (alluding to the beginning of book 2); Stewart and Bywater accept the latter reading.

parent, there will be no need of the “why” in addition, and a person of the sort indicated has or would easily get hold of principles. As for him to whom neither of these is available, let him listen to the words of Hesiod:

10 This one is altogether best who himself understands all things

But good in his turn too is he who obeys one who speaks well.

But he who neither himself understands nor, in listening to another,

Takes this to heart, he is a useless man . 22

Let us speak from the point where we digressed. For on the basis of the 15 lives they lead, the many and crudest seem to suppose, not unreasonably, that the good and happiness are pleasure. And thus they cherish the life of enjoyment. For the especially prominent ways of life are three: the one just mentioned, the political, and, third, the contemplative.

20 Now, in choosing a life of fatted cattle, the many appear altogether slavish; but they attain a hearing, because many people in positions of au¬ thority experience passions like those of Sardanapallus . 23 The refined and active, on the other hand, choose honor, for this is pretty much the end of the political life. But it appears to be more superficial than what is be- 2 5 ing sought, for honor seems to reside more with those who bestow it than

with him who receives it; and we divine that the good is something of ones own and a thing not easily taken away. Further, people seem to pur¬ sue honor so that they may be convinced that they themselves are good; at any rate, they seek to be honored by the prudent , 24 among those to whom they are known, and for their virtue . 25 It is clear, then, that in the case of 30 these people at least, virtue is superior.

22 * Hesiod, Works and Days 293, 295-97. The line Aristotle omits is: “Reflecting on what is better subsequently and in the end.” The term translated as “good” is not aga- thos but the more poetic estklos (see also book 2, n. 18); “heart” is thumos, elsewhere rendered as “spiritedness” or “spirit.”

23 ■ An Assyrian king (ruled ca. 669-627) renowned for, and apparently boastful of, his extravagant way of life and sensual indulgences. Aristotle mentions him also in the Eudemian Ethics (i2i6ai6).

24 • The first appearance of this adjective, related to the intellectual virtue of prudence (phronesis).

25 * This is the first appearance of the term arete , which refers to the excellence specific to a given thing or being. It will be translated throughout as “virtue,” but one should

And perhaps someone might in fact suppose that virtue is to a greater degree the end of the political life. Yet it too appears to be rather incom¬ plete. For it seems to be possible for someone to possess virtue even while asleep or while being inactive throughout life and, in addition to these, while suffering badly and undergoing the greatest misfortunes. But no 1096a one would deem happy somebody living in this way, unless he were de¬ fending a thesis. But enough about these things: they have been spoken about adequately also in the circulated writings. 26

Third is the contemplative life, about which we will make an investiga¬ tion in what will follow. 27 5

The moneymaking life is characterized by a certain constraint, and it is clear that wealth is not the good being sought, for it is a useful thing and for the sake of something else. Thus someone might suppose that the pre¬ viously mentioned things are ends to a greater degree than is money, for at least they are cherished for their own sakes. But they do not appear to be ends either, and many arguments have been widely distributed in op¬ position to them. 28 So let these things be dismissed. 10

As for the universal [good], 29 perhaps it is better to examine it and to go through the perplexities involved in the ways it is spoken of, although un¬ dertaking such an inquiry is arduous, because the men who introduced

keep in mind that it is possible to refer in Greek to the “virtue” not only of human be¬ ings but also of other animals and even of inanimate objects.

26 • It is unknown precisely what Aristotle here refers to; the extended meaning of the term may be “routine” or “everyday,” and the general sense is that these writings are not the most exacting.

27 • For Aristotle’s explicit discussion, see 10.6-8.

28 • Reading, with Gauthier and Jolif, the kai (and) of some MSS, rather than the kai- toi (although) of others, and taking pros in its not uncommon sense of “against” or “in opposition to” The other reading could be rendered: “although many arguments have been widely distributed relating to them.”

29 • Or, “general” (kathalou), here referring to the Platonic idea of the good as a self- subsisting whole separate from any particular good thing. The word order in Greek suggests at first blush that the subject of the chapter will be “the universal better” {to de kathalou beltion), and indeed Aristotle will argue that our

experience of better and worse does not permit us access to a universal “good.”

the forms 30 are dear . 31 But perhaps it might be held to be better, and in fact to be obligatory, at least for the sake of preserving the truth, to do away l s with even ones own things, especially for those who are philosophers. For

although both are dear, it is a pious thing to honor the truth first.

Now, those who conveyed this opinion did not make ideas 32 pertain to those cases in which they spoke of the prior and posterior; hence they did not set up an idea of numbers either. But the good is spoken of in relation 20 to what something is, and in relation to what sort of thing it is, and as re¬ gards its relation to something; but that which is the thing in itself—that is, the being—is prior by nature to any relation it has (for this is like an offshoot and accident of the being). As a result, there would not be any common idea pertaining to these things.

And further, the good is spoken of in as many ways as is the term is — for the good is spoken of in relation to what something is (for example, 25 the god and intellect 33); as for what sort of thing something is, the good is spoken of as the virtues; as for how much something is, it is spoken of as the measured amount; in its relation to something, as what is useful; as regards time , as the opportune moment; as regards place, as the [right] location; and other things of this sort. [Since all this is so,] it is clear that the good would not be something common, universal, and one. For if that were the case, it would not be spoken of in all the categories but in one alone.

30 And further, since there is a single science of things that pertain to a single idea , there would also be some single science of all the good things. But as things stand, there are many sciences even of things that fall under a single category—for example, the opportune moment: in war, it is gen-

30 • Eide (singular, eidos): a term closely associated with Plato or the Platonists. Like idea , the term that will shortly follow, the primary sense of eidos is “that which is seen,” in particular, the “form” or “shape” of a thing. In the Platonic doctrine of the forms, to which Aristotle refers here, the eide are the self-subsisting forms that give each partic¬ ular thing its class character and hence are in some sense responsible for the existence of a thing as what it is.

32 • A transliteration of the term made famous by Plato and closely associated with ei¬ dos, or “form.” It is related to the verb to see and means most simply the outward look or appearance of a thing and, by extension, the class to which a group of things with similar looks belong; see also n. 58.

33 • The first appearance of the term theos , “god,” and of the term nous, translated throughout as “intellect,” with the exception of moan, ni2azi, and 11^9, where it is translated as “sense.”

eralship, in illness, medicine; and in the case of the measured amount of nourishment, on the one hand, it is medicine, but in that of physical ex¬ ertions, on the other, it is gymnastic training.

But someone might be perplexed as to whatever they mean by “thing- 3 5

as-such," if in fact the very same account of human being pertains both to 1096b "human being-as-such" and to a given human being. For in the respect in which each is a human being, they will not differ at all. And if this is so,

[then neither the good-as-such nor a good thing will differ] in the respect in which each is good. Moreover, the good will not be good to a greater degree by being eternal either, if in fact whiteness that lasts a long time will not be whiter than that which lasts only a day.

The Pythagoreans 34 seem to speak more persuasively about it by pos- 5 iting the One in the column of the goods, and it is indeed they whom Speusippus 35 seems to follow. But about these things let there be another argument.

A certain dispute over the points stated begins to appear, because the arguments made [by the proponents of the forms] do not concern every good: things pursued and cherished by themselves are spoken of in refer- 10 ence to a single form, but what produces these (or in some way preserves them or prevents their contraries) is spoken of as being good on account of the former sorts of goods and in a different manner. It is clear, then, that the good things would be spoken of in two senses: those that are good in themselves, others that are good on account of these.

Separating the things good in themselves from those that are advanta- 15

geous, then, let us examine whether the former are spoken of in reference to a single idea. What sorts of things might someone posit as being good in themselves? Is it so many things as are in fact pursued for themselves alone—for example, exercising prudence and seeing, as well as certain pleasures and honors ? For even if we pursue these on account of some¬ thing else as well, nonetheless one might posit them as being among the things that are good in themselves. Or is nothing good in itself except 20 the idea ? The result will be that the form [abstracted from all individual good things] is pointless. But if in fact these things [that is, exercising pru¬ dence, seeing, and the like] are among the things good in themselves, the

34 * Little is known about Pythagoras, a famous thinker of the sixth century hailing from Samos; but he, or his followers, became particularly well known for their math¬ ematical investigations.

35 ■ An Athenian philosopher (ca. 407-339) who succeeded Plato as head of the Acad¬ emy in Athens. Though he was a prolific writer, only fragments of his work remain.

definition of the good will need to manifest itself as the same in all cases, just as the definition of whiteness is the same in the case of snow and in that of white lead. But the definitions of honor, prudence, and pleasure are dis- 25 tinct and differ in the very respect in which they are goods. It is not the case,

therefore, that the good is something common in reference to a single idea.

But how indeed are they spoken of [as good] ? For they are not like things that share the same name by chance. Is it by dint of their stemming from one thing or because they all contribute to one thing? Or is it more that they are such by analogy? For as there is sight in the body, so there is intellect in the soul, and indeed one thing in one thing, another in an- 30 other. But perhaps we ought to leave these considerations

be for now: to be very precise about them would be more appropriate to another phi¬ losophy. The case is similar with the idea as well: even if there is some one good thing that is predicated [of things] in common, or there is some sep¬ arate thing, itself by itself, it is clear that it would not be subject to action or capable of being possessed by a human being. But it is just some such thing that is now being sought.

35 Perhaps someone might be of the opinion that it is better to be familiar

1097a with it, with a view to those goods that can be possessed and are subject to action. By having this [universal good] as a sort of model, we will to a greater degree know also the things that are good for us; and if we know them, we will hit on them. Now, the argument has a certain persuasive¬ ness, but it seems to be inconsistent with the sciences. For although all 5 sciences aim at some good and seek out what is lacking, they pass over knowledge of the good itself. And yet it is not reasonable for ^//craftsmen to be ignorant of so great an aid and not even to seek it out.

A further perplexity too is what benefit the weaver or carpenter might gain, in relation to his own art, by knowing this same good, or how he io who has contemplated the idea itself will be a more skilled physician or general. For it appears that the physician does not examine even health this way, but inquires rather into the health of a human being and even more, perhaps, into that of this particular human being. For he treats pa¬ tients individually.

And let what pertains to these things be stated up to this point. CHAPTER SEVEN

1 5 Let us go back again to the good being sought, whatever it might be. For it appears to be one thing in one action or art, another in another: it is a

different thing in medicine and in generalship, and so on with the rest.

What, then, is the good in each of these ? Or is it that for the sake of which everything else is done? In medicine, this is health; in generalship, vic¬ tory; in house building, a house; and in another, it would be something 20 else. But in every action and choice, it is the end involved, since it is for the sake of this that all people do everything else. As a result, if there is some end of all actions, this would be the good related to action; and if there are several, then it would be these. So as the argument proceeds, it arrives at the same point. But one ought to try to make this clearer still. 25

Since the ends appear to be several, and some of these we choose on account of something else—for example, wealth, an aulos , 36 and the in¬ strumental things generally—it is clear that not all ends are complete , 37 but what is the best appears to be something complete. As a result, if there is some one thing that is complete in itself, this would be what is being sought, and if there are several, then the most complete of these. We say 30 that what is sought out for itself is more complete than what is sought out on account of something else, and that what is never chosen on ac¬ count of something else is more complete than those things chosen both for themselves and on account of this [further end]. The simply complete thing, then, is that which is always chosen for itself and never on account of something else.

Happiness above all seems to be of this character, for we always choose 1097b

it on account of itself and never on account of something else. Yet honor, pleasure, intellect, and every virtue we choose on their own account—for even if nothing resulted from them, we would choose each of them—but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, because we suppose that, 5 through them, we will be happy. But nobody chooses happiness for the sake of these things, or, more generally, on account of anything else.

The same thing appears to result also on the basis of self-sufficiency, for the complete good is held to be self-sufficient. We do not mean by self- sufficient what suffices for someone by himself, living a solitary life, but what is sufficient also with respect to parents, offspring, a wife, and, in 10 general, one's friends and fellow citizens, since by nature a human being is political. But it is necessary to grasp a certain limit to these; for if one

36 • A double-reed instrument not unlike the modern oboe; the noun here is plural in the Greek.

37 • Or, "perfect" (teleios)-, the adjective is related to the noun telos and suggests that which reached or fulfilled the end or goal appropriate to a given thing (see also n. 3 above).

extends these to include the parents [of parents], 38 and descendants, and the friends of friends, it will go on infinitely. But this must be examined 15 further later on. As for the self-sufficient, we posit it as that which by it¬ self makes life choiceworthy 39 and in need of nothing, and such is what we suppose happiness to be.

Further, happiness is the most choiceworthy of all things because it is not just one among them—and it is clear that, were it included as one among many things, it would be more choiceworthy with the least ad¬ dition of the good things; for the good that is added to it results in a superabundance of goods, and the greater number of goods is always 20 more choiceworthy. So happiness appears to be something complete and self-sufficient, it being an end of our actions.

But perhaps saying that "happiness is best" is something manifestly agreed on, whereas what it is still needs to be said more distinctly. Now, 25 perhaps this would come to pass if the work 40 of the human being should

be grasped. For just as in the case of an aulos player, sculptor, and every expert, and in general with those who have a certain work and action, the relevant good and the doing of something well seem to reside in the work, so too the same might be held to be the case with a human being, if in fact there is a certain work that is a human being s. Are there, then, certain works and actions of a carpenter and shoemaker, but none of a human 30 being: would he, by contrast, be naturally "without a work " 41 ? Or just as there appears to be a certain work of the eye, hand, and foot, and in fact of each of the parts in general, so also might one posit a certain work of a human being apart from all these ?

So whatever, then, would this work be? For living appears to be some¬ thing common even to plants, but what is peculiar [to human beings] is 1098 a being sought. One must set aside, then, the life characterized by nutrition

as well as growth. A certain life characterized by sense perception would be next, but it too appears to be common to a horse and cow and in fact to every animal. So there remains a certain active life of that which possesses

38 • This additional phrase, not present in the MSS, seems necessary in order to make the text consistent with io97b9~io; it is suggested by Rassow and accepted by both Burnet and Gauthier and Jolif.

39 • Some MSS add at this point the words “and sufficient” (arkion) (or, “sufficient and choiceworthy”).

40 • To ergon : see n. 3 as well as the glossary.

41 • Argon: literally, without an ergon , a work, task, or function, and so by extension idle.

reason; and what possesses reason includes what is obedient to reason, on the one hand, and what possesses it and thinks, on the other. But since 5 this [life of reason in the second sense] also is spoken of in a twofold way, one must posit the life [of that which possesses reason] in accord with an activity, for this seems to be its more authoritative meaning . 42 And if the work of a human being is an activity of soul in accord with reason, or not without reason, and we assert that the work of a given person is the same in kind as that of a serious 43 person, just as it would be in the case of a cithara 44 player and a serious cithara player, and this would be so in 10 all cases simply when the superiority in accord with the virtue is added to the work; for it belongs to a cithara player to play the cithara, but to a serious one to do so well. But if this is so 45 —and we posit the work of a human being as a certain life, and this is an activity of soul and actions ac¬ companied by reason, the work of a serious man being to do these things well and nobly, and each thing is brought to completion well in accord 15 with the virtue proper to it—if this is so, then the human good becomes an activity of soul in accord with virtue, and if there are several virtues, then in accord with the best and most complete one.

But, in addition, in a complete life. For one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one day. And in this way, one day or a short time does not make someone blessed and happy either.

Let the good have been sketched in this way, then, for perhaps one 20

42 • The subject of the sentence is unclear, and we supply the immediately preceding referent, the life in accord with the part of the soul that possesses reason and thinks; of this part, there is both an activity and a characteristic (hexis); and, as Aristotle will argue in 1 . 8 , happiness consists in the activity or use rather than the mere possession of a characteristic. Burnet recommends dropping the immediately preceding phrase, which distinguishes the two parts of the soul; he argues that the phrase “interrupts the argument and destroys the grammar ” On his reading, the referent would be simply the active life of that which possesses reason.

43 * The first appearance of the term spoudaios. The “serious” (spoudaios) human be¬ ing is characterized by the correct devotion to and exercise of moral virtue, although Aristotle extends the term to anything that does its own “work” well, including horses and eyes: see 2 .6.

44 • A plucked instrument with a tortoiseshell soundboard.

45 • Bywater brackets everything within the dashes on the grounds that it is both awk¬ ward and a repetition of points already raised. The grammar here is difficult; Burnet, who accepts the text, confesses that he “hardly [likes] to put a limit to the capacity of Aristotle for long and complicated protases even when they involve repetitions and grammatical awkwardnesses.”

ought to outline it first and then fill it in later. It might seem to belong to everyone to advance and fully articulate things whose sketch is in a noble condition, and time is a good discoverer of or contributor to such things: 25 from this have arisen the advances in the arts too, for it belongs to every¬ one to add what is lacking.

But one must remember the points mentioned previously as well, to the effect that one must not seek out precision in all matters alike but rather in each thing in turn as accords with the subject matter in question and insofar as is appropriate to the inquiry. For both carpenter and geom- 30 eter seek out the right angle but in different ways: the former seeks it in¬ sofar as it is useful to his work; the latter seeks out what it is or what sort of a thing it is, for he is one who contemplates 46 the truth. One ought to act in the same manner also in other cases, so that things extraneous to the 1098b works involved not multiply. And one should not demand the cause in all things alike either; rather, it is enough in some cases to have nobly pointed out the “that”—such is the case in what concerns the principles—and the “that” is the first thing and a principle. Some principles are observed 47 by means of induction , 48 some by perception, some by a certain habituation, 5 and others in other ways. One ought to try to go in search of each in turn in the manner natural to them and to be serious about their being nobly defined. For they are of great weight in what follows from them: the be¬ ginning 49 seems to be more than half of the whole, and many of the points being sought seem to become manifest on account of it.

One must examine what concerns it , 50 not only on the basis of the conclu- 10 sion and the premises on which the argument rests, but also on the basis of things said about it. For with the truth, all the given facts harmonize; but with what is false, the truth soon hits a wrong note.

46 ■ Or, is an “observer,” “spectator” (theates); the term is related to the words translated as “contemplation” and “contemplative” (theoretike , tbedretikos).

47 ■ Again, “contemplated,” “beheld,” or “seen” (theorem).

48 • A technical term of Aristotelian logic (epagoge); see also 6.3.

49 • Arche : “principle” or “beginning point” (see n. 20).

50 • The nearest grammatical subject is “beginning” or “principle” (arche). Gau¬ thier andjolif (following Susemihl) object to this and suggest making a relatively small change in the reading of the MSS (from antes to autou) such that the referent would be “the good” rather than “principle.”

Now, although the good things have been distributed in a threefold manner—both those goods said to be external, on the one hand, and those pertaining to soul and to body, on the other—we say that those pertaining to soul are the most authoritative and especially good. And we 15

posit as those “goods pertaining to soul,” the souls actions and activities.

As a result, the argument 51 would be stated nobly, at least according to this opinion, which is ancient and agreed to by those who philosophize.

It would be correct too to say that certain actions and activities are the end, for in this way the end belongs among the goods related to soul, not among the external ones. 20

And that the happy person both lives well and acts well harmonizes with the argument, for [happiness] was pretty much said to be a certain kind of living well and good action . 52 It also appears that all the things being sought pertaining to happiness are included in what was said: in the opinion of some, happiness is virtue; of others, prudence; of oth¬ ers, a certain wisdom; in the opinion of still others, it is these or some of these things, together with pleasure or not without pleasure. And others 25 include alongside these the prosperity related to external goods as well.

Many of the ancients say some of these things, a few men of high repute say others of them; and it is reasonable that neither of these two groups be wholly in error, but rather that they be correct in some one respect, at least, or even in most respects.

The argument, then, is in harmony with those who say that [happi- 30 ness] is virtue or a certain virtue, for the activity in accord with virtue belongs to virtue. But perhaps it makes no small difference whether one supposes the best thing to reside in possession or use, that is, in a charac¬ teristic 53 or an activity. For it is possible that, although the characteristic is present, it accomplishes nothing good—for example, in the case of some- 1099a

51 • The main verb is without an expressed subject; we follow the suggestion of Burnet and assume logos , here rendered as “argument,” although “definition” (of happiness) is another possibility.

52 • “Good action” or “faring well” (eupraxia): the abstract noun here used is related to the word translated as “action” throughout (praxis); and the previous terms in the sen¬ tence, “acts well” (euprattein), can also be translated as “fares well”; see n. 17.

53 • This is the first appearance of the important term hexis , which is related to a verb (echein) that means to have, hold, or possess, and in conjunction with an adverb, to be in a given state. A hexis in the context of the Ethics is an ordered disposition or state of soul, produced by habituation, and active especially in the face of pleasures and pains; as Aristotle notes at the end of book 1, the praiseworthy characteristics are the (moral) virtues.

one who is asleep or has been otherwise hindered. But this is not possible when it comes to the activity: of necessity, a person will act, and he will act well. For just as it is not the noblest and strongest who are crowned with the victory wreath in the Olympic Games but rather the competi- 5 tors (for it is certain of these who win), so also it is those who act correctly who attain the noble and good things in life.

But their life is also pleasant in itself; for feeling pleasure is among the things related to the soul, and there is pleasure for each person in con¬ nection with whatever he is said to be a lover 54 of—for example, a

horse 10 is pleasant to the horse lover, a play to the theater lover. In the same man¬

ner too, the just things are pleasant to the lover of justice, and in general, things in accord with virtue are pleasant to the lover of virtue. Now, things pleasant to the many do battle with one another, because such things are not pleasant by nature; but to the lovers of what is noble, the things pleas¬ ant by nature are pleasant. Such too are the actions in accord with virtue, with the result that they are pleasant both to such people and in them- 15 selves. Indeed, the life [of those who love what is noble] has no need of additional pleasure, like a sort of added charm, but possesses pleasure in itself. For, in addition to the points mentioned, he who takes no delight in noble actions is not good either; for no one would say that somebody 20 who does not delight in acting justly is just or who does not delight in lib¬ eral actions is liberal, and similarly in the other cases as well. And if this is so, then the actions in accord with virtue would, in themselves, be pleas¬ ant. But certainly these actions are good as well as noble ; 55 and they will be each of these especially, if in fact the serious person judges nobly about them — and he judges as we said.

25 Happiness, therefore, is the best, noblest, and most pleasant thing; and

these are not separated, as the inscription at Delos has it:

Noblest is what is most just, but best is to be healthy;

And most pleasant by nature is for someone to attain what he passion¬ ately desires.

For all these are present in the best activities, and we assert that happiness 30 is these activities—or the best one among them.

Nonetheless, it 56 manifestly requires external goods in addition, just

54 • The love here indicated is philia, friendship or friendly love, not eros or erotic desire.

55 • One MS reads “noble, as well as good.”

56 • Either “happiness” or “the best activity” is a grammatically possible subject.

as we said. For it is impossible or not easy for someone without equip¬ ment to do what is noble: many things are done through instruments, 1099b as it were—through friends, wealth, and political power. Those who are bereft of some of these (for example, good birth, good children, or beauty) disfigure their blessedness , 57 for a person who is altogether ugly in appearance , 58 or of poor birth, or solitary and childless cannot really be characterized as happy; and he is perhaps still less happy, if he should 5

have altogether bad children or friends or, though he did have good ones, they are dead. Just as we said, then, [happiness] seems to require some such external prosperity 59 in addition. This is why some make good for¬ tune equivalent to happiness, and others, virtue.

This is also why the perplexity arises as to whether happiness is some¬ thing that can be gained through learning or habituation or through 10 some other practice, or whether it comes to be present in accord with

a sort of divine allotment or even through chance.

Now, if there is in fact anything that is a gift of the gods to human be¬ ings, it is reasonable that happiness is god given, and it especially among the human concerns insofar as it is the best of them. But perhaps this would be more appropriate to another examination—yet it appears that even if happiness is not god sent but comes to be present through virtue 15 and a certain learning or practice, it is among the most divine things. For the prize of virtue or its end appears to be best and to be something divine and blessed. It would also be something common to many people, for it is possible for it to be available, through a certain learning and care, to all who have not been rendered defective in point of virtue. And if it is better 20

to be happy in this way rather than through chance, it is reasonable that this is how [happiness is acquired]—if in fact what accords with nature is naturally in the noblest possible state, and similar too is what accords

57 • The terms translated as “bereft” and “disfigure” in this clause are poetic or tragic and hence rare in Aristotle.

58 • Aristotle here uses the term idea, characteristic of the Platonic “doctrine ofideas” in its primary sense of outward appearance or look (see n. 32 above).

59 ■ This phrase attempts to capture a word (euemeria) whose components suggest “having a good day” or spending ones days cheerfully; the word then came to mean being successful or enjoying good luck. The same word appears also at ii 78 b 33 .

with art and with cause as a whole, and especially the best [art or cause]. To entrust the greatest and noblest thing to chance would be excessively discordant.

25 What is being sought is manifest also on the basis of the argument [or definition], for happiness was said to be a certain sort of activity of soul in accord with virtue. Now, of the remaining goods, some must necessarily be present, others are coworkers and by nature useful in an instrumental way. And these points would be in agreement also with those made at the 30 beginning: we posited the end of the political art as best, and it exercises a very great care to make the citizens of a specific sort—namely, good and apt to do the noble things. It is to be expected, then, that we do not say that either a cow or a horse or any other animal is at all happy, for none l iooa of them are able to share in such an activity. It is because of this too that a

child is not happy either: he is not yet apt to do such things, on account of his age, though some children are spoken of as blessed on account of the expectation 60 involved in their case. For, as we said, both complete virtue 5 and a complete life are required: many reversals and all manner of for¬ tune arise in the course of life, and it is possible for someone who is par¬ ticularly thriving to encounter great disasters in old age, just as the myth is told about Priam in the Trojan tales. 61 Nobody deems happy someone who deals with fortunes of that sort and comes to a wretched end.

10 Should one, then, not deem happy any human being for so long as he is alive; but must one look instead, as Solon 62 has it, to his end? But if in¬ deed it is necessary to posit such a thesis, then is in fact a

person happy when he is dead? Or is this, at least, altogether strange, especially for us who say that happiness is a certain activity? But if we do not say that the i 5 dead person is happy—and this is not what Solon means either— but say

rather that someone might safely deem a human being blessed only once he is already at a remove from bad things and misfortunes, this too admits

61 • Priam, the highly respected king of Troy in Homer's Iliad, witnesses the destruc¬ tion of his city in the course of the Trojan War and so loses all that his great virtue and fortune had bestowed on him, not least his fifty sons (see Homer, Iliad 24.493-94; compare 24.248-52, 686-88,751-53).

62 ■ An Athenian statesman, legislator, and poet (ca. 638-558); for his conversation with King Croesus of Lydia, here alluded to, see Herodotus 1.32.

of some dispute. For it is held that both something bad and something good can befall the dead person, if in fact they can befall the living person who does not perceive it—for example, honors and dishonors, and the 20

faring well or the misfortunes of his offspring and descendants generally.

But these things too are perplexing: for someone who has lived bless¬ edly until old age and come to his end accordingly , 63 it is possible that many reversals may occur involving his descendants, just as some of these descendants may be good and attain the life that accords with their merit, 2 5 but others the contrary. Yet it is clear that it is possible for these descen¬ dants to be of varying degrees of remove from their ancestors. Indeed, it would be strange if even the dead person should share in reversals and become now happy, now wretched again. But it would be strange too if nothing of the affairs of the descendants should reach the ancestors, not even for a certain time. 30

But one must return to the perplexity previously mentioned, for per¬ haps what is now being sought might also be contemplated on the basis of it. If indeed one does have to see a persons end and at that time deem each person blessed, not as being blessed [now] but as having been such previ¬ ously—how is this not strange if, when he is happy, what belongs to him will not be truly attributed to him ? [This strange consequence arises] on 35

account of our wish not to call the living happy, given the reversals that 1100b

may happen, and of our supposition that happiness is something lasting and by no means easily subject to reversals, while fortunes often revolve for the same people. For it is clear that if we should follow someone's fortunes, we will often say that the same person is happy and then again 5 wretched, declaring that the happy person is a sort of chameleon and on unsound footing.

Or is it not at all correct to follow someone's fortunes? For it is not in these that doing well or badly consists. Rather, human life requires these fortunes in addition, just as we said; yet it is the activities in accord with 10 virtue that have authoritative control over happiness, and the contrary ac¬ tivities over the contrary.

The perplexity just now raised also bears witness to the argument, since in none of the human works is anything so secure as what pertains to the activities that accord with virtue. For such activities seem to be more lasting than even the sciences; and the most honored of them seem 15 to be more lasting, because those who are blessed live out their lives en-

63 • Literally, “in accord with reason [logos]?

gaged, to the greatest degree and most continuously, in these activities. This seems to be the cause of our not forgetting such activities. Indeed, what is being sought will be available to the happy person, and he will be such throughout life. For he will always or most of all act on and contem- 20 plate what accords with virtue, and he—at least he who is truly good and “four-square, without blame” 64 —he will bear fortunes altogether nobly and suitably in every way.

Now, many things occur by chance, and they differ in how great or small they are. The small instances of good fortune, and similarly of its 2 5 opposite, clearly do not tip the balance of ones life, whereas the great and numerous ones that occur will make life more blessed (since these natu¬ rally help adorn life, and dealing with them is noble and serious). But those fortunes that turn out in the contrary way restrict and even ruin one’s blessedness, for they both inflict pains and impede many activities. 30 Nevertheless, even in the midst of these, nobility shines through, when¬ ever someone bears up calmly under many great misfortunes, not because of any insensitivity to pain but because he is wellborn and great souled . 65

And if the activities have authoritative control over life, just as we said, 35 then no one who is blessed would become wretched, since he will never do things that are hateful and base. For we suppose that someone who noia is truly good and sensible bears up under all fortunes in a becoming way and always does what is noblest given the circumstances, just as a good general makes use, with the greatest military skill, of the army he has and 5 a shoemaker makes the most beautiful shoe out of the leather given him. It holds in the same manner with all the other experts as well. And if this is so, the happy person would never become wretched—nor indeed would he be blessed, it is true, if he encounters the fortunes of Priam. Fie would not be unstable and subject to reversals either, for he will not be 10 easily moved from happiness, and then not by any random misfortunes but only by great and numerous ones. And as a result of such things he would not become happy again in a short time; but, if in fact he does, he will do so in the completion of some lengthy time during which he comes to attain great and noble things.

1 5 What, then, prevents one from calling happy someone who is active in

accord with complete virtue and who is adequately equipped with exter-

64 • From Simonides, a lyric and elegiac poet (ca. 556-468); see also Plato Protagoras 339b, where parts of the poem from which this line is taken are quoted and discussed.

65 • Or, “magnanimous.” This is the first appearance of this important virtue (megalo - psychia), which Aristotle will analyze at 4.3.

nal goods, not for any chance time but in a complete life? Or must one posit in addition that he will both live in this way and meet his end ac¬ cordingly 66 —since the future is immanifest to us, and we posit

happiness, wholly and in every way, as an end and as complete? And if this is so, we will say that those among the living who have and will have available to 20 them the things stated are blessed—but blessed human beings.

Let what pertains to these things too be defined up to this point.

But that the fortunes of a persons descendants and all his friends contrib¬ ute nothing whatsoever [to his happiness] appears to be excessively op¬ posed to what is dear 67 and contrary to the opinions held. And because the things that may befall us are many and differ in various respects— 25

some hitting closer to home, other less so—thoroughly distinguishing each appears to be a long and even endless task. But perhaps for the mat¬ ter to be stated generally and in outline would be adequate.

Just as some of the misfortunes that concern a person himself have a certain gravity and weight as regards his life but others seem lighter, so 30 also the misfortunes that concern all his friends are similar; and if, con¬ cerning each thing suffered, it makes a difference whether the friends are alive or have met their end, far more than if the unlawful and terrible things in tragic plays occur before the action of the play or during it, then one must indeed take this difference into account—and even more, per¬ haps, when it comes to the perplexity raised concerning those who have 35 passed away , 68 that is, whether they share in something good or in the opposite. For it seems, on the basis of these points, that even if anything 1101b at all does get through to them, whether good or its contrary, it is some¬ thing faint and small, either simply so or to them. And if this is not so, then what gets through to them is, at any rate, of such a degree and kind that it does not make happy those who are not such or deprive those who 5 are happy of their blessedness. The friends' faring well, then, appears to make some contribution to the condition of those who have passed away, as does, similarly, their faring ill—but a contribution of such a kind and degree as not to make the happy unhappy or anything else of that sort.

67 * Or, perhaps, "excessively unfriendly" or even "hateful" (aphilon).

68 • Literally, "those who have grown weary," a euphemistic term, characteristic of trag¬ edy, that can be applied either to the sick or to the dead.

10 With these things defined, let ns examine closely whether happiness is something praised or rather honored, for it is clear that it does not be¬ long among the capacities, at any rate . 69 Now, everything praised appears to be praised for its being of a certain sort and for its condition relative to something: we praise the just person, the courageous person, and, in gen- 1 5 eral, the good person as well as virtue itself, on account of the actions and

works involved; and we praise the strong man and the swift runner and each of the rest for their being, by nature, of a certain sort and for their condition in relation to something good and serious. This is clear also on the basis of the praises offered to the gods, since it is manifestly laughable 20 for them to be compared to us; but this happens because praise arises through comparison, as we said. And if praise is of things of that sort, it is clear that not praise but something greater and better than praise ap¬ plies to the best things, as in fact appears to be the case: the gods we deem blessed and happy, and the most divine of men we

deem blessed . 70 25 The case is similar with the good things too: none praise happiness the way they praise justice; rather, people deem happiness a blessed thing, on the grounds that it is something more divine and better. And Eudoxus too seems to have nobly pleaded his case that the first prize belongs to plea¬ sure. For the fact that it is not praised as being among the good things re- 30 veals, he supposed, that it is superior to the things praised; and such, he supposed, is the god and the good. For it is to these that all else is com¬ pared. Indeed, praise belongs to virtue: people are apt to do noble things as a result of virtue, whereas encomiums belong to the works of both body and soul alike. But perhaps being very precise about these things is more 35 appropriate to those who have labored over encomiums; to us it is clear, 1102a on the basis of what has been said, that happiness belongs among the things that are honored and complete. This seems to be the case also on account of its being a principle: it is for the sake of this that we all do ev¬ erything else, and we posit the principle and the cause of the good things as being something honorable and divine.

69 • For a possible interpretation of this line, see Aristotle's treatment of capacities in 2.1 and 2.5.

70 • The reading of the MSS. Burnet, following the text of Bywater and the suggestion of Susemihl, deletes the final verb such that the emended text would read in translation, "we deem blessed and happy the gods as well as the most divine of men."

Now, since happiness is a certain activity of soul in accord with complete virtue, what concerns virtue would have to be examined. For perhaps in this way we might better contemplate happiness as well. And the politi¬ cian in the true sense seems to have labored over this especially, for he wishes to make the citizens good and obedient to the laws. We have as models of these the lawgivers of the Cretans and Lacedaimonians, and any others of that sort there might have been. And if this examination is a part of the political art, it is clear that the investigation would be in ac¬ cord with the choice made at the beginning.

But that we must examine the virtue distinctive of a human being is clear, for we were seeking both the human good and human happiness. We mean by "virtue distinctive of a human being" not that of the body but that of the soul, and by "happiness" we mean an activity of soul. But if these things are so, then it is clear that the politician ought to know in some way about the soul, just as also someone who is going to treat the eye must know the whole body as well—and even more so inasmuch as the political art is more honorable and better than medicine. Those physicians who are refined take very seriously what pertains to knowl¬ edge of the body, and the politician too ought to contemplate the soul; but he ought to contemplate it for the sake of these things and up to the point that is adequate for what is being sought: to be more precise is per¬ haps too difficult given the tasks set forth. But some points concerning the soul are stated sufficiently even in the exoteric 71 arguments, and one ought to make use of them—for example, that one part of it is nonra- tional, another possesses reason. Yet whether these things are divided, like the parts of the body and every divisible thing, or whether they are two in speech but naturally inseparable, like the convex and the concave in the circumference of a circle, makes no difference with a view to the present task.

Of the nonrational, one part seems to be that which is held in com¬ mon and vegetative—I mean that which causes nutrition and growth. For someone could posit that such a capacity of the soul is in all things

that are nourished and in embryos, and that this same capacity is present in the completed things as well, for this is more rational than positing

71 * Evidently a reference to writings intended for a wider or more popular audience; see also n. 26 .

some other capacity. A certain virtue belonging to this capacity, then, ap¬ pears to be common and not distinctive of a human being. For this part 5 and its capacity seem particularly active in sleep, but the good person and the bad would be least distinct in sleep. (So it is that people assert that for half of life, the happy do not differ at all from the wretched, and this is to be expected: sleep is an idleness of that in reference to which the soul is said to be serious or base.) Unless, that is, certain motions do reach them 10 to a small degree, and in this way the dreams of the decent 72 are better than those of people at random. But enough about these things: let the nutritive part be, since it does not naturally share in human virtue.

Yet there seems to be also a certain other nature of the soul that is non- rational, although it does share in reason in a way. For in the case of the self-restrained person and of the one lacking self-restraint, we praise their 15 reason and that part of their soul possessing reason, since it correctly ex¬

horts them toward the best things. But there appears to be something else in them that is by nature contrary to reason, which does battle with and strains against reason. For just as when we choose to move paralyzed parts 20 of the body to the right and they are, to the contrary, borne off to the left, so also with the soul: the impulses of those lacking self-restraint are to¬ ward things contrary [to their reason]. Yet whereas in the case of bodies, we see the thing being borne off, in the case of the soul we do not see it. But perhaps one must hold there to be, no less in the case of the soul too, 25 something contrary to reason that opposes and blocks it. How it is dif¬ ferent does not matter at all; it too appears to share in reason, as we said. In the case of the self-restrained person, at any rate, it is obedient to the commands of reason—and perhaps it heeds those commands still more readily in the case of the moderate or courageous person, since then it is in all respects in harmony with reason.

It appears, therefore, that the nonrational part is twofold, for the veg- 30 etative part has nothing in common with reason; but that part character¬

ized by desire, and by longing in general, shares somehow in reason inas¬ much as it heeds it and is apt to be obedient to its commands. Thus we assert that [he who is in this way obedient to the commands] of his fa¬ ther and friends in some manner possesses reason—and not that he does so in the manner of [someone knowledgeable in] mathematics. That the nonrational part is somehow persuaded by reason is indicated both by

72 • Epieikes, here in its general sense of “decent ” is also rendered as “equitable” in the discussion of justice and equity in 5 . 10 .

admonition and by all criticism as well as exhortation. But if we must as- 1103a

sert that this part too possesses reason, then that which possesses reason will be twofold as well: what possesses it in the authoritative sense and in itself, on the one hand, and, on the other, what has it in the sense of being apt to listen as one does to ones father.

Virtue too is defined in accord with this distinction, for we say that some of the virtues are intellectual, others moral : 73 wisdom, comprehen- 5 sion, and prudence being intellectual, liberality and moderation being moral. For in speaking about someone's character, we do not say that he is wise or comprehending but that he is gentle or moderate. Yet we praise the wise person too with respect to the characteristic that is his, and we say that of the characteristics, the praiseworthy ones are virtues. 10

73 • Ethikos, here in the plural, from ethos, the same word appearing in 1.3 (see n. 14 above) and, as a plural adjective, in the title of the work. When it is used in relation to virtue or the virtues, we will always translate it as "moral," in deference to the tradi¬ tional translation, "moral virtue."

Virtue, then, is twofold, intellectual and moral. Both the coming-into - H03ai5 being and increase of intellectual virtue result mostly from teaching— hence it requires experience and time—whereas moral virtue is the result of habit, and so it is that moral virtue got its name [ethike | by a slight al¬ teration of the term habit [ethos]. It is also clear, as a result, that none of the moral virtues are present in us by nature, since nothing that exists by 20 nature is habituated to be other than it is. For example, a stone, because it is borne downward by nature, could not be habituated to be borne up¬ ward, not even if someone habituates it by throwing it upward ten thou¬ sand times. Fire too could not be borne downward, nor could anything else that is naturally one way be habituated to be another. Neither by na¬ ture, therefore, nor contrary to nature are the virtues present; they are in- 25 stead present in us who are of such a nature as to receive them, and who are completed 1 through habit.

Further, in the case of those things present in us by nature, we are first provided with the capacities associated with them, then later on dis¬ play the activities, something that is in fact clear in the case of sense per¬ ceptions. For it is not as a result of seeing many times or hearing many times that we came to have those sense perceptions; rather, it is, con- 30 versely, because we have them that we use them, and not because we use them that we have them. But the virtues we come to have by engag¬ ing in the activities first, as is the case with the arts as well. For as re¬ gards those things we must learn how to do, we learn by doing them— for example, by building houses, people become house builders, and by

1 • Or, "who are perfected." The same participle (teleioumenois) may also be taken to be in the middle rather than the passive voice: "and who complete or perfect them¬ selves through habit."

playing the cithara, they become cithara players. So too, then, by doing 1103b just things we become just; moderate things, moderate; and courageous things, courageous. What happens in the cities too bears witness to this, for by habituating citizens, lawgivers make them good, and this is the wish of every lawgiver; all who do not do this well are in error, and it is in 5 this respect that a good regime 2 differs from a base regime.

Further, as a result of and on account of the same things, every vir¬ tue both comes into being and is destroyed , 3 as is similarly the case also with an art. For it is as a result of playing the cithara that both good and bad cithara players arise, and analogously with house builders and all the 10

rest: as a result of building houses well, people will be good house build¬ ers; but as a result of doing so badly, they will be bad ones. If this were not the case, there would be no need of a teacher, but everyone

would come into being already good or bad. So too in the case of the virtues: by doing things in our interactions with human beings, some of us become 15 just, others unjust; and by doing things in terrifying circumstances and by being habituated to feel fear or confidence, some of us become coura¬ geous, others cowards. The case is similar as regards desires and bouts of anger. For some people become moderate and gentle, others licentious and irascible, the former as a result of conducting themselves in the one 20 way, the latter as a result of doing so in the other. And so, in a word, the characteristics come into being as a result of the activities akin to them.

Hence we must make our activities be of a certain quality, for the char¬ acteristics correspond to the differences among the activities. It makes no small difference, then, whether one is habituated in this or that way straight from childhood but a very great difference—or rather the whole 25

Now, since the present subject is taken up, not for the sake of contempla¬ tion, as are others—for we are conducting an examination, not so that we may know what virtue is, but so that we may become good, since other¬ wise there would be no benefit from it—it is necessary to examine mat¬ ters pertaining to actions, that is, how one ought to perform them. For 30

2 • The first appearance of this important political term (politeia), which refers to the authoritative ruling element in a political community. Aristotle’s sixfold classification of regimes is found in 8 . 10 .

3 • Or, perhaps, “ruined,” “corrupted” (phtheirein).

these actions have authoritative control over what sorts of characteristics come into being, just as we have said. Now, “acting in accord with correct reason” 4 is commonly granted, and let it be posited for now—what per¬ tains to it will be spoken of later, both what “correct reason” is and how it relates to the virtues. 5

1104a But let it be agreed to in advance that every argument concerned with what ought to be done 6 is bound to be stated in outline only and not pre¬ cisely—just as we said at the beginning as well, that the demands made of given arguments should accord with the subject matter in question. Mat¬ ters of action and those pertaining to what is advantageous have nothing 5 stationary about them, just as matters of health do not either. And since such is the character of the general argument, still less precise is the argu¬ ment concerned with particulars, for it does not fall under an art or any set of precepts. Instead, those who act ought themselves always to examine what pertains to the opportune moment [when it presents itself], as is the 10 case with both medicine and piloting. Although such is the character of the present argument, one must nonetheless attempt to be of assistance.

This, then, is the first thing that must be contemplated. Such things [as the virtues] are naturally destroyed through deficiency and excess, just as we see in the case of strength and health (for one ought to make use 15 of manifest things as witnesses on behalf of what is immanifest): exces¬ sive as well as deficient gymnastic exercises destroy strength, and, simi¬ larly, both drink and food destroy health as they increase or decrease in quantity, whereas the proportionate amounts create, increase, and pre¬ serve health. So it is too with moderation, courage, and the other virtues: 20 he who avoids and fears all things and endures nothing becomes a cow¬ ard, and he who generally fears nothing but advances toward all things becomes

reckless. Similarly, he who enjoys every pleasure and abstains from none becomes licentious; but he who avoids every pleasure, as the boorish do, is a sort of “insensible” person. 7 Moderation and courage are

4 • This famous phrase (orthos logos), which translators have often rendered as “right reason,” is as ambiguous as its components: what is “correct” (orthos) may or may not be true, and a logos may be a rational argument or merely a “speech,” rational or not.

5 • Literally, “to the other virtues.”

6 • The reading of the principal MSS accepted by Burnet, but Bywater, following Bek- ker and Susemihl, emends the text to read in translation: “concerned with actions”

7 • That is, someone lacking in sense perception (anaistbetos); Aristotle will note later (no7b8) that there really is no name for such persons, since they “do not come into be¬ ing very much” (see also no8b2i, 110934,1114310, and 111937).

indeed destroyed by excess and deficiency, but they are preserved by the 25 mean . 8

But not only do the coming-into-being and increase [of the virtues], as well as their destruction, occur as a result of the same things and through the same things, but the activities [associated with the virtues] too will be found in the same things [as are responsible for their coming-into-being and increase]. For this is the case also with other, more manifest things — 30

for example, in the case of strength: it comes into being as a result of taking much nourishment and enduring many exertions, and he who is strong would especially be able to do just these things. So too in the case of the virtues, for as a result of abstaining from pleasures, we become moderate; and by so becoming, we are especially able to abstain from 35 them. Similar is the case of courage as well: by being habituated to dis- 1104b dain frightening things and to endure them, we become courageous, and by so becoming, we will be especially able to endure frightening things.

The pleasure or pain that accompanies someone’s deeds ought to be taken 5

as a sign of his characteristics: he who abstains from bodily pleasures and enjoys this very abstention is moderate, but he who is vexed in doing so is licentious; he who endures terrifying things and enjoys doing so, or at any rate is not pained by it, is courageous, but he who is pained thereby is a coward. For moral virtue is concerned with pleasures and pains: it is on ac¬ count of the pleasure involved that we do base things, and it is on account 10

of the pain that we abstain from noble ones. Thus one must be brought up in a certain way straight from childhood, as Plato asserts, so as to en¬ joy as well as to be pained by what one ought, for this is correct education.

Further, if the virtues are concerned with actions and passions, and pleasure and pain accompany every passion and every action, then on this 15

account too virtue would be concerned with pleasures and pains. Punish¬ ments are indicative of this as well, since they arise through these [pains]: they are a sort of curative treatment, and curative treatments naturally take place through contraries.

Further, as we said just recently too, every characteristic of soul shows its nature in relation to and in its concern for the sorts of things by which 20

8 • The first appearance of this famous term (he mesotes) in Aristotle's account of the moral phenomena.

it naturally becomes worse or better: it is through pleasures and pains that people become base, by pursuing and avoiding these, either the pleasures and pains that one ought not to pursue or avoid, or when one ought not, or as one ought not, or in as many other such conditions as are defined by reason . 9 Thus people even define the virtues as certain dispassionate and 25 calm states, though such a definition is not good; for they say simply this much but not "as one ought," "as one ought not," "when," and any other things posited in addition. Virtue, therefore, has been posited as being such as to produce the best [actions] in relation to pleasures and pains, and vice as being the contrary.

But that [virtue and vice] are concerned with the same things might be- 30 come manifest to us also from these considerations: there being three ob¬ jects of choice and three of avoidance—the noble, the advantageous, and the pleasant together with their three contraries, the shameful, the harm¬ ful, and the painful—in all these the good person is apt to be correct, the bad person to err, but especially as regards pleasure. For pleasure is com- 35 mon to the animals and attendant upon all things done through choice, 1105a since both what is noble and what is advantageous appear pleasant.

Further, pleasure has been a part of the upbringing of us all from in¬ fancy; it is difficult to remove this experience, since our life has been so in¬ grained with it. We also take pleasure and pain as the rule of our actions, 5 some of us to a greater degree, some to a lesser. It is on account of this, then, that ones entire concern necessarily pertains to pleasure and pain, for taking delight and feeling pain make no small contribution to our ac¬ tions' being well or badly done.

Further, it is more difficult to battle against pleasure than against spir¬ itedness, as Heraclitus 10 asserts, and art and virtue always arise in connec- 10 tion with that which is more difficult: the doing of something well is bet¬

ter when it is more difficult. As a result, and on account of this, the whole

9 • Or, "the argument" (ho logos). The phrase may well refer to "[correct] reason"; see also n. 4 above.

10 • Heraclitus of Ephesus lived in the late sixth century and is numbered among the most famous of the pre-Socratic philosophers. It is uncertain what remark Aristotle here refers to, and the fragment most frequently cited by commentators ("with thumos it is difficult to do battle / for whatever it craves is purchased at the price of soul") ap¬ pears to use thumos (translated in the text above by "spiritedness" its usual meaning in later Attic Greek) as an equivalent of, rather than in contrast to, craving or desire (see Gauthier and Jolif). Aristotle cites this line also in the Politics (1315330-31) and Eu- demian Ethics (iz23b23).

matter of concern in both virtue and the political art is bound up with pleasures and pains. For he who deals with these well will be good, but he who does so badly will be bad.

Let it be said, then, that virtue concerns pleasures and pains; that it both increases as a result of those actions from which it comes into be- 15 ing and is destroyed when these are performed in a different manner; and that it becomes active in just those activities as a result of which it also came into being.

But someone might be perplexed as to what we mean when we say that to become just, people must do just things or, to become moderate, do moderate things. For if they do just and moderate things, they already are 20

just and moderate, just as if they do what concerns letters and music, they are by that fact skilled [or artful] in letters and in music. Or is this not so even in the case of the arts ? For it is possible to do something skillful in letters by chance or on the instructions of another. A person will actually be skilled in letters, then, when he both does something skillful and does it in a skillful way, and this is what accords with the art of letters that re- 25 sides within the person himself.

Further, what pertains in the arts is not at all similar to what pertains in the virtues. For the excellence in whatever comes into being through the arts resides in the artifacts themselves. It is enough, then, for these artifacts to be in a certain state. But whatever deeds arise in accord with the virtues are not done justly or moderately if they are merely in a cer- 30 tain state, but only if he who does those deeds is in a certain state as well: first, if he acts knowingly; second, if he acts by choosing and by choos¬ ing the actions in question for their own sake; and, third, if he acts while being in a steady and unwavering state. But these criteria are irrelevant when it comes to possessing the arts—except for the knowledge itself 1105b involved. But when it comes to the virtues, knowledge has no, or little, force, whereas the other two criteria amount to not a small part of but rather the whole affair—criteria 11 that are in fact met as a result of our doing just and moderate things many times. Matters of action are said to 5

11 • The reading of the MSS (haper). Perhaps better is Bywater s slight emendation of the text (eiper), adopted also by Burnet and Gauthier and Jolif, which might be ren¬ dered as follows: “the whole affair, if in fact [the virtues] are gained as a result of doing just and moderate things many times.”

be just and moderate, then, when they are comparable in kind to what the just or moderate person would do. And yet he who performs these actions is not by that fact alone just and moderate, but only if he also acts as those who are just and moderate act.

10 It is well said, then, that as a result of doing just things, the just person comes into being and as a result of doing moderate things, the moderate person; without performing these actions, nobody would become good. Yet most people [or the many] do not do them; and, seeking refuge in ar¬ gument, they suppose that they are philosophizing and that they will in is this way be serious, thereby doing something similar to the sick who lis¬ ten attentively to their physicians but do nothing prescribed. Just as these latter, then, will not have a body in good condition by caring for it in this way, so too the former will not have a soul in good condition by philoso¬ phizing in this way.

After this, what virtue is must be examined. Now, since there are three 20 things that are present in the soul—passions, capacities, and charac¬ teristics—virtue would be one of these. I mean by passions the follow¬ ing: desire, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendly affection, 12 hatred, yearning, emulation, pity—in general, those things that pleasure or pain accompany. And capacities are those things in reference to which we are said to be able to undergo these passions—for example, those in refer- 25 ence to which we are able to feel anger, pain, or pity. But characteristics are those things in reference to which we are in a good or bad state in re¬ lation to the passions; for example, if we feel anger intensely or weakly, we are in a bad condition, but if in a measured 13 way, we are in a good con¬ dition, and similarly with the other passions as well. Neither the virtues 30 nor the vices, then, are passions, because we are not said to be serious or base in reference to the passions but in reference to the virtues and vices, and because we are neither praised nor blamed in reference to the pas¬ sions simply (for neither he who is afraid nor he who is angry is praised,

12 • Or, “friendship.” Although Aristotle uses exactly the same word (philia) for both the moral virtue taken up in 4 .6 and the association of two friends discussed in books 8-9, he argues that the former does not really have a name, “though it seems most like friendship,” and that the latter is finally something other than moral virtue.

13 • Or, in a manner characteristic of the middle (mesds), a term related to Aristotle’s doc¬ trine of moral virtue as a “mean” (mesotes) or “middle” (to meson). See also n. 15 below.

nor is he who is simply angry blamed, but only he who is such in a certain 1106a

way). Rather, it is in reference to the virtues and vices that we are praised or blamed. Further, we are angry and afraid in the absence of choice, but the virtues are certain choices or not without choice. In addition to these considerations, in the case of the passions we are said to be moved; but 5 in that of the virtues and vices, we are not said to be moved but rather to have a certain disposition.

On account of these considerations as well, the virtues and vices are not capacities either. For we are not said to be either good or bad by dint of possessing the capacity simply to undergo the passions, nor are we praised or blamed. Further, we are possessed of capacities by nature, but we do not by nature become good or bad. Rut we spoke about this before. 10

If, then, the virtues are neither passions nor capacities, it remains that they are characteristics. What virtue is with respect to its genus, then, has been said.

Yet one ought to say not only this—that virtue is a characteristic—but also what sort of characteristic it is. So it must be stated that every virtue 15

both brings that of which it is the virtue into a good condition and causes the work belonging to that thing to be done well. For example, the vir¬ tue of the eye makes both the eye and its work excellent , 14 for by means of the virtue of the eye, we see well. Similarly, the virtue of a horse makes 20

the horse both excellent and good when it comes to running, and carry¬ ing its rider, and standing its ground before enemies. If indeed this is so in all cases, then the virtue of a human being too would be that

character¬ istic as a result of which a human being becomes good and as a result of which he causes his own work to be done well. And how this will be, we have already stated.

But virtue will be further manifest also as follows—if we contemplate 25

what sort of thing its nature is. In everything continuous and divisible, it is possible to grasp the more, the less, and the equal, and these either in reference to the thing itself or in relation to us. The equal is also a certain middle term 15 between excess and deficiency. I mean by "a middle term 30

14 • Or, "serious" (spoudaios), here and in the next sentence.

15 • To meson (the middle term, the middle—though not necessarily the literal center of something) as distinguished from he mesotes, which will always be rendered as "the mean." The two are etymologically close.

of the thing" that which stands at an equal remove from each of the ex- tremes, which is in fact one and the same thing for all; though in relation to us, it is that which neither takes too much nor is deficient. But this is not one thing, nor is it the same for all. For example, if ten is much but two is few, six is a middle term for those who take it in reference to the thing itself. For it both exceeds and is exceeded by an equal amount, and 35 this is the middle term according to the arithmetic proportion. But one

1106b ought not to grasp in this way the middle term relative to us, for if eating

ten pounds is a lot but two pounds too little, the trainer will not prescribe six pounds, since perhaps even this is a lot or a little for him who will take it: for Milo , 16 it would be too little; for someone just starting gymnastic training, it would be too much. It is similar in the case of running and in that of wrestling.

5 Thus every knower of the excess and the deficiency avoids them, but seeks out the middle term and chooses this—yet not a middle belonging to the thing in question but rather the one relative to us. Indeed, every science in this way brings its work to a good conclusion, by looking to the 10 middle term and guiding the works toward this. Hence people are accus¬

tomed to saying that there is nothing to take away from or add to works that are in a good state, on the grounds that the good state is destroyed by excess and deficiency but the mean preserves it; and the good craftsmen, as we say, perform their work by looking to this. Virtue is more precise 15 and better than every art, as is nature as well. If all this is so, then virtue would be skillful in aiming at the middle term.

But I mean moral virtue, for it is concerned with passions and actions, and it is in these that excess, deficiency, and the middle term reside. For example, it is possible to be afraid, to be confident, to desire, to be angry, 20 to feel pity, and, in general, to feel pleasure and pain to a greater or lesser degree than one ought, and in both cases this is not good. But to feel them when one ought and at the things one ought, in relation to those people whom one ought, for the sake of what and as one ought—all these con¬ stitute the middle as well as what is best, which is in fact what belongs to virtue. Similarly, in the case of actions too, there is an excess, a deficiency, 25 and the middle term. Virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which the excess is in error and the deficiency is blamed ; 17 but the middle

16 • A famous wrestler of the late sixth century, hailing from Croton. He is said to have won six victories in the Olympic Games and six in the Pythian.

17 • The reading of the MSS defended by Gauthier and Jolif. Bywater, followed by Bur¬ net and others, deletes the verb translated as “is blamed”

term is praised and guides one correctly, and both [praise and correct guidance] belong to virtue. Virtue, therefore, is a certain mean, since it, at any rate, is skillful in aiming at the middle term.

Further, while it is possible to be in error in many ways (for what is bad is unlimited [or indeterminate], as the Pythagoreans used to conjecture, 30 what is good, limited [or determinate]), there is only one way to guide someone correctly. And thus the former is easy, the latter hard: it is easy to miss the target, hard to hit it. On account of these considerations, then, to vice belongs the excess and the deficiency, to virtue the mean.

For [people] are good 18 in one way, but in all kinds of ways bad 35

Virtue, therefore, is a characteristic marked by choice, residing in the mean relative to us, a characteristic defined by reason and as the prudent 1107a person would define it . 19 Virtue is also a mean with respect to two vices, the one vice related to excess, the other to deficiency; and further, it is a mean because some vices fall short of and others exceed what should be the case in both passions and actions, whereas virtue discovers and 5 chooses the middle term. Thus, with respect to its being and the defini¬ tion that states what it is, virtue is a mean; but with respect to what is best and the doing of something well, it is an extreme.

But not every action or every passion admits of the mean, for some have names that are immediately associated with baseness—for example, 10

spitefulness, shamelessness, envy, and, when it comes to actions, adultery, theft, and murder. For all these things, and those like them, are spoken of as being themselves base, rather than just their excesses or deficiencies. It is never possible, then, to be correct as regards them, but one is always in 15 error; and it is not possible to do what concerns such things well or not well—by committing adultery with the woman one ought and when and as one ought. Rather, doing any of these things whatever is simply in er¬ ror. Similar to this, then, is thinking it right that, as regards committing injustice, being a coward, and acting licentiously, there is a mean, an ex¬ cess, and a deficiency: in this way there will be a mean of an excess and of 20 a deficiency, an excess of an excess, and a deficiency of a deficiency! And just as there is no excess and deficiency of moderation and courage, on ac¬ ts • Not the usual word translated as “good” (agathos) but the more poetic esthlos. The author of the verse is unknown.

19 ♦ An alternative reading suggested by Alexander of Aphrodisias, among others, and adopted by Bywater, would give the following translation: “residing in the mean relative to us, a mean defined by that argument by which the prudent person would define it.”

count of the middle terms being somehow an extreme, so too there would not be a mean or an excess and a deficiency of those [base acts mentioned 25 above]; rather, however they are done, they are in error. For in

general there is neither a mean of an excess and of deficiency nor an excess and deficiency of a mean.

One must not only state this [definition] in general terms but also make 30 it harmonize with the particulars involved. For in the case of arguments concerning actions, the general arguments are of wider application , 20 whereas those pertaining to a part are truer: actions concern particulars, and it is with these that the arguments ought to accord. One must grasp these particulars from the [following] outline.

Concerning fear and confidence, then, courage is a mean. Among 1107b those characterized by an excess, he who is excessive in fearlessness is nameless (in fact, many of these characteristics are nameless), and he who is excessive in feeling confident is reckless; he who is excessive in being afraid and deficient in feeling confident is a coward. Concerning plea- 5 sures and pains—not all of them, and to a lesser degree as regards pains— the mean is moderation, the excess, licentiousness. But those who are de¬ ficient when it comes to pleasures do not arise very much, and thus people of this sort too have not attained a name; let them be “the insensible.”

Concerning the giving and taking of money, the mean is liberality, the 10 excess and deficiency, prodigality and stinginess 21 respectively. But they are excessive and deficient in contrary respects: the prodigal person is ex¬ cessive in spending but deficient in taking, whereas the stingy is excessive in taking but deficient in spending. Now, at present we are speaking in 15 outline and summarily, being satisfied with just that, but later what per¬ tains to them will be defined more precisely. Concerning money, there are also other dispositions: the mean is magnificence (for the magnificent person differs from the liberal, the former being concerned with great things, the latter with small); the excess is vulgarity and crassness; the de- 20 ficiency, parsimony. These differ from matters related to liberality, but how they differ will be stated later.

20 • Or, “are common to more things” (koinoteroi). Some translators and commenta¬ tors follow an alternative reading (kendteroi) that might be rendered as follows: “the general arguments are emptier.”

21 ■ Literally, “illiberality” (aneleutheria).

Concerning honor and dishonor, the mean is greatness of soul; the ex¬ cess, what is said to be a certain vanity; the deficiency, smallness of soul.

And just as we were saying that liberality bears a relation to magnificence, though it differs by being concerned with small things, so also there is a 25 certain [other] virtue that bears a relation to greatness of soul, the latter being concerned with great honor, the former with small. For it is pos¬ sible to long for honor as one ought and more or less than one ought; the person who is excessive in his longings in this regard is said to be ambitious , 22 the deficient unambitious, while the one in the middle is nameless. And the dispositions are in fact nameless, except the ambition 30 of the ambitious person. This is why people at the extremes lay claim to the middle ground, and we sometimes call the person in the middle “am¬ bitious,” sometimes “unambitious”; and sometimes we praise the ambi- 1108a tious person, sometimes the unambitious one. What the cause is, on ac¬ count of which we do this, will be stated subsequently. For now, let us speak about what remains in the manner that has guided us thus far.

In what concerns anger too there is an excess, a deficiency, and a mean; and although these are pretty much nameless, let us call the mean gentle- 5 ness, since we speak of the person in the middle as gentle. Of those at the extremes, let he who is excessive be irascible, the vice irascibility, and let he who is deficient be a sort of “unirascible” person, the deficiency “unirascibility.”

There are also three other means, and though they bear a certain simi- 10

larity to one another, they also differ from one another. For all are con¬ cerned with our sharing in speeches and actions, but they differ because one of them is concerned with the truth in such speeches and actions, the others with what is pleasant in them. Of these latter, one is found in times of play, the other in all that relates to life [as a whole]. One must speak about these too, then, so that we may see better that in all things, the 15 mean is praiseworthy and the extremes are neither praiseworthy nor cor¬ rect but instead blameworthy. Now, the majority of these are nameless, and yet one must try, as in the case of the others as well, to fashion a name for them for the sake of clarity and ease of following along.

Concerning the truth, then, let the person in the middle be said to be somebody truthful and the mean, truthfulness; the pretense that exag- 20 gerates is boastfulness, and he who possesses it, a boaster, whereas that which understates is irony and he who possesses it, an ironist. As for what

22 • Literally, “a lover of honor” (philotimos).

is pleasant in times of play, he who is in the middle is witty and the dis- 25 position, wittiness; the excess is buffoonery and he who possesses it, a buffoon, while he who is deficient is a sort of boor, and the characteris¬ tic, boorishness. As for the remaining part of what is pleasant, which is found in life [as a whole], he who is pleasant as he ought to be is friendly and the relevant mean, friendliness . 23 But he who is friendly in excess is obsequious, if he is such for no reason, but if he is excessively friendly for 30 his own advantage, he is a flatterer; he who is deficient and is in all things unpleasant is a sort of quarrelsome and surly person.

There are also means in the passions and concerning the passions. For a sense of shame is not a virtue, but he who is bashful 24 is praised: in these things too there is one person said to be in the middle, another who is in excess, like the shy person who feels shame in everything. He who is de- 35 ficient in this or is generally ashamed of nothing is shameless, whereas liosb he who is in the middle is bashful. Indignation 25 is a mean between envy and spitefulness, and these concern pleasure and pain at the fortunes that befall ones neighbors: the indignant person is pained at those who fare 5 well undeservedly; the envious person exceeds him because he is pained at anyone's faring well; the spiteful is so deficient in feeling pain [at the misfortune of others] that he even delights in it. But about these types, there will be an opportunity to speak elsewhere.

As for justice, since it is not spoken of in a simple way, after we have gone through each [of the meanings of justice], we will say how they are 10 means, and similarly also with the rational virtues . 26

There are, then, three dispositions, two of them vices—one relating to an excess, the other to a deficiency—and one of them a virtue, namely,

23 • Or simply, “friendship” (philia). Books 8 and 9 examine philia, understood there not as a moral virtue but as a kind of community or association that the virtues help make possible.

24 • The word translated as “ bashful” (aidemon) shares the same root as the word trans¬ lated as “a sense of shame” (aidds), which can also refer to the “awe” or “reverence” due to the gods and the divine things, for example.

25 • Literally, “nemesis,” also the name of a Greek goddess, the divine personification of righteous indignation or revenge (see Hesiod, Works and Days 200, Tbeogony 223 and contexts).

26 • The phrase “rational virtues” (logikai aretai) appears nowhere else in the Nico- machean Ethics .

the mean. All are in some way opposed to all: the extremes are contrary both to the middle disposition and to each other, while the middle dis¬ position is contrary to the extremes. For just as the equal is greater when 15 compared to what is lesser and lesser when compared to what is greater, so the middle characteristics are excessive when compared to the deficient characteristics but deficient when compared to the excessive, in both pas¬ sions and actions. For the courageous person appears reckless when com- 20 pared to the coward, but when compared to the reckless, a coward. And similarly, the moderate person appears licentious when compared to the “insensible” one, but when compared to the licentious, “insensible”; the liberal person, when compared to the stingy, appears prodigal, but when compared to the prodigal, stingy. Hence each of those at the extremes pushes the person in the middle over to the other extreme: the coward 25 calls the courageous man reckless, the reckless calls him a coward, and analogously in the case of the others. And although these are opposed to one another in this way, the greatest contrariety lies with the extremes in relation to each other rather than in relation to the middle term; for these extremes stand at a greater remove from each other than they do from the middle term, just as the great stands at a greater remove from the small and the small from the great than either stands from the equal. 30

Further, there appears to be a certain similarity of some extremes to the middle term, as recklessness has some similarity to courage and prodigal¬ ity to liberality, but the extremes have the greatest dissimilarity to one another. (Things at the greatest remove from one another are defined as contraries, with the result that the more they are removed from one an- 35 other, the more they are contraries of one another.)

In some cases, it is the deficiency that is more opposed to a given 1109a middle term, in some cases it is the excess. For example, it is not reckless¬ ness, which is an excess, but rather cowardice, which is a deficiency, that is more opposed to courage. Then again, it is not "insensibility,” which is a deficiency, but rather licentiousness, an excess, that is more opposed to 5 moderation. This occurs through two causes, one being the result of the thing itself: by dint of the one extremes being closer and more similar to the middle, we set not this extreme but rather its contrary in greater op¬ position [to the middle term]. For example, since recklessness seems more similar and closer to courage, but cowardice less similar, we posit cow- 10 ardice as being in greater opposition [to the middle term than is reckless¬ ness] : things at a greater remove from the middle term seem to be more contrary to it. This, then, is one cause, which results from the thing itself.

The other cause results from us ourselves. For those things to which 15 we somehow more naturally incline appear to a greater degree contrary to the middle term. For example, we ourselves are naturally more inclined toward pleasures; hence we have a greater propensity toward licentious¬ ness than orderliness. We say, then, that those things toward which our tendency is greater are to a greater degree contraries [of the mean]; and on this account licentiousness, which is an excess, is more contrary to moderation [than is “insensibility”].

20 That moral virtue is a mean, then, and how it is such; that it is a mean be¬ tween two vices, the one relating to excess, the other to deficiency; and that it is such on account of its being skilled in aiming at the middle term in matters of passion and action, have been stated adequately. Hence it 25 is in fact a task to be serious, for in each case it is a task to grasp what re¬ sides in the middle. For example, to grasp the middle of a circle belongs not to everyone but to a knower. And so too, to become angry belongs to everyone and is an easy thing, as is also giving and spending money; but to whom [one ought to do so], how much, when, for the sake of what, and how—these no longer belong to everyone nor are easy. Thus in fact 30 acting well is rare, praiseworthy, and noble. Hence he who aims at the middle term must first depart from what is more contrary to it, just as Calypso too advises:

From this smoke and swell, keep the ship 27

For of the extremes, the one is more in error, the other less. Now, since it is difficult to hit on the middle with extreme precision, we must, in accord 35 with “the second sailing ,” 28 as they say, grasp the least of the bad things, 1109b and this will occur most of all in the way we are speaking of.

But one must examine what we ourselves readily incline toward, for

27 • In the text of Homer s Odyssey as it has come down to us, these words are spoken by Odysseus to his men, as the result of Circe s advice (Odyssey 12.219). According to Burnet, “[s]ome inferior MSS. have Kirke [Circe, rather than Calypso] which is more nearly right.”

28 • A proverbial expression roughly equivalent to “the next best thing.” Socrates, for example, uses the expression of his turn away from the natural philosophy of his pre¬ decessors and to his characteristic examination of “the speeches”: see Plato, Phaedo 99C9~di and context.

some of us naturally incline to some things, others to other things. This [object of our inclination] will be recognizable from the pleasure and the pain that occur in our case. And we must drag ourselves away from it to- 5 ward its contrary; for by leading ourselves far from error, we will arrive at the middle term, which is in fact what those who straighten warped lumber do. But in everything one must be especially on guard against the pleasant and pleasure, for we do not judge it impartially. What the town elders felt toward Helen, then, is what we too ought to feel toward plea- 10

sure; and in all cases we ought to utter their remark, for by thus dismiss¬ ing pleasure, we will err less . 29 By doing these things, then—to speak in summary fashion—we will be most able to hit on the middle term.

But perhaps this is hard, and especially so in particular cases; for it is not easy to define how, with whom, at what sorts of things, and for how 15 long a time one ought to be angry: sometimes we praise those who are deficient and assert that they are gentle, sometimes those who are harsh, calling them manly. But he who deviates a little from what is well done is not blamed, whether he does so in the direction of what is more [than the mean] or in that of what is less than it. But he who deviates more than that 20

is blamed, for he does not go unnoticed. Yet at what point and to what extent he is blameworthy is not easy to define by means of argument, for neither is anything else that is subject to perception; such things reside in the particulars involved, the relevant decision too residing in the percep¬ tion [of the particulars].

This much, then, is clear: the middle characteristic in all cases is praise¬ worthy, but one ought to incline sometimes toward the excess, sometimes 2 5

toward the deficiency, for in this way we will most easily hit on the middle term and what is well done.

And when they saw Helen moving along the city walls Softly they uttered winged words to one another:

“No indignation [nemesis : see n. 25] at the Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans, Who for the sake of this woman have long suffered pains.

Terribly does she resemble, in our eyes, immortal goddesses.

But, even such as she is, let her go home in the ships

And not remain, for us and our children, a calamity hereafter.”

1109b30 Since virtue concerns passions as well as actions, and voluntary [actions] elicit praise and blame, whereas involuntary ones elicit forgiveness 1 and sometimes even pity, it is perhaps necessary for those who are examining virtue to define the voluntary and the involuntary Doing so is useful also 3 5 for lawgivers with a view to both honors and punishments,

nioa Now, things that come about as a result of force or on account of igno¬ rance seem to be involuntary. That which is forced 2 is something whose origin is external, since it is the sort of thing to which the person who is acting or undergoing something contributes nothing—for example, if a wind, or people who have control over someone, should carry him off somewhere.

But as for all that is done on account of fear of greater harm or on ac- 5 count of something noble—for example, if a tyrant should order some¬

one to do something shameful while the tyrant has control over his par¬ ents and offspring, and if he should do it, they would be saved, but if not, they would be killed—whether this kind of thing is involuntary or volun¬ tary admits of dispute. Something comparable occurs also when it comes 10 to casting off cargo in storms; for, in an unqualified sense, no one volun¬ tarily jettisons cargo, but when ones own preservation and that of the rest are at issue, everyone who has sense 3 would do it. These sorts of actions, then, are mixed, though they are more voluntary [than involuntary], for

1 • We translate the term sungnome in book 3 as “forgiveness ” but as “sympathy” in 6.11 and 7.2, 6, and 7.

2 * The term that Aristotle uses here (biaios) has both an active sense—that which is doing the forcing—and, more frequently in the Ethics, a passive one—that which is being forced.

3 • Here “sense” translates nous, which is elsewhere “intellect.”

they are choiceworthy at the time they are done and the end of the action accords with what is opportune at the moment.

Both what is voluntary and involuntary, then, must be spoken of with reference to when someone acts. And [in the case at hand], the person acts voluntarily, for in fact the origin of the movement of the parts [of his is

body] that serve as instruments in such actions is in the person himself.

And in those cases in which the origin is in the person himself, it is also up to him to act or not to act. Such cases, therefore, are voluntary—though in an unqualified sense, they are perhaps involuntary. For no one would choose anything of this sort in itself. In such actions, people are some- 20 times even praised, whenever they endure something shameful or painful in return for great and noble things. But should the contrary occur, they are blamed, for it belongs to a base person to endure shameful things in the service of nothing noble or measured.

In some actions, not praise but forgiveness arises, whenever someone does what he ought not to do because the matters involved surpass hu- 25 man nature and could be endured by no one. Some things, perhaps, it is not possible to be compelled to do; one ought instead to die while suffer¬ ing the most terrible things. Indeed, the considerations that compelled Euripides’s Alcmaeon to commit matricide appear laughable . 4 But it is difficult sometimes to decide what sort of thing one ought to choose in 30 return for what, and what ought to be endured in return for what. It is still more difficult to abide by the judgments one makes in each case, since, for the most part, the things people anticipate in such circumstances are painful and those they are compelled to do are shameful, which is why praise and blame are dependent on whether the people in question are compelled or not to act as they do.

What sorts of actions, then, must be declared to be “forced” ? Or in an mob

unqualified sense do forced actions occur whenever their cause is found in external things and the person who acts contributes nothing to them?

But as for the actions that are in themselves involuntary and yet choice¬ worthy at the present moment in return for specific things and whose or¬ igin is in the person who acts—these actions in themselves are involun- 5

4 • We have only fragments of Euripides s play to which Aristotle refers here; see also H36ai3, where Aristotle quotes from the play. According to the scholiast, Alcmaeons father was persuaded to fight at

Thebes by his wife Eriphyle, who had been bribed by the promise of a necklace. He was killed at the battle but had learned of her treachery, and while he was dying, he commanded his son to kill his mother, placing a curse on him should he not comply.

tary, but, at the present moment and in return for these specific things, they are voluntary. Yet they are more like voluntary actions, for actions reside in particulars, and these are voluntary. What sort of thing ought to be chosen in return for what is not easy to explain, for there are many distinctions involved in the relevant particulars.

If someone should declare that pleasant things and noble things are 10 characterized by force (for they exercise compulsion, while being exter¬ nal), then in this way everything would be forced: it is for the sake of these things that everyone does everything. And people who act as a result of force and involuntarily, do so painfully, while those who act on account of what is pleasant and noble do so with pleasure. But it is laughable to attribute to external things the cause 5 of ones being easily snared by such things, rather than to attribute the cause to oneself, as is attributing the 15 cause of noble things to oneself but that of shameful ones to pleasures. That which is forced, then, appears to be something whose origin is ex¬ ternal, while he who is forced contributes nothing thereto.

What is done on account of ignorance is in every case not voluntary, but it is involuntary [only] when it causes the person who acts to feel pain 20 and regret. For the person who does anything whatever on account of ig¬ norance, while feeling no degree of disgust at the action, has not acted voluntarily, since he, at least, did not know what he was doing; and yet he has not in turn acted involuntarily either, since he is not pained by so acting. In the case of what is done on account of ignorance, then, he who feels regret seems to act involuntarily; but as for the person who is with¬ out regret, since he is different, let his action be “nonvoluntary.” For since they differ, it is better that each have his own name.

25 Acting on account ^ignorance seems different also from acting in ig¬ norance, for he who is drunk or angry is not held to act on account of ig¬ norance but rather on account of one of the things stated, [drunkenness or anger,] and not with knowledge but in ignorance. Everyone who is cor¬ rupt, then, is ignorant of what he ought to do and to abstain from; and 30 through this sort of error, people become unjust and bad in general. But one does not wish to use the term involuntary when somebody is igno¬ rant of what is advantageous; for the ignorance involved in ones choice is the cause, not of what is involuntary, but of ones corruption. Nor is the ignorance of the relevant general [principle] the cause of an act’s being in-

5 • The verb here translated as “to attribute the cause to” (aitiasthai) can also carry the sense of moral condemnation, “to blame ”

voluntary (for people are indeed blamed on account of this sort of general ignorance); the cause, rather, is the ignorance pertaining to the various particulars, both the circumstances of the action and what it concerns. In mia

these latter cases, there is both pity and forgiveness, since he who is igno¬ rant of any of these particulars acts involuntarily.

Perhaps, then, it is not the worst thing to distinguish what and how many these particulars are—that is, who acts, what he does, and with re¬ spect to what or in what circumstances, and sometimes also with what (for example, with an instrument), for the sake of what (for example, pres- 5 ervation), and how (for example, gently or violently). Now, no one could be ignorant of all these things, unless he were mad; and it is clear that he would not be ignorant of the person who is acting either, for how could he be ignorant of himself ? But someone could be ignorant of what he is doing—for example, people declare that they had a slip of the tongue while speaking; or that they did not know that what they said was for¬ bidden, as Aeschylus said about the Mysteries ; 6 or that, as the fellow said 10 about the catapult, he set it off while wishing simply to exhibit it. Some¬ one might also suppose that his own son is an enemy, just as Merope did , 7 that the pointed spear has been blunted, or that the stone is pumice. Or, by giving someone a drink to save him, one might kill him. Or wishing only to touch, as sparring partners do, someone might land a blow. So, 15 since there may be ignorance about all these things that constitute an ac¬ tion, he who is ignorant of any them is held to have acted involuntarily, and especially so in the case of the most authoritative of them—the most authoritative seeming to be those particular circumstances that consti¬ tute the action and the end for the sake of which it is done. Although an action is said to be involuntary in reference to this sort of ignorance, it must still be painful to the person in question and done with regret. 20

Since what is involuntary is that which is the result of force and done on account of ignorance, what is voluntary would seem to be something whose origin is in the person himself, who knows the particulars that constitute the action. For perhaps it is not nobly said that involuntary ac¬ tions are those done on account of spiritedness or desire; in that case, in 25

6 • According to this famous story, the great tragic poet Aeschylus (ca. 525-456) was brought before the Areopagus and charged with divulging secrets of the Eleusinian Mysteries. He defended himself by arguing that he had never been initiated into the Mysteries and said only what came to his lips. He was acquitted of the charges.

7 • A story from another lost play of Euripides. Merope recognizes her son just in time to avoid killing him. See also Aristotle, Poetics ii53b3-54aio.

the first place, none of the other animals will ever act voluntarily, nor will children. Second, do we do nothing stemming from desire and spirited¬ ness voluntarily, or do we do noble things voluntarily and only the shame¬ ful ones involuntarily? Or is this laughable, since they both arise from 30 one cause ? It is perhaps strange to declare to be involuntary those things for which one ought to long; and one ought both to be angry at certain things and to desire certain things—for example, health and learning. It seems too that involuntary things are painful, but that what accords with our desire is pleasant. Further, what difference does it make, with respect to their being involuntary, whether errors are made by way of calculation or spiritedness? For both kinds of error are to be avoided. And the non- nlib rational passions 8 seem to be no less characteristically human [than cal¬ culation or reason], such that the actions resulting from spiritedness and desire too belong to a human being. It is strange, then, to set these down as involuntary.

Since both the voluntary and the involuntary have been defined, going 5 through what pertains to choice comes next. For choice seems to belong very much to virtue and to distinguish people s characters more than ac¬ tions do. Now, choice appears to be something voluntary, but not the same thing as the voluntary; rather, what is voluntary is wider in scope. For both children and animals share in what is voluntary but not in 10 choice, and we say that sudden actions are voluntary but do not stem from choice.

Those who say that choice is desire, spiritedness, wish, or some spe¬ cific opinion do not seem to speak correctly. For choice is not something shared by nonrational animals, but desire and spiritedness are. And the person lacking self-restraint acts out of desire, but he does not do so from 15 choice; the self-restrained person, conversely, acts from choice but not out of desire. And whereas desire opposes choice, desire does not oppose desire. Desire has to do with what is pleasant and painful, whereas choice has to do with neither the painful nor the pleasant. Still less is choice spir¬ itedness. For what arises through spiritedness seems least of all to stem from choice.

8 • Burnet argues that the word for "passions" (pathe) is rightly omitted from the best MSS. If so, the line would read: "And what is nonrational is held to be no less charac¬ teristically human."

Yet choice is not wish either, although it appears to be closely related 20 to it. For choice does not have impossibilities [as its object], and if some¬ one should claim to choose something impossible, he would be held to be foolish. But wish may be for things that are impossible—for example, immortality. And wish is also concerned with things that could not come about through one's own doing, such as wishing that a certain actor or athlete win a victory. No one chooses these sorts of things, but only those 25 that a person supposes may come about through his own doing. Fur¬ ther, wish has more to do with the end, whereas choice has to do with things conducive to that end—for example, we wish to be healthy, whereas we choose those things by which we will become healthy; and we wish to be happy and we declare this, whereas to say that we choose to be happy is not appropriate. For, on the whole, choice appears to be con-
30 cerned with things that are up to us.

Choice would also not be opinion, then, since opinion seems to be concerned with all matters and to be no less concerned with things eter¬ nal or impossible than with those that are up to us. And opinion is divided into false and true, not into bad and good, whereas choice is divided more into these latter two. Perhaps, then, no one even says that choice is the 1112a same as opinion generally. But it is not the same as some specific opinion either. For it is by choosing the good or bad things that we are of a certain sort, not by opining about them. And we choose to take or to avoid one 5 of these sorts of [good or bad] things, but we opine about what it is, or to whom or in what manner it is advantageous, and we really do not opine about taking or avoiding them. Choice is also praised more for being di¬ rected at what it ought to be or for being correctly made , 9 whereas opin¬ ion is praised for how true it is. And we choose what we know most of all to be good, whereas we opine about what we do not know at all well. The same people do not seem both to choose and to opine what is best; rather, some opine what is better, yet, on account of their vice, they choose what 10 they ought not. But whether opinion precedes choice or accompanies it makes no difference, for we are not examining this but whether it is the same thing as some specific opinion.

What or what sort of thing is choice, then, since it is none of the things mentioned? It indeed appears to be something voluntary, but not every¬ thing voluntary is an object of choice. But is it, therefore, at least an object 15

9 * This first clause could also be translated: “And choice is praised more for being di¬ rected at what it ought to be than for being correctly made.”

of prior deliberation? For choice is accompanied by reason and thought. Even the name appears to signify this, as though it refers to something “taken before other things .” 10

Do people deliberate about all things and is everything an object of de¬ liberation, or about some things is there no deliberation? Perhaps it must 20 be said that an object of deliberation is not something that a foolish or mad person would deliberate about, but rather something a person with sense 11 would deliberate about. And about eternal things no one deliber¬ ates—for example, about the cosmos or about the fact that the diagonal and the side of a square are incommensurable. But neither does anyone deliberate about things that are in motion but that always come into be- 25 ing in the same ways, whether from necessity or also by nature (or on ac¬ count of some other cause)—for example, about solstices and sunrises. Nor does anyone deliberate about things that are different at different times—for example, droughts and rains—or about what arises from chance—for example, the discovery of treasure. But neither is there de¬ liberation about every human concern: for example, no Lacedaimonian deliberates about how the Scythians might best govern themselves. For 30 none of these things could come into being through us.

But we do deliberate about things that are up to us and subject to ac¬ tion, and these are in fact what remain. For nature, necessity, and chance seem to be causes, but so too are intellect and all that comes about through a human being. When it comes to human beings, each deliberates about actions that come about through his own doing. And as for those sci- 1112b ences marked by precision and self-sufficiency, there is no deliberation involved—for example, concerning letters (for we do not doubt how one must write). Rather, we deliberate about all those things that come about through us but that do not always do so in the same way—for example, what pertains to the arts of medicine and moneymaking—and we de- 5 liberate more about the art of piloting than about gymnastic training, insofar as the former has attained less precision. And further, the case is similar with the remaining arts or sciences, but more so with the arts than the sciences, for we have more doubt in the case of the arts. But deliberat-

10 ♦ The Greek is proairesis, which means literally “taking [-airesis] before [pro -]” other things and so choosing or preferring some things over others.

11 • Literally, with “intellect” or “mind” (nous).

ing occurs in matters that are for the most part so, where it is unclear how they will turn out and in which something is undetermined. We also take counselors when it comes to great matters, distrusting ourselves on the 10 grounds that we are not adequate to determine them.

We deliberate not about the ends but about things conducive to the ends. For a doctor does not deliberate about whether he is to make some¬ one healthy, an orator whether he is to persuade, or a politician

whether he is to produce good order—in fact, nobody else deliberates about 15 the end either. Rather, having set down the end, they examine how and through what things it will exist. And if the end in question appears to come about in several ways, they examine the easiest and noblest way it will do so. But if it will come to completion through only one means, they examine how it will come about through this means and how this one, in turn, will arise through some other means, until they arrive at the first cause, which is the last in the process of discovery. For he who deliber- 20 ates seems to investigate and to analyze in the manner just spoken of, as he would in the case of a geometrical figure (and it appears that not ev¬ ery investigation is a deliberation—for example, mathematical investiga¬ tions—but every deliberation is an investigation); and what is last in the analysis is first in the process of coming into being. If people happen on something impossible, they leave it be—for example, they need money , 12 25

but it is impossible for this to be furnished—but if it appears possible, they undertake to do it. Possible things are those that could come to be through us; for what comes to be by way of our friends is in a way through us, since the origin is in us. Sometimes what is sought out are the instru¬ ments needed, sometimes the use of them; and similarly too in the case 30 of all else, sometimes what is sought out is that through which the end will come about, sometimes in what way or through whom it will come about . 13

It seems, then, as has been said, that a human being is an origin of his actions. Deliberation is concerned with actions that happen through ones own doing, and the actions are for the sake of something else. For not the end, but rather the things conducive to the end, would be the ob¬ ject of deliberation. So deliberation is not about particular facts either— for example, whether this is a loaf of bread or whether it has been baked iu3a

13 • As Stewart points out, this clause is awkward. It is not clear, for example, what the phrase “all else” refers to, or whether “through whom” should be translated as “through what” and thus as explanatory of “in what way”

as it ought to have been—for these belong to sense perception. And if a person will always be deliberating about them, the process will go on in¬ finitely. The object of deliberation and the object of choice are the same thing, except that the object of choice has already been determined, for 5 that which has been decided by deliberation is what is chosen: each per¬ son ceases investigating how he will act when he traces the origin [of the action] back to himself and to what it is in himself that leads the way, since this is what chooses. This is clear also from the ancient regimes, which Homer portrayed: the kings used to announce to the people what 10 they had chosen. Since what is chosen is a certain longing, marked by de¬

liberation, for something that is up to us, choice would in fact be a delib¬ erative longing for things that are up to us. For in deciding something on the basis of having deliberated about it, we long for it in accord with our deliberation.

Let choice, then, be thus spoken of in outline—both the sorts of things it is concerned with and that it has to do with things conducive to ends.

is That wish is concerned with the end has been said. But in the opinion of some people, wish is for the good; in the opinion of others, it is for what appears good. Yet for those who say that the object of wish is

the good, it turns out that if someone chooses incorrectly, then what he wishes for is not actually an object of wish (for if it will be an object of wish, it will also be good, whereas if someone were to choose incorrectly, it would in 20 fact be bad). But for those, in turn, who say that the apparent good is the object of wish, it turns out that there is no object of wish by nature but only what seems to be good to each. But different things appear good to different people, and, should it so happen, even contrary things.

But if, then, these [consequences] are not satisfactory, must it be de¬ clared that the object of wish in the unqualified and true sense is the 25 good, but that for each person it is what appears to him to be good? To the serious person, then, the object of wish exists in a true sense, whereas to the base person, it is whatever chances to appear good, just as is the case also with bodies: to those who are in good condition, things that are truly healthful appear to be such, whereas to those who are sick, the healthful things appear to be different from these, as is similarly the case with what is bitter, sweet, hot, cold, and each of the rest. For the serious

person judges each case correctly, and in each case what is true appears 30 to him. For with respect to each characteristic, there are noble and pleas¬ ant things peculiar to it; and the serious person is distinguished perhaps most of all by his seeing what is true in each case, just as if he were a rule and measure of them. But in the case of most people [or the many], a de¬ ception appears to occur on account of the pleasure involved, for what is not good appears to them as good. They choose the pleasant, then, on the 1113b

grounds that it is good, and they avoid pain on the grounds that it is bad.

Since the object of wish is the end, whereas the objects of deliberation and choice are the means conducive to the end, actions pertaining to these latter would accord with choice and be voluntary. And the activi- 5 ties of the virtues pertain to these means. Virtue too, then, is up to us, and similarly vice is as well. For in the cases in which it is up to us to act, so too is not acting; and where there may be a “no,” there may also be a “yes.” As a result, if acting, when it is noble to do so, is up to us, then also not acting, when it is shameful not to do so, will be up to us; and if not acting, when 10 it is noble not to, is up to us, then also acting, when it is shameful to do so, is up to us. If doing the noble and the shameful things is up to us, and similarly also not doing them—and this, as we saw, amounts to our being good or bad—it is, therefore, up to us to be decent or base.

But the saying that “no one is voluntarily wicked or involuntarily 15 blessed” 14 appears to be in one respect false and in another respect true.

For no one is involuntarily blessed, but corruption is voluntary. Other¬ wise, one would have to dispute the points now being made, at least, and deny that a human being is the origin and begetter of his actions, as he is also of his offspring. But if these points appear to be the case, and we are not able to trace the origins [of our actions] to any other origins apart from 20

those within us, then these very actions are up to us and voluntary. And these considerations appear to be born witness to both in the case of each person individually and in that of lawgivers themselves. For they punish and seek revenge on those who do corrupt things (insofar as the latter do

14 • The source of this saying is uncertain, though the scholiast suggests that it is a frag¬ ment or adaptation of a line from the poet Epicharmus. The idea that no one is volun¬ tarily bad recurs in Plato's dialogues; see, e.g., Laws 731c, 734b, 863b, 868c; Protagoras 343d; Timaeus 86d.

not act as a result of force or on account of an ignorance of which they are 25 not themselves the cause 15), and they honor those who do noble things, on the grounds that they will thereby exhort the latter and punish the for¬ mer. And yet nobody exhorts us to do those things that are neither up to us nor voluntary, on the grounds that it is pointless to persuade someone not to feel heat or suffer pain or be hungry or any other such thing, since we will suffer them nonetheless.

30 For in fact [lawgivers] do punish the ignorance that depends on one¬ self, if someone is held to be a cause of his own ignorance—for example, in the case of those who are drunk, the penalties are doubled . 16 For the or¬ igin [of the ignorance] is in oneself, since one is in control of not getting drunk, and it is drunkenness that is the cause of the ignorance in ques¬ tion. Also, they punish those who are ignorant of anything in the laws, which people ought to know and which it is not difficult to know. The 1114a case is similar in other matters as well, whenever people seem to be igno¬ rant through carelessness, on the grounds that it was up to them not to be ignorant, since they are in control of taking the appropriate care.

But perhaps someone is the sort of person who does not take that ap- 5 propriate care. Yet by living loosely, people are themselves the causes of their becoming such a sort and of their being unjust and licentious—the former, by doing vicious things; the latter, by passing the time in drink¬ ing bouts and the like. For the activities that pertain in each case produce people of a corresponding sort. This is clear from those who take the ap¬ propriate care with a view to any contest or action whatever, for they are continually engaged in the relevant activity. To be ignorant, then, that the 10 corresponding characteristics come from engaging in a given activity is exactly the mark of someone who is insensible.

Further, it is unreasonable [to say] that he who commits injustice does not wish to be unjust or that he who is licentious does not wish to be li¬ centious. If someone who is not acting in ignorance does those things as a result of which he will be unjust, then he would be voluntarily unjust—it is surely not the case that if somebody who is unjust merely wishes to cease to be unjust, he will cease being it in fact and thus be just: neither will the 15 sick person in this way become healthy. And if it did happen in this way,

15 • Or, "are not themselves to blame."

16 • At Politics 1274619, Aristotle notes that this was a law peculiar to Pittacus (ca. 650- 570), one of the Seven Sages, who was for ten years a dictator of his city, Mytilene. See also Rhetoric i402bio.

then the person in question is sick voluntarily, as a result of living his life without self-restraint and in disobedience to his doctors. At one time, then, it was possible for him not to be sick; but in letting himself go, it is no longer possible, just as it is not possible for someone to toss away a stone and then retrieve it. Nonetheless, the throwing was up to him, be¬ cause the origin [of the throwing] is in him. In this way too, it was pos¬ sible at the beginning for both the unjust person and the licentious one 20 not to become such as they are, and hence they are what they are volun¬ tarily; but once they become such, it is no longer possible for them to be otherwise.

Not only are the vices of the soul voluntary, but, for some people, so too are the vices of the body, namely, for those people whom we in fact censure. For nobody censures those who are ugly on account of nature, whereas people do censure those who are ugly through want of exercise and failing to take the appropriate care. Similar too is the case of feeble- 25

ness or defects, for no one would reproach somebody who is blind by na¬ ture or from sickness or suffering a blow; rather, one would pity such a person. But he who is blind from drunkenness or other licentiousness, ev¬ eryone would censure. Hence, with respect to the vices of the body, those that are up to us are censured, those not up to us are not censured. If this is so, then in the case of the other vices too, those that are censured would 30 be up to us.

But someone might say that while all people aim at what appears good to them, they do not have control over that very appearance ; 17 rather, the end appears to each according to whatever sort of person he is. If, then, nub each person is somehow a cause of his own characteristic, he himself will somehow be a cause also of the appearance [of the good]. Otherwise— if he is not such a cause—then no one is a cause of his own bad actions.

Rather, it is on account of a persons ignorance of the end that he per¬ forms these bad actions, because he supposes that, through them, what is 5 best will be his; and in this case, his aiming at the end is not self-chosen. Instead, one must simply be born as someone who has, as it were, the vi¬ sion by which he will judge nobly and take hold of the true good, and he is of a good nature to whom this noble [capacity] belongs by nature. For when it comes to the greatest and noblest thing—which it is not possible

17 • Here the term is phantasia> which can also mean “imagination,” the soul’s ability to present or represent appearances or images.

io either to get or to learn from another, but rather one is simply such by birth as to have this—to have been born so well and nobly in this respect would constitute natural goodness in the complete and true sense.

If these things are true, how, then, will virtue be any more voluntary than vice ? For to both alike, to both the good person and the bad, the end appears and is set down by nature (or in whatever way); and by referring 1 5 to this, they do all else in whatever way they do it. Whether, then, the end

(of whatever sort it may be) does not appear to each person by nature but is in some respect dependent on the person himself, or whether, granting that the end is indeed natural, yet because the serious person does all else voluntarily, his virtue too is a voluntary thing—[in either case,] vice too 20 would be no less voluntary [than virtue]. For [just as in the case of the ac¬ tions taken by the good person,] so the actions taken by the bad person are similarly traceable to him himself, even if that is not so when it comes to the end [that guides him]. If, then, just as is said, the virtues are volun¬ tary (and indeed we ourselves are somehow joint causes of our character¬ istics, and by being of a certain sort, we set down this or that sort of end), 25 the vices too would be voluntary, for their case is similar [to that of the virtues].

As for what concerns the virtues taken together, then, their genus was stated by us in outline; that they are means and that they are character¬ istics; that they are in themselves productive of the actions out of which

they come to be; that they are up to us and voluntary; and that [they 30 prompt us to act] in the way correct reason commands. But actions and characteristics are not voluntary in a similar way. For in the case of ac¬ tions, from the beginning up to the end we exercise authoritative control over them, knowing the particulars involved; whereas in the case of the characteristics, we are in control of the beginning of them, but at each 1115a moment, the growth [that results from the relevant activity] is not no¬ ticed, just as in the case of illnesses. But because it was once in our power to make use of [the characteristics] in this or that way, they are voluntary.

But taking up each virtue again, let us say what they are, what sorts of 5 things they are concerned with, and in what way. At the same time, how many there are will be clear as well.

And first let us speak about courage. Now, that it is a mean with respect to fear and confidence has already become apparent. It is clear that we

fear frightening things, and these are, to speak unqualifiedly, bad things.

Hence people also define fear as the anticipation of a bad thing. 18 We 10 fear, then, all the bad things—for example, disrepute, poverty, sickness, friendlessness, and death—but the courageous person is not held to be concerned with all of these. For some things one even ought to fear, and it is noble to do so and shameful not to—for example, disrepute, since he who fears this is decent and bashful, whereas he who does not is shame- less, though he is said by some to be courageous in a metaphorical sense: is he bears a certain likeness to the courageous man because the courageous man is in fact a sort of fearless person. One ought not to fear poverty, per¬ haps, or sickness, or, in general, anything that is not the result of vice or one's own doing. But he who is fearless concerning these things is not cou¬ rageous either, though we do say that he too is fearless by dint of a certain similarity [to the truly courageous]. For though some may be cowards in 20 the dangers of war, they are nonetheless liberal and cheerfully confident in the face of a loss of money. And someone who is afraid of wanton vio¬ lence against his children and wife, or of malicious envy or something of this sort, is not a coward. Nor if a person is confident when he is about to be flogged is he courageous.

With what sort of frightening things, then, is the courageous man con¬ cerned? Or is he concerned with those that are such to the greatest de- 25 gree? For no one more steadfastly endures terrible things. And the most frightening thing is death, for it is a limit [or end], and there seems to be nothing else for the dead, nothing either good or bad. But the courageous man would seem not to be concerned with death in any or every circum¬ stance—for example, death at sea or by way of illnesses. In what circum¬ stances, then? Or is it in the noblest ? Such deaths are those that occur in 30 war, for they happen amid the greatest and noblest danger. In agreement with these considerations are also the honors given in cities and by mon- archs.

In the authoritative sense, then, a courageous man could be said to be someone who is fearless when it comes to a noble death and to any situ¬ ation that brings death suddenly to hand. What pertains to war is above 35 all of this character. Yet surely the courageous man is fearless also at sea 1115b and in sicknesses, though not in the way that sailors are. For the coura¬ geous man despairs of his preservation

and is disgusted with this sort of death, whereas the sailors are of good hope, given their experience. But at

the same time too, the courageous act like men 19 in circumstances where 5 prowess in battle is possible or dying is noble; but in the sorts of destruc¬ tion mentioned, by contrast, neither such prowess nor nobility is pos¬ sible.

What is frightening is not the same for all, and we say that there is a cer¬ tain frightening thing that is too much for a human being to bear. This is frightening to everyone, then, at least to everyone who has sense; whereas the frightening things that are within the scope of what is humanly bear- 10 able differ in magnitude, that is, in being greater or lesser, and similarly too do the things that inspire confidence differ.

But the courageous man is as undaunted as a human being can be. He will fear things of this sort, then, but he will endure them in the way that he ought and as reason commands, for the sake of the noble, for this is the end of virtue. It is possible to fear these things more and less [than 15 one ought] and, further, to fear things that are not frightening as if they were. One of the errors that arise is to fear what one ought not, another is to fear in a way one ought not, and yet another is to fear when one ought not or something of this sort. The case is similar also with things that in¬ spire confidence. He, then, who endures and fears what he ought and for the sake of what he ought, and in the way he ought and when, and who is 20 similarly confident as well, is courageous. For the courageous man suffers and acts in accord with what is worthy and as reason would command. Moreover, the end of every activity is that which accords with the charac¬ teristic, and to the courageous man, courage is noble . 20 Such too, there¬ fore, is the end, for each thing is defined by its end. For the sake of the noble, therefore, the courageous man endures and does what accords with courage.

As for those who are marked by excess, he who exceeds in fearlessness 25 is nameless (it was previously said by us that many [characteristics] are nameless), but someone would be mad or insensitive to pain if he should fear nothing, neither earthquake nor floods, as people claim about the

19 • The root of the verb here (andrizein) is aner, a male in an emphatic sense, a “real man”; it is related also to the moral virtue andreia, which we translate as “courage” but which means literally “manliness ”

20 * Rassow suggests an alternative reading: “This is also the case for the courageous man, and courage is noble.”

Celts. He who exceeds in confidence when it comes to frightening things is reckless, and the reckless person is held to be both a boaster and a pre- 30 tender to courage; at any rate, as the courageous man actually is with re¬ spect to frightening things, so the reckless wishes to appear to be. In the circumstances in which he is able to do so, then, he imitates the coura¬ geous man. Hence the majority of them are in fact “reckless cowards,” for although they are reckless where circumstances permit it, they do not en¬ dure frightening things.

He who exceeds in being fearful is a coward, for he fears what one ought not and in the way one ought not, and all the things of that sort 35 that follow. He is also deficient in feeling confidence, but it is in his ex- 1116a

ceeding in feeling pain that he is more conspicuous. The coward, there¬ fore, is someone of faint hope, for he fears everything. The courageous man is the opposite, since to feel confident is to be of good hope.

The coward, the reckless, and the courageous are concerned with the 5 same things, then, but they differ in relation to them. For the former two exceed and are deficient respectively, whereas the latter holds to the middle and in the way he ought. The reckless are also impetuous, and though prior to the dangers they are willing, in the midst of them they withdraw, whereas courageous men are keen in the deeds but quiet be¬ forehand.

In accord with what has been said, then, courage is a mean with respect 10

to what inspires confidence and fear in the situations spoken of, and it chooses and endures what it does because it is noble to do so, or because it is shameful not to. But dying in order to flee poverty, erotic love, or some¬ thing painful is not the mark of a courageous man but rather of a coward.

For it is softness to flee suffering, and such a person endures death not be- 15

cause it is noble to do so but in order to avoid a bad thing.

Courage is something of this sort, then, but there are also other kinds of courage spoken of, in five ways. First is the courage found in the citizen , 21 since it seems most like courage properly speaking. For citizens seem to endure dangers on account of the legal penalties and reproaches involved, as well as on account of the honors at stake. For this reason too people 20 seem to be most courageous wherever cowards are dishonored and the

21 • More literally, “political courage,” the andreia that is politike.

courageous honored. And such are those whom Homer depicts—for ex¬ ample, Diomedes and Hector:

Polydamas will be the first to lay a reproach upon me. 22

25 For Hector will one day declare among the Trojans, speaking in the as¬ sembly,

This most closely resembles the courage spoken of before, because it arises through virtue, that is, through a sense of shame and longing for what is noble (since it is for honor) and through avoiding reproach, since it is shameful.

30 Someone might put in the same category also those who are compelled

by their rulers [to fight], but they are inferior insofar as they do what they do not through a sense of shame but on account of fear, and because they are fleeing not what is shameful but what is painful to them. For those in authority compel them, just as does Hector:

Him whom I might spy far off from the battle, crouching in fear,

35 It is certain that he will not be able to flee the dogs. 24

And if those who assign military posts drive their men back into their 1116b ranks by beating them, 25 they do the same thing, as do those who station their men in front of trenches and such things. For all are using compul¬ sion, and one ought not to be courageous on account of compulsion but because it is noble to be such.

But experience of particular things seems to be courage as well. So it 5 is that Socrates too supposed courage to be knowledge. 26 Yet different people are experienced in different things, and in matters of war, it is the

23 • Ibid., 8.148. The full line is, “The son of Tydeus, by me being put to flight, ran for the ships.”

24 • Ibid., 2.391. It is Agammenon, not Hector, who speaks. See Politics 1285a, where Aristotle correctly attributes the speech to Agammenon.

25 • According to some commentators who take Herodotus 7.223 as their source, this was a practice of the Persians, who used whips to force their troops forward at Ther¬ mopylae.

26 * Or, “science” (episteme). See the definition of courage at Laches i99aio-bi and Protagoras 36od4-5.

professional soldiers who are such. For there seem to be many false alarms in war, which professional soldiers especially see through. Hence they ap¬ pear courageous, because the others do not know what these false alarms are. Then too, professional soldiers are especially able to make an attack and not to suffer one, as a result of their experience, since they are able 10 to use their weapons and possess the sorts of things that are most excel¬ lent for both making an attack and not suffering one oneself. They, then, are like armed men fighting unarmed ones or trained athletes contesting with private amateurs. And indeed, in these sorts of contests, it is not the most courageous who are fittest for battle but those who are especially 15 strong and have the best bodies. But professional soldiers become cow¬ ards when the danger outstrips them and they are lacking in numbers and preparations. For they are the first to flee, whereas the citizen soldiers, who remain in place, die, just as happened at the temple of Hermes. 27 For to citizen soldiers, it is shameful to flee and death is more choiceworthy 20 than preservation of the kind indicated; whereas those who from the very beginning were taking risks on the supposition that they were the stron¬ ger ones, once they realize they are not, they flee, because they fear death more than shame. But a courageous man is not of this sort.

People refer to spiritedness as courage because those who act on ac¬ count of spiritedness do in fact seem to be courageous (like brute animals 25 who turn on those who have wounded them) and because the courageous are spirited. For spiritedness renders a person most ready to face dangers, and so it is that Homer said, “he infused strength into his spirit,” and “he roused up his might and his spirit,” and “strength piercing his nostrils,” and “his blood boiled.” 28 For everything of this sort seems to signal the awak- 30 eningand impulse of spiritedness. Courageous men, then, act on account of the noble, though their spiritedness does work together with them, whereas brute animals act on account of pain, as a result of being struck or afraid: if they are in the forest or the marshland, they do not approach. Hence it is not courage to rush impulsively into danger, being driven by pain and spiritedness, without seeing in advance any of the terrible things 3 5

27 * According to the scholiast, this refers to a battle during which the Coroneans, hav¬ ing been betrayed to the Phocian commander Onomachus, nonetheless stood their ground and were slaughtered while their Boeotian auxiliaries fled.

28 • The first phrase refers to Iliad 14.151 and 16.529, the second to Iliad 5.470. The third phrase refers to the Odyssey 24.318, but the fourth does not come from the texts of Homer as we have them. The scholiast indicates that it comes from Theocritus; see also DeAnima 403a3i.

involved. In this way, at any rate, even asses would be courageous when they are hungry; for although they are being beaten, they nonetheless do 1117a not move off from their grazing. And adulterers too, on account of their desire, do many daring things . 29

Yet the courage that arises through spiritedness appears to be the most 5 natural kind; and if it includes choice and that end for the sake of which [the act ought to be done], it is courage. And certainly when human be¬ ings are angry, they feel pain; but when they exact revenge, they feel plea¬ sure. Those who fight on account of anger or revenge are fit for battle, but they are not courageous, since they fight not on account of the noble or as reason commands but on account of their passion. Yet they are in pos¬ session of something closely resembling courage.

10 Nor indeed are those of good hope courageous. Because they have won

many victories on many occasions, they are confident in the midst of dan¬ gers, and they do resemble the courageous, since both are confident. But courageous men are confident on account of the points stated previously, whereas the hopeful are confident because they suppose they are stron¬ gest and would suffer nothing in the event. Those who are drunk also do i 5 this sort of thing, for they come to be of good hope. But when such things

as they hope for do not turn out for them, they flee. Yet, as we noted, it belongs to the courageous man to endure what is and appears to be fright¬ ening to a human being because it is noble to do so and shameful not to. Hence it also seems that it is more courageous to be fearless and calm amid unforeseen dangers than amid those that are clear beforehand: the 20 former reaction would depend more on one’s characteristic, since fear¬ lessness in the face of such unforeseen dangers would stem less from prep¬ aration. In the case of foreseen dangers, a person would make his choice on the basis of calculation and reason, whereas in the case of sudden dan¬ gers, he would choose in accord with his characteristic.

But the ignorant too appear courageous, and they are not far from those who are of good hope. Yet they are inferior insofar as they have no claim to merit, whereas those of good hope do. Hence the latter in fact remain in their station for a certain time. But if those who have been de- 25 ceived discern that things are different from what they surmise, they flee,

29 • A line that follows—“It is not courage, therefore, to rush impulsively into danger on account of pain or spiritedness”—largely repeats a previous line and is omitted in the best MS.

just as happened to the Argives when they encountered the Laconians, supposing them to be Sicyonians. 30

Of what sort the courageous are, as well as those who merely seem cou¬ rageous, has been stated.

Now although courage is concerned with confidence and fear, it is not similarly concerned with both but is instead more concerned with fright- 30

ening things. For he who is calm in frightening situations and is as he ought to be in the face of them is courageous, more so than he who is as he ought to be when it comes to what inspires confidence. It is because they endure painful things, as was said, 31 that people are spoken of as courageous. Hence courage is in fact a painful thing and is justly praised, since it is more difficult to endure painful things than to abstain from 35 pleasures. Nevertheless, the end that pertains to courage would seem to be pleasant but to be obscured by the circumstances that surround it, as 1117b occurs, for example, in gymnastic contests. For to boxers, the end—the crown and the honors—for the sake of which they fight is pleasant, but being struck is grievous and, given that they are made of flesh and blood, 5

painful, as is all the exertion involved. And because there are many such painful things involved, the end for the sake of which boxers fight, being a small thing, appears not to be pleasant at all.

If, therefore, what concerns courage is this sort of thing, then death and wounds will be painful to the courageous man and he will endure them involuntarily, but he will endure them because it is noble to do so or because it is shameful not to. And the more he possesses complete 10 virtue and the happier he is, the more he will be pained at the pros¬ pect of death. For to this sort of person, living is especially worthwhile, and he is deprived of the greatest goods knowingly—and this is a pain¬ ful thing. Yet he is not less courageous for that, but perhaps even more so, because he chooses what is noble in war instead of these [greatest 15 goods]. Hence the activity is not pleasant in the case of all the virtues, except insofar as the virtue attains its end. But perhaps nothing prevents those who are not of this sort from nonetheless being the most excellent

30 • See Xenophon, Hellenica 4.4.10.

soldiers—those who are less courageous, yet possess nothing else good. 20 For such men are ready to face dangers, and they exchange their lives for small gain.

Let what concerns courage, then, be stated up to this point. But it is not difficult to grasp what it is, in outline at least, from what has been said.

After this virtue, let us speak about moderation, for these seem to be the virtues of the nonrational parts [of the soul]. Now, that moderation is 25 a mean with respect to pleasures has been stated by us, for it is less con¬ cerned with pains than with pleasures, and it is concerned with each in dissimilar ways; licentiousness too is manifest in the same things. Let us now define the sorts of pleasures with which they are concerned.

Let the bodily pleasures, then, be distinguished from those that belong to the soul—for example, love of honor [or ambition], love of learning— 30 for, of these latter pleasures, each person enjoys the one he is disposed to love, his body not being at all affected by them but rather his thought. People who are concerned with such pleasures are not spoken of as either moderate or licentious, nor, similarly, are those

concerned with any of the other nonbodily pleasures. As for people who are lovers of myth and 35 disposed to storytelling and who while away the days on whatever chance

matters they may happen on—we say that they are idle chatterers but not ni8a licentious. Nor do we say that those who are pained over money or friends

Moderation would be concerned with the bodily pleasures, and not even with all of them. For people who enjoy the pleasures stemming from sight—for example, colors, shapes, and drawings—are not spoken of as 5 either moderate or licentious, and yet it would seem possible to enjoy these things too in the way one ought as well as in an excessive or deficient way. This is similarly the case also with hearing, for no one calls licentious those who take excessive enjoyment in melodies or dramatic oratory, nor does anyone call moderate those who enjoy them in the way they ought. Nor does anyone speak this way about people taken up with smells, ex- 10 cept incidentally, for we do not say that people who enjoy the smell of apples, roses, or incense are licentious, but rather those who enjoy the smell of fancy perfume or gourmet foods. For the licentious enjoy these because, through such smells, they come to have a memory of things they

desire. One could see others too enjoying the smell of foods when they are hungry, but enjoying such things belongs to a licentious person, since 15

for him they are objects of desire. In the case of the other animals, there is no pleasure associated with these perceptions, except incidentally, for it is not the smell of hares that the hounds enjoy but their meat, and the smell produces the perception [of the meat to be enjoyed]. The lion too enjoys 20 not the sound of the cows voice but the eating of the cow, though the fact that the cow was nearby he perceived through the sound of its voice, and so he appears to enjoy this. And, similarly, the lion does not take enjoy¬ ment because he sees “a deer or a goat in the fields ,” 32 but because he will have its meat.

Moderation and licentiousness are concerned with the sorts of plea¬ sures that the rest of the animals also share in—which is why these plea- 25 sures appear slavish and brutish—namely, the pleasures of touch and taste. But in fact moderation and licentiousness appear to deal with taste only to a small extent or not at all. For it belongs to the sense of taste to discriminate among flavors, which is just what people who test wines and season meats do. But they do not even enjoy these things very much, or at least not if they are licentious; instead, the licentious enjoy the delight 30 that comes about entirely through touch, in food, drink, and the mat¬ ters said to belong to Aphrodite. Hence a certain gourmand 33 prayed for his throat to become longer than a crane s, on the grounds that he takes his pleasure through touch. So licentiousness pertains to the most com- 1118b mon 34 of the senses; and it might be held to be justly subject to the great¬ est reproach, because it belongs to us not inasmuch as we are human but inasmuch as we are animals. To enjoy these sorts of things, then, and to be fond of them most of all, is brutish. The most liberal 35 of the pleasures 5

that arise through touch are excepted—for example, those in the gymna¬ sia connected with massage and heat—since the touch that is of interest to the licentious person does not concern the whole body but only certain parts.

32 • The phrase alludes to Iliad 3.24.

33 • This gourmand is identified in the Eudemian Ethics (iz3iaiy) as Philoxenos, son of Eryxis.

34 ■ The term (koinos) suggests in the first place “widely shared” but also, by extension, “ordinary” or “vulgar”

35 • The substantive use of the adjective eleutherios , which refers most generally to the quality or qualities that distinguish a free man—above all, in the Ethics , the freedom from any slavish attachment to money.

Of the desires, some seem to be common, others idiosyncratic and ac- 10 quired. For example, the desire for food is natural, for everyone who lacks it desires dry or wet food, and sometimes both; and as Homer asserts, one who is young and in the bloom of youth desires a “marriage-bed ” 36 But beyond this, not everyone desires this or that sort of thing, or the same things; hence [the object of desire] appears to be peculiarly our own. Nevertheless, it has at least something natural about it too, for different things are pleasant to different people, and some things are more pleasant is to all than are just any chance ones.

In the natural desires, then, few people err and in only one direction, namely, toward what is too much. For to eat random things or to drink until one is overfull is to exceed the quantity that accords with nature, since the natural desire is for the satisfaction of need. Hence these people 20 are said to be gluttons on the grounds that they gorge themselves beyond what is needful, and those who are extremely slavish become people of this sort.

With respect to the idiosyncratic pleasures, many people err and in many different ways. For although the lovers of this or that sort of thing are said to enjoy what they ought not, or to enjoy something more than 25 most people do, or in a way they ought not, the licentious exceed in all these ways. For they both enjoy some things they ought not (these are hateful things); and if they enjoy some of the sorts of things one ought to enjoy, they do so more than they ought or more than most people do. That the excess with respect to the pleasures is licentiousness and is blameworthy, then, is clear.

Concerning pains, it is not for enduring them (as in the case of cour- 30 age) that a person is spoken of as moderate, nor is he spoken of as li¬ centious for not doing so. Rather, he is spoken of as licentious for being pained more than he ought to be because he does not attain his pleasures (and, for him, pleasure produces pain as well), whereas a person is spo¬ ken of as moderate for not being pained by the absence of pleasure and ni9a for abstaining from pleasure. The licentious person, then, desires all the pleasures or the especially pleasant ones, and he is led by his desire so that he chooses these instead of other things. Hence he is pained both by fail-

ing to obtain his desire and by desiring itself. For desire is accompanied by pain, though it seems strange to be pained on account of pleasure. 5

Those who are deficient when it comes to pleasures and enjoy them less than they ought do not arise very often, because this sort of “insensi¬ bility” is not characteristically human; even the rest of the animals distin¬ guish among their foods and enjoy some but not others. And if there is someone for whom nothing is pleasant or who does not distinguish one thing from another, he would be far from human. And this sort of person 10 has not obtained a name because he does not arise very often.

The moderate person takes the middle path with respect to these things. He does not take pleasure in those things that are particularly pleasant to a licentious person—rather, he is disgusted by them—and in general the moderate person does not take pleasure in things he ought not or in any such thing to an excessive degree; and when pleasures are absent, he neither feels pain as a result nor desires them, or does so only in a measured way and not more than he ought, or when he ought not, or 15 anything of this sort in general. But as for all the pleasures that are condu¬ cive to health or good conditioning, these the moderate person will long for in a measured way and as he ought; he will long also for such other pleasures as do not impede the healthy pleasures, or are not opposed to what is noble, or do not outstrip his resources. For he who is disposed to the contrary is fond of such pleasures more than they are worth, whereas the moderate person is not of this sort but is as correct reason commands. 20

Licentiousness seems more voluntary than cowardice, for the former arises on account of pleasure, the latter on account of pain; and of these two, pleasure is something we choose, pain something we avoid. And pain unhinges a person and destroys the nature of him who undergoes it, whereas pleasure does no such thing. So it is more voluntary and hence 25 more subject to reproach. Indeed, it is easier to be habituated in relation to pleasures, for there are many such things in life; and the processes of habituation in the case of pleasures are free from danger, but it is the re¬ verse in the case of frightening things. And it might seem that coward¬ ice is not voluntary in the same way as the particular instances of it are.

For cowardice itself is without pain, whereas in the particular instances of cowardice, people are unhinged on account of the pain they undergo,

30 such that they both throw down their weapons and do other unseemly things. Hence these things seem to be forced as well. In the case of the licentious person, to the contrary, the particular instances are voluntary (since he desires and longs for something), whereas the whole [character¬ istic] is less so, for no one desires to be licentious.

We apply the name “licentiousness” also to the errors of children, for 1119b there is a certain resemblance. 37 Which is named for which makes no dif¬ ference to the present considerations, yet it is clear that what comes later is named for what comes earlier. And the transferring of this meaning seems not to have been badly done, since whatever longs for shameful 5 things and can undergo much growth ought to be chastised, and desire and a child are especially of this description: children too live according to desire, and the longing for pleasure is present in them especially. If, then, this longing will not be obedient and placed under that which rules, it will grow too great, for the longing for pleasure is insatiable and bom¬ bards from all sides someone who lacks sense; the activity of the desire 10 increases the innate desire, and if the desires are great and intense, they drive out calculation. Hence they ought to be measured, and few, and in no way opposed to reason—we say that a thing of that sort is “obedient” and “chastised”—and just as a child ought to live in accord with the com¬ mand of his tutor, so too the desiring part ought to live in accord with 15 reason. Hence the desiring part of the moderate person ought thus to be in harmony with reason: the target for both is the noble, and the moder¬ ate person desires what he ought and in the way that he ought and when. It is also in this way that reason commands.

Let these things, then, be stated by us concerning moderation.

37 • The term used here (akolastos) can be used of children who are “spoiled ” It liter¬ ally means “unchecked” or “unpunished” and so is related to the term translated as “chastise” (kolazein).

Let us speak next in order about liberality. It seems, then, to be a mean with respect to money. 1 For the liberal person is praised not in situations of war or in those in which the moderate person is praised, or, again, in those that involve legal adjudications. Rather, he is praised when it comes to the giving and taking of money, and more with regard to the giving of it. (We mean by money all those things whose worth is measured in le¬ gal currency.) Prodigality and stinginess are excesses and deficiencies per¬ taining to money; and while we always ascribe stinginess to those who are more serious about money than they ought to be, we sometimes assign the term prodigality to a combination of things, for we call prodigal those who lack self-restraint and who, in their licentiousness, spend lavishly Hence the prodigal are held to be very base people, since they have many vices simultaneously. But in fact they are not appropriately called by this name, because a “prodigal person” means someone who has one vice, namely, ruining his own resources. 2 For a prodigal person is destroyed by his own doing, since the destruction of one’s own resources seems to be a kind of self-destruction, on the grounds that it is through these resources that one is able to live. We take prodigality, then, in this sense.

Regarding things that have a use, it is possible to use them either well or badly, and wealth belongs among things useful to us. In each case, the person who has the virtue pertaining to a given thing uses it best. Hence he who has the virtue pertaining to money uses wealth best, and this is the

1 • Or, “goods,” “property” (chremata), as distinguished from "legal currency” (nomi- sma).

2 ■ “Resources” here translates ousia , a noun derived from the verb to be that can in philosophical contexts be translated as “being” Hence to destroy one’s “resources” is in a sense to destroy one’s being.

liberal person. The use of money seems to consist in spending and giving it, whereas taking and safeguarding money seem to constitute more its 10 acquisition. Thus it belongs to the liberal person more to give to whom he ought than to take from whom he ought or to refrain from taking from whom he ought not, since it belongs to virtue more to act well than to fare well and to do what is noble than not to do what is shameful. It is also not unclear that acting well and doing what is noble correspond with giv- 15 ing, while faring well and not acting shamefully correspond with taking. Moreover, gratitude flows to one who gives and not to one who refrains from taking, and praise even more so. It is also easier to refrain from tak¬ ing than it is to give, for people are less inclined to give away their own property than they are to refrain from taking that of another. And those who give are spoken of as liberal, whereas those who refrain from taking 20 are praised, not with a view to liberality, but more with a view to justice; those who take are not praised at all. Of all those who act on the basis of virtue, liberal human beings are perhaps loved most, for they are advanta¬ geous to others, and this consists in giving.

Actions that accord with virtue are noble and for the sake of the noble. 25 The liberal person too, then, will give for the sake of the noble and cor¬ rectly: he will give to whom he ought and as much as and when he ought, and anything else that accompanies correct giving. Moreover, he will do these things with pleasure or without pain, since what accords with virtue is pleasant or not painful—in fact, least of all is it painful.

But the person who gives to whom he ought not, or who gives not for the sake of what is noble but for some other cause, will not be spoken of as liberal but as something else, which is the case also with the person who is pained by 30 giving. For he would choose money rather than noble action, and this is not the mark of a liberal human being. The liberal person will also re¬ frain from taking from where he ought not, since someone who does not honor money will not engage in this sort of taking; he would not even be apt to ask [for money], since someone who is a benefactor is not readily the recipient of a benefit. And the liberal person will take from where he 1120b ought—for example, from his own possessions—not on the grounds that

it is noble to do so but on the grounds that it is necessary, so that he may be able to give to others. But he is not careless with his own possessions, since he wishes, at least, to aid some people through these very possessions. And he will not give to just anyone, so that he may be able to give to whom he ought and when and where it is noble to do so. Yet it very much belongs

to the liberal person also to exceed in giving, such that there is little left for himself, for it is typical of a liberal person not to look out for himself

Liberality is spoken of in reference to a person s resources, since what is liberal consists not in the specific amount given but in the characteristic of the giver, and the characteristic relates to his resources. 3 In fact, noth¬ ing prevents the person who gives a lesser amount from being the more liberal one, if he gives from a lesser total amount. And those who did not acquire what they themselves own but inherited it seem more liberal, for they are without the experience of need; and all people are fonder of the works [or products] that are their own, just as parents and poets are. 4 It is also not easy for a liberal person to be wealthy, since he is inclined neither to accept nor to safeguard money; rather, he is inclined even to throw it away, since he does not honor money on its own account but rather for the sake of giving it. Hence the accusation is leveled against chance that those who most deserve wealth are the least wealthy in fact. Yet this hap¬ pens not without reason, for it is not possible to possess money with¬ out taking the requisite care so as to have it, just as is the case with other things. The liberal person surely will not give to whom he ought not and when he ought not or any other such thing, since he would then no longer be acting in accord with liberality; and by spending on these things, he would not be able to spend on the things he ought. For, just as was said, he who spends in accord with his resources and on what he ought is lib¬ eral, whereas he who exceeds these is prodigal. Hence we do not speak of tyrants as prodigal, because for them to exceed their great wealth, through gifts and expenditures, seems no easy thing.

Since, then, liberality is a mean with respect to the giving and taking of money, the liberal person will both give and spend on what he ought and as much as he ought, in things small and great alike, and he will do so with pleasure. Moreover, he will take from where he ought and as much as he ought: since the virtue is a mean with respect to both giving and taking, he will do both as he ought, for this sort of taking corresponds with equitable giving, whereas what is not of this character is contrary. The giving and taking that correspond with each other, then, arise simul¬ taneously in the same person, but the contrary kinds clearly do not. If he

3 • The translation of the final phrase follows Bywater and Burnet; another reading is suggested by Stewart: “this person gives in accord with his resources.”

4 * Aristotle’s remark here recalls a similar one of Socrates in Plato’s Republic (330C3- 6); consider also below, Ii67b28-n68a2.

happens to spend contrary to what he ought and to what is noble, he will be pained, though in a measured way and as he ought, since it belongs to virtue to feel both pleasure and pain at the things one ought and as one ought. The liberal person, moreover, is easy to deal with in money mat- 5 ters, for he can be done injustice, since he does not honor money, at any rate; and he is more vexed if he fails to spend what he ought than pained if he does spend what he ought not, and he is not content with the view of Simonides. 5 The prodigal person thoroughly errs in these matters too, for he neither takes pleasure in the things he ought or as he ought, nor is he pained. This will be more manifest as we proceed.

10 It was stated by us, then, that prodigality and stinginess are excesses and deficiencies, and in two ways—in giving and in taking—for we put spending in the category of giving. Now, prodigality exceeds in giving and not taking, and is deficient in taking, whereas stinginess is deficient is in giving but exceeds in taking, though only in small things. The different

parts of prodigality, then, do not all fit together, since it is not easy to give to all while taking from none: resources quickly run out for those who give their own possessions to others, and these are the very people who are held to be prodigal. Yet this sort of person, at least, would seem to be bet- 20 ter, and in not a small way, than the stingy person, because he is easily cur¬

able, by the effects of both age and want, and he can arrive at the middle term because he possesses the traits of the liberal person: he both gives and does not take, but in neither case does he do so as he ought or well. If, then, he should be habituated in the manner indicated, or changed in some other way, he would be liberal, for he will give to whom he ought 2 5 and not take from where he ought not. 6 Hence too his character does not seem to be base, since to exceed in giving and in not taking is the mark of neither a corrupt nor a lowborn person, but of a foolish one. He who is prodigal in this manner is held to be much better than the stingy per¬ son, both on account of the points stated and because the prodigal person benefits many and the stingy no one, not even himself.

30 But the majority of those who are prodigal, as has been said, also take from where they ought not and are in this respect stingy [or illiberal].

5 • Simonides of Ceos (ca. 506-468) was a fifth-century poet, known for his greed. According to a story Aristotle tells in his Rhetoric (139^8), when Simonides was asked by the wife of the tyrant Hiero whether it was better to be wealthy or wise, he replied, “Wealthy, for I see that the wise hang about the doors of the rich.”

6 • Or, according to some MSS, “he will give to whom he ought and take from where he ought ”

They become disposed to taking because they wish to spend but are not able to do so readily, since their own possessions are quickly depleted.

They are compelled, therefore, to supply resources from some other quar¬ ter; at the same time too, on account of having no thought for what is 1121b noble, they care little about taking from any and all quarters. For they de¬ sire to give, and how [they supply the necessary resources] or from where they do so makes no difference to them. Because of this very thing, their acts of giving are not liberal, since they are not noble or for the sake of what is noble, nor are they done as they ought to be. Rather, sometimes 5 they make wealthy those who ought to labor, and they might give nothing to those whose characters are measured, whereas they would give much to those who flatter them or furnish some other pleasure. Hence many of the prodigal are also licentious, for they spend readily and are lavish in their licentious pursuits; and because they do not live with a view to what is 10 noble, they incline in the direction of pleasures. The prodigal person who is without guidance, then, changes in these directions, yet one who obtains the requisite care could arrive at the middle term and at what is proper.

But stinginess is both incurable (for it seems that age and every infir¬ mity make people stingy) and inborn in human beings to a greater degree than is prodigality. For most people [or the many] are lovers of money 15 more than they are inclined to giving it, and this disposition extends widely and is of multiple kinds, since there seem to be many ways to be stingy. Because stinginess is divided into two categories—deficiency in giving and excess in taking—it is not present as a complete whole in ev¬ eryone but is sometimes divided: some people exceed in taking, while oth- 20

ers are deficient in giving. For all those who have such names as “thrifty,” “penny-pincher,” and “miser” are deficient in giving, but they do not aim at the property of others or wish to take from others. Some people are like this on account of a certain decency and their avoidance of shameful things. For some seem to guard their money, or so at least they assert, pre- 25

cisely so that they will not be compelled at some point to do something shameful—among these fall also the skinflint and everyone of that sort, who are so named because they exceed in giving nothing. Some, in turn, abstain from the property of others out of fear, on the grounds that it is not easy for somebody to take the property of others and not have those 30 others take his in return. They are satisfied, then, neither to take from nor to give to another. But still other people exceed when it comes to taking, in the sense that they take from anywhere and anything—for example, those who perform illiberal tasks, such as brothel keepers and all of their

1122a ilk, and usurers who lend small amounts at high interest. 7 For all these people take from where they ought not and in quantities they ought not. Shameful greediness for gain appears to be what they have in common, since they all endure reproach for the sake of gain, and small gain at that. For we do not call stingy those who take great amounts from where they 5 ought not or of what they ought not—for example, tyrants who plunder

cities and pillage temples—but we speak of them more as wicked, impi¬ ous, and unjust. Yet a gambler and a thief 8 do belong among the stingy, since they are greedy for gain in a shameful way: both engage in their 10 business and endure reproach for the sake of gain, thieves running the greatest risks for the sake of loot, while gamblers gain from their friends to whom they ought rather to give. Since both types, then, wish to gain from where they ought not, their greediness for gain is shameful, and so all such kinds of

taking are marked by stinginess.

Stinginess is appropriately said to be the contrary of liberality, both be- 1 5 cause it is the greater vice than prodigality and because people err more in the direction of this [extreme] than in the direction of prodigality.

As for what concerns liberality, then, and the vices opposed to it, let this much have been said.

Going through what concerns magnificence as well would seem to fol¬ low next. For this too seems to be a certain virtue pertaining to money, 20 although, unlike liberality, it does not extend to all actions involving money but concerns only expenditures; and in these expenditures, it sur¬ passes liberality in greatness. For just as the name itself signifies, magnifi¬ cence is a fitting expenditure on a great thing. 9 But greatness is relative, since the expenditure is not the same for someone who outfits a trireme 25 as for the sponsor of a sacred embassy. 10 What is fitting, then, is relative to

the person involved and to the thing on which as well as that for which he

7 • The MSS vary. Another possible reading for the final phrase is “who perform small tasks for much money.”

8 • Following Aspasius, we delete a third term, pirate , particularly in light of the next two references to “both ”

9 • Megaloprepeia : the prefix, mega, signifies the connection of the virtue to “greatness,” prepeia to what is fitting or appropriate thereto.

10 • These are examples of both ordinary and extraordinary public offices or services that would have been expected of wealthy citizens. See also 1122^9-23.

makes the expenditure. But he who spends on small or measured things in accord with their worth is not said to be magnificent—as, for example, in the line, “I often used to give to a wanderer” 11 —but only he who does so on great things. For the magnificent person is liberal, but the liberal person is not thereby magnificent. The deficiency of this sort of charac- 30

teristic is called parsimony, whereas the excess is called crassness and vul¬ garity and all such things. The excess here resides, not in the magnitude of the expenditure for the things one ought to spend on, but in making an ostentatious display in the circumstances one ought not and in a way one ought not. We will speak about these [the deficiency and the excess] later.

But the magnificent person resembles a knower, since he is able to con- 35

template what is fitting and to spend great amounts in a suitable way. For just as we said in the beginning, the characteristic is defined by the cor- 1122b responding activities and their objects. The expenditures of the magnifi¬ cent person, then, are great and fitting; such too, therefore, are the works involved, since in this way the expenditure will be great and fitting to the work. As a result, the work ought to be worthy of the expenditure, the ex- 5

penditure worthy of the work, or even to exceed it. The magnificent per¬ son will make these sorts of expenditures for the sake of what is noble, for this is common to the virtues. Further, he will do so both with pleasure and unstintingly. For strict accounting is a mark of parsimony. He would examine how to spend most nobly and fittingly rather than how much the work will cost or how to produce it most cheaply. It is necessary, then, that 10 the magnificent person also be liberal, since the liberal person too will spend what he ought and as he ought. But in these considerations resides precisely what is great in the magnificent person, that is, his “greatness”; for although liberality is concerned with these matters, even from an equal expenditure the magnificent person will produce the more magnificent work . 12 For the virtue of a possession and that of a work are not the same. 15

The possession whose price is greatest (such as gold) is the most valued, but the most valued work is the great and noble one (for the contemplation 13

12 • The translation of this line is much disputed among modern commentators, since it is unclear whether Aristotle intends to draw a contrast between liberality and mag¬ nificence, as our translation suggests, or to continue to show their likeness in contrast to the vices associated with magnificence.

13 • Or, “beholding” (theoria). Here we see the connection suggested by kalos between “noble” and “beautiful,” the nobility of the work being related to its beauty.

of such a work is wondrous, and what is magnificent is wondrous); and the virtue of a work, its magnificence, resides in its greatness.

Of expenditures, we say that some kinds are honorable, such as those 20 that concern the gods—votive offerings, [sacred] buildings, and sacri¬ fices—and similarly too those that concern the entire divine realm and are proper objects of ambition in common affairs: for example, if people should suppose that they ought to endow a chorus splendidly or outfit a trireme or even provide a feast for the city. But in all cases, as was said, the 2 5 expenditure is referred to the person who is acting—who he is and what re¬

sources are available to him—for the expenditure must be worthy of these and be fitting not only to the work but also to the person producing it. Hence a poor man could not be magnificent, since he does not have the re¬ sources from which he might fittingly spend large amounts, and the person who tries to do this is foolish. Doing so would be contrary to what is worthy and proper, whereas spending correcdy accords with virtue. But magnifi- 30 cence is fitting to those who possess these sorts of resources to begin with—

whether on their own account or through their ancestors or relations—and to those who are wellborn, of good repute, and all such things, for all these things possess greatness and worthiness. The magnificent person, then, is this kind of person especially, and magnificence consists in these sorts of 35 expenditures, as was said, since they are greatest and most honored.

1123a As for private expenditures, there are all those that occur just once (such as a wedding or anything of this sort) and anything the whole city or people of worth take seriously, as well as anything connected with the receiving and sending off of foreign guests or the giving and reciprocat- 5 ing of gifts. For the

magnificent person is lavish not on himself but on the

common affairs, and his gifts have a certain resemblance to votive offer¬ ings. Yet it also belongs to the magnificent person to furnish his home in a way fitting to his wealth (since this, too, is a certain ornament); and with respect to these furnishings, he will spend more on those works that endure over time (since these are noblest) and spend what is fitting in 10 each case. For the same thing is not suitable for gods and human beings, or in the case of a temple and that of a burial tomb. Now, each expendi¬ ture is great within its class (great expenditure on a great thing is most magnificent simply, whereas what is most magnificent in this or that cir¬ cumstance is what is great in it); and what is great in the case of a given work differs from what is great in the case of the expenditure, for the most i 5 beautiful ball or oil flask is magnificent as a gift for a child, though its cost

is small and cheap. Since these things are so, it belongs to the magnificent

person to produce things in a magnificent way in whatever category he should produce something (for such production is not easily surpassed) and in a way worthy of the expenditure. The magnificent person, then, is of this sort.

But he who is excessive and vulgar exceeds in spending beyond what is 20 needful, as has been said. For on small things, he lavishes much expense and makes an ostentatious display of himself contrary to what is proper— for example, in giving a club dinner in the manner of a wedding feast or leading a comic chorus clothed in purple in its entrance on stage, just as they might do in Megara. And he will do all such things not for the sake 25 of the noble but to display his wealth; and for these reasons he supposes that he makes himself an object of wonder. He will spend little on what he ought to spend much, and he will spend much on what he ought to spend little. But the parsimonious person will be deficient in all respects, and after spending great amounts, he will destroy the noble for some trifle; he continually examines how to spend the least amount on whatever he may 30

produce, lamenting even this expenditure, and, in every case, supposing that he spends more than he ought.

These characteristics, then, are vices. Nevertheless, they do not bring reproach, because they are neither harmful to a neighbor nor extremely unseemly.

Greatness of soul 14 seems, even from its name, to be concerned with great 3 5 things, and let us first grasp what sort of great things it concerns. It makes no difference whether we examine the characteristic or the person who 1123b accords with the characteristic.

He, then, who deems himself worthy of great things and is worthy of them is held to be great souled. 15 For he who does this in a manner con-

14 • Megalopsychia is often translated “magnanimity,” from the Latin, but this term in English has come to mean generosity or liberality rather than the sense intended by Aristotle. The more literal translation, “greatness of soul,” captures better the full meaning of the virtue, both the greatness of its possessor in terms of his virtue and his awareness of this greatness.

15 • “To deem oneself worthy” (axioun), in accord with one’s worth (axia), is a central idea in Aristotle’s treatment of greatness of soul, and the verb and its cognates occur more than thirty times in this chapter alone. Here, axia is always translated as “worth”; it can also mean “merit,” as we translate it in the discussion of justice in particular.

trary to his real worth is foolish, and no one who acts virtuously is fool- 5 ish or mindless. The person spoken of, then, is great souled. For he who is worthy of small things and deems himself worthy of them is moder¬ ate 16 but not great souled, since greatness of soul resides in greatness, just as beauty involves a body of great stature: those who are small may be el¬ egant and well proportioned but not beautiful. He who deems himself worthy of great things while not being worthy of them is vain, though not everyone who deems himself worthy of things greater than he is worth 10 is vain. He who deems himself worthy of less than he is worth is small souled—whether he is worthy of great things or of measured things or even if, being worthy of small things, he deems himself worthy of still less. And most small-souled of all would seem to be the person who is in fact worthy of great things [but does not deem himself so], for what would he do if he were not worthy of so much?

The great-souled man, then, is an extreme in terms of greatness, but he is in the middle in terms of his acting as one ought, since he deems himself is worthy of what accords with his worth, whereas the others exceed or are

deficient [in judging their own worth]. If, then, he deems himself worthy of great things, while being worthy of them, and especially of the great¬ est things, he would be concerned with one matter most of all. Worth is spoken of in relation to external goods, and we would posit as the greatest of these that which we assign to the gods, that at which people of worth 20 aim, and that which is the prize conferred on the noblest people. Honor is such a thing, since it is indeed the greatest of the external goods. The great-souled man, then, is concerned with honor and dishonor in the way that he ought to be. Even in the absence of argument, the great-souled ap¬ pear to be concerned with honor, for they 17 deem themselves worthy of honor most of all, in accord with their worth. But the small-souled per- 25 son is deficient in relation to his estimation of himself and the worthi¬ ness of the great-souled man; the vain person is excessive when it comes to himself, though not, of course, in relation to the great-souled man.

The great-souled man, if indeed he is worthy of the greatest things, would be the best, for he who is better is always worthy of what is greater, and he who is best is worthy of the greatest things. He who is truly great souled, therefore, must be good, and what is great in each virtue would

16 • The term is sophron. In his discussion of the virtue of moderation (sophrosune), Aristotle confines its sphere to the bodily appetites or desires, whereas here it has a general meaning of “sensible.”

17 • Bywater brackets as an interpolation the terms the great that appear here in the MSS.

seem to belong to the great-souled man. It would in no way be suitable 30 for a great-souled man to flee with arms swinging or to commit injustice: for the sake of what will he do shameful things, he to whom nothing is great ? 18 And to anyone who thoroughly examines each characteristic, it would appear entirely laughable if the great-souled man were not good.

He would not be worthy of honor, either, if he were base, for honor is the 35

prize of virtue and is assigned to those who are good. Greatness of soul, then, seems to be like a kind of ornament 19 of the virtues, for it makes 1124a them greater and does not arise without them. For this reason, it is diffi¬ cult, in truth, to be great souled, for it is not possible without gentleman¬ liness . 20

It is especially with matters of honor and dishonor, then, that a great- 5 souled man is concerned. And he will take pleasure in a measured way in great honors and those that come from serious human beings, on the grounds that he obtains what is proper to him or even less—for there could be no honor worthy of complete virtue, but he will nevertheless ac¬ cept it inasmuch as they have nothing greater to assign to him. As for honor that comes from people at random, or small honors, he will have complete 10 contempt for them, since it is not of these that he is worthy. The case of dis¬ honor is similar, for it will not justly pertain to him. The great-souled man, then, is, as was said, especially concerned with honors, but he will surely also be disposed in a measured way toward wealth and political power as 15 well as all good and bad fortune, however it may occur: he will be neither overjoyed by good fortune nor deeply grieved by bad fortune. For he is not disposed even toward honor as though it were a very great thing, and po¬ litical power and wealth are choiceworthy on account of the honor they bring; at any rate, those who possess them wish to be honored on account of them. But to him for whom honor is a small thing, so also are these other concerns. Hence the great-souled are held to be haughty. 20

But instances of good fortune too seem to contribute to greatness of soul, since the wellborn deem themselves worthy of honor, as do those who possess political power or wealth. For they are in a position of superiority, and everything superior in point of goodness is more honorable. Hence

18 • Aristotle repeats this phrase at 112533 and 15. Compare Plato, Republic 486a8-io, for a similar remark in reference to the philosopher.

19 • Or, “adornment,” “crown” (kosmos). It is used also at 112336-7 to refer to the way that someone who possesses magnificence furnishes his home.

20 • Kalokagathia, literally “nobility and goodness,” is the term typically applied in Greek to the “gentleman,” the exemplar of the moral virtues.

these sorts of things render people more great souled, since they are hon- 2 5 ored by some as a result. Yet in truth, only the good human being is honor¬

able, though he who has both goodness and good fortune is deemed even worthier of honor. But those who possess such goods in the absence of vir¬ tue do not justly deem themselves worthy of great things, nor are they cor¬ rectly spoken of as great souled: in the absence of complete virtue, neither 30 of these is possible. And people who possess such goods become haughty

and hubristic because, in the absence of virtue, it is not easy to deal with the goods of fortune in a suitable manner. Although not in fact being able 1124b to deal with these goods and supposing themselves to be superior to oth¬ ers, they look down on them, while they themselves act in whatever ran¬ dom way. For they imitate the great-souled man without being like him, and they do this wherever circumstances permit.

They do not perform the 5 deeds that accord with virtue, then, but they look down on others nonethe¬

less. For the great-souled man jusdy looks down on others (since he holds a true opinion of himself), whereas the many do so in a random fashion.

The great-souled man is not one to hazard trifling dangers and he is not a lover of danger either, since he honors few things. But he will hazard great dangers, and when he does so, he throws away his life, on the grounds that living is not at all worthwhile . 21 He is also the sort to benefit others 10 but is ashamed to receive a benefaction; for the former is a mark of one who is superior, the latter of one who is inferior. He is disposed to return a benefaction with a greater one, since in this way the person who took the initiative [with the original benefaction] will owe him in addition and will have also fared well thereby. But those who are great souled seem in fact to remember whatever benefaction they may have done, yet not those that they have been done (for he who receives the benefit is inferior to him who performed it, whereas the great-souled man wishes to be superior); 15 and they seem to hear about the former with pleasure, but about the latter with displeasure. Hence Thetis too did not speak of the benefactions she had done for Zeus, nor did the Laconians speak of those they had done for the Athenians but only those they had been done . 22 It belongs to the

21 • Translators often render this ambiguous phrase as “living at any cost is not worth¬ while,” perhaps rightly. The alternative we offer, while arresting in its import, makes sense of the suggestion that the great-souled man will “throw away” his life and of Aris¬ totle’s repeated statement that “nothing is great” to such a man.

22 • For the reference to Thetis, see Iliad 1.503-4. In fact, she does refer to the good she has done Zeus, though only in general terms: “Father Zeus, if ever I benefited you among the immortals, either by word or by deed .. ” It is not certain what the claim

great-souled also to need nothing, or scarcely anything, but to be eager to be of service, and to be great in the presence of people of worth and good fortune, but measured toward those of a middling rank. For it is a difficult 20

and august thing to be superior among the fortunate, but easy to be that way among the middling sorts; and to exalt oneself among the former is not a lowborn thing, but to do so among the latter is crude, just as is using ones strength against the weak. It belongs to the great-souled man also not to go in for the things that are generally honored or in which others hold first place, and he is idle and a procrastinator, except wherever either a great honor or a great deed is at stake; he is disposed to act in few affairs, 2 5

namely, in great and notable ones. He is necessarily open in both hate and love, for concealing these things is the mark of a fearful person, as is car¬ ing less for the truth than for peoples opinion. He necessarily speaks and acts in an open manner: he speaks freely because he is disposed to feeling contempt for others, and he is given to truthfulness, except inasmuch as 30 he is ironic toward the many. And he is necessarily incapable of living with a view to another—except a friend—since doing so is slavish. Hence too 1125a all flatterers are servile, and all lowly types are flatterers.

The great-souled man is also not given to admiration, 23 since nothing is great to him. But neither is he one to remember evils done him; for it does not belong to a great-souled man to recall things with a grudge, in particular evils done him, but rather to overlook them. He is also not one 5 for personal conversation: he will speak neither about himself nor about another, since he does not care either to be praised himself or for others to be blamed. Nor, in turn, is he given to praising others. Hence he is not one to speak ill, not even of his enemies, except where insolence is involved. 24 When it comes to necessities or small concerns, he is least of all given to lamentation and requests for help, since it is the mark of a serious person 10 to be thus disposed toward these. He is such as to possess beautiful and useless things more than useful and beneficial ones, for this is more the mark of a self-sufficient person. Also, slowness of movement seems to be the mark of a great-souled man, as well as a deep voice and steady speech;

about the Laconians refers to. According to a scholiast, who quotes the historian Cal- listhenes, it refers to an event in 369 when the Spartans sought Athenian aid against the Thebans. But if so, Xenophons account of the relevant Spartan speeches does not bear out Aristotle's claim; see Xenophon, Hellenica 6.5.33-34.

24 • Commentators disagree about the meaning of this final phrase: is the insolence (hubris) that of the great-souled man or of his enemy?

15 for he who is serious about few things is not given to hastiness, nor is any¬

one ever vehement who supposes that nothing is great, whereas a shrill voice and quickness result from these things.

Such, then, is the great-souled man, whereas he who is deficient is small souled, and he who exceeds is vain. Now, these people too do not seem to be bad (since they are not malefactors), though they do err. For 20 the small-souled person, even though he is worthy of good things, deprives

himself of those he is indeed worthy of, and he seems to be in some way bad, as a result of not deeming himself worthy of good things, and to be ignorant of himself; he otherwise would long for the things he is worthy of, since they are good. Nonetheless, such people are held not to be foolish but, rather, 25 timid. Yet such an opinion seems to make them even worse; for everyone aims at those things that accord with his worth, whereas the small-souled refrain even from noble actions and pursuits, on the grounds that they are unworthy of them, as is similarly the case also with external goods.

But vain people are foolish and ignorant of themselves, and manifestly so; for although they are not worthy , 25 they try their hand at the things 30 people honor, and then they are found out. They deck themselves out when it comes to their dress and appearance and things of that sort; they wish for the things of good fortune and for these to be manifestly theirs; and they speak about these things , 26 on the grounds that they will be hon¬ ored as a result.

But smallness of soul is more opposed to greatness of soul than vanity is, for it both occurs more often and is worse.

35 Greatness of soul, then, is concerned with great honor, just as has been

1125b But there seems to be a certain virtue also concerned with honor, just as was said in the first discussions , 27 which would seem to stand in a similar way to greatness of soul as liberality stands to magnificence: both are at a remove from what is great but dispose us to be such as we ought to be 5 when it comes to measured and small things. Just as there is a mean, an excess, and a deficiency in the taking and giving of money, so also in the longing for honor one can have more or less of such a longing than one

25 • Or, according to some MSS, “as if they are worthy”

26 • Or, according to some MSS, “they speak about themselves ”

27 • In the enumeration of the virtues in 2.7 (no7b24~3i); consider also 1.5 (io95b22~3o).

ought, and one can seek honor from where and in the way one ought. For we blame the ambitious person , 28 on the grounds that he aims at getting honor more than he ought and from where he ought not; and we blame 10 the unambitious person, on the grounds that he chooses not to be hon¬ ored even in the case of what is noble. But sometimes we praise the am¬ bitious person as manly and a lover of what is noble, and praise the un¬ ambitious person as measured and moderate, just as we said in the first discussions as well. Yet it is clear that since we speak of the “lover of such and such” in various ways, we do not always apply the phrase “lover of 15 honor” [or ambitious person] to the same thing; when we are offering praise, we apply the term to those who love honor more than the many do, but when we are speaking in terms of blame, to those who love honor more than they ought. Since the mean is nameless, the extremes seem to dispute over it as if it were unclaimed. But where there is excess and de¬ ficiency, there exists also a middle term, and people long for honor both more than they ought and less; and, therefore, it is possible to do so as 20 one ought. It is this characteristic that is praised, then, although the mean with respect to honor is nameless. In relation to ambition, it appears as lack of ambition; in relation to lack of ambition, it appears as ambition; and in relation to both, it somehow appears as both. This seems to be the case also with the other virtues, but here it is the extremes that appear to 25 be opposites of each other, because the middle term has not been named.

Gentleness is a mean with respect to anger. Since the middle term is nameless, as the extremes also pretty much are, we confer the name “gen¬ tleness” on the middle term, since it inclines in the direction of the defi¬ ciency, which is nameless. The excess might be said to be a certain iras¬ cibility, for the passion involved is anger, though what produces anger is 30 manifold and varied.

The person who gets angry at the things and with whom he ought, then, and, further, in the way, when, and for as much time as he ought, is praised. Hence this person would be gentle, if indeed gentleness is praised.

The gentle person wishes to be calm and not led by his passion, but rather 35

as reason may command, and so to be harsh regarding the things he ought

28 • The ambitious person (philotimos) is literally a “lover of honor,” while the one who lacks ambition is aphilotimos , “without the love of honor”

1126a and for the requisite time. But he seems to err more in the direction of the deficiency, since the gentle person is given not to revenge but rather to forgiveness. The deficiency, whether it is a certain lack of anger or some- thing else, is blamed. For those who do not get angry at the things they 5 ought are held to be foolish, as are those who do not get angry in the way they ought or when or with whom they ought. For such a person seems to lack perception and even not to feel pain; since he does not get angry, he seems not apt to defend himself against an attack. Yet to hold back in this way after having been treated insolently, and to overlook such treat¬ ment of ones kin, is held to be slavish.

The excess arises in all these respects (that is, getting angry at whom 10 one ought not and at the things one ought not, more than one ought, and more quickly and for too much time), though surely not all these happen to one and the same person: this would not be possible, since what is bad destroys even itself, and if it is complete in all its parts, it becomes intoler¬ able. Irascible people, then, get angry rapidly, with whom they ought not, 15 at things they ought not, and more than they ought; but they rapidly cease being angry, which is in fact their best trait. This happens to them because they do not hold on to their anger but retaliate in a manifest way on ac¬ count of the quickness of their temper, and then they leave off. The cho¬ leric are exceedingly quick tempered and irascible toward everyone and at everything; hence too the name . 29 But bitter people are resistant to recon- 20 ciliation and are angry for a long time, because they constrain their spirit.

Yet it does come to a halt when they retaliate, since revenge makes anger cease, thus producing pleasure instead of pain. Whenever this does not oc¬ cur, bitter human beings carry a heavy weight: because their anger is not 2 5 manifest, no one persuades them out of it, and time is needed to digest it in

oneself. Such people are most troublesome to themselves and their closest friends. We speak of harsh people as those who are harsh regarding matters not requiring it, who are harsher than they ought to be and for too long a time, and who cannot be reconciled unless they inflict their revenge or punishment. We set the excess in question as more opposed to gentleness 30 [than the deficiency], for it also occurs more often, since to seek revenge is

more characteristically human, and harsh people are worse to live with.

Wftat was said earlier is clear also from the points being discussed: it is not easy to determine how, with whom, at what sort of things, and for

29 * The Greek term akrocholos has the sense similar to that of the English choleric or bilious, meaning “an excess of chole” choler or bile, the humor thought to cause anger.

how much time one ought to be angry, as well as up to what point this is correctly or erroneously done. For he who deviates a little is not blamed, 35 whether in the direction of more [than the mean] or in that of less than it, since sometimes we praise those who are deficient and assert that they 1126b are gentle, and sometimes we praise those who are harsh as manly, on the grounds that they are capable of ruling. How much and in what way he who deviates is blameworthy, then, is not easy to render by means of ar¬ gument. For in each circumstance, the relevant decision resides in the perception in question. But this much at least is clear: the middle char- 5 acteristic is praiseworthy, in accord with which we are angry with

whom we ought to be, at the things we ought, in the way we ought, and every¬ thing of this sort; whereas the excesses and deficiencies are blamewor¬ thy—slightly so if they are small in degree, more so if in greater degree, and extremely so if in great degree. It is clear, therefore, that one must cleave to the middle characteristic.

Let the characteristics that pertain to anger, then, be stated in this way. 10 CHAPTER SIX

In our associations with one another, both in living together and in shar¬ ing in speeches and actions, some people are held to be obsequious: those who praise everyone with a view to pleasing them and oppose nothing, but rather suppose they ought not to cause pain to anyone they may meet.

At the opposite extreme to them are those people who oppose everything 15 and give no thought whatever to causing others pain, people who are called surly and quarrelsome. It is not unclear, then, that the characteristics spo¬ ken of are blameworthy and that the middle term with respect to these— in accord with which a person will approve of what he ought and in the way he ought, and similarly also disapprove—is praiseworthy. But a spe¬ cific name has not been given to this characteristic, though it seems most 20 like friendship [or friendliness]. For someone who accords with the middle characteristic here is the sort of person we mean by an equitable friend, if his disposition also goes together with feeling affection for the other.

This characteristic differs from friendship, however, because it is without the relevant passion, that is, the feeling of affection for those with whom one associates: it is not as a result of friendly affection 30 or hatred that the

30 • For “the feeling of affection” and “friendly affection,” Aristotle uses forms of two different verbs, stergein and philein, respectively; the first usually connotes familial af¬ fection, and the second the affection connected with friendship proper (philia).

person in question approves of each matter as he ought, but as a result of 25 being the sort of person he is. For he will act similarly in the case of both those he does not know and those he does know, of both those who are inti¬ mates and those who are not—except that he will also do what is suitable in each case. For it is not proper to give similar thought to ones intimates as to strangers, nor, in turn, to be similarly concerned about causing each pain.

It has been stated in general, then, that this person will associate with others in the way he ought; and by referring to what is noble and advanta- 30 geous, he will aim either at not causing others pain 31 or at contributing to their pleasure. For he seems to be concerned with the pleasures and pains that arise in the course of our associations; and in all cases in which it is not noble, or is harmful, for him to contribute to their pleasure, he will disapprove of doing so, and he will choose to cause them pain. If some¬ thing would bring no little disgrace or harm to the person doing it, while 35 opposing it would cause little pain, he will not approve but rather dis¬ approve of it. He will also associate differently among people of worth than among people at random, just as he will associate differently also 1127a with those who are more or less known to him, and similarly in the case of other relevant differences, assigning to each what is fitting. And while he chooses to contribute to the pleasure of others for its own sake and is cautious about causing

others pain, he is guided by the consequences at 5 stake—I mean if what is noble and advantageous may be greater [than

the pleasure or pain involved]. And for the sake of a great pleasure in the future, he will cause a little pain now. Such, then, is the person marked by the middle characteristic, but he does not have a name.

As for contributing to pleasure, he who aims at being pleasant for no ulterior motive is obsequious, whereas he who does so in order to gain some benefit for himself, in money and all that comes from money, is 10 a flatterer. But he who disapproves of everyone was said to be surly and quarrelsome. And the extremes appear to be opposed to each other be¬ cause the middle term is nameless.

Concerning pretty much the same things, there is also the mean related to 15 boasting, but it too is nameless. Yet it is not the worst thing to go through

31 • Or, according to a suggestion of Susemihl and Gauthier and Jolif, “he will aim at causing them pain.”

considerations of this kind as well, since we would know better what per¬ tains to character by going through each of them, and we would trust that the virtues are means by seeing plainly that this is so in each case.

When it comes to living together, then, those who associate with a view to pleasure and pain have been spoken of. Let us speak similarly also about 20

those who tell the truth as well as those who state falsehoods 32 related to speeches and actions, that is, in relation to what it is they pretend to. The boaster, then, seems apt to pretend to qualities held in high repute, both qualities he does not actually possess and those that are greater than the ones he does possess, whereas the ironist, conversely, seems to deny the qualities he actually possesses or to make them less; and the person in the middle between them is a kind of “plain dealer ,” 33 since he is given to truth¬ fulness, both in his life and his speech, acknowledging that the qualities he 25

possesses are his own and neither exaggerating nor diminishing them.

It is possible to act in each of these ways either for the sake of some goal or for none. The sorts of things each person says and does, and thus how he lives, are determined by the sort of person he is—if he is not acting for the sake of some goal. In itself, what is false is base and blameworthy, whereas what is true is noble and praiseworthy. In this way too, he who is given to 30 truthfulness, being characterized by the middle term, is praiseworthy; but both of those given to falsehoods are blameworthy, though more so the boaster. Yet let us speak about each, and first about the truthful person.

Now, we are speaking not about truthfulness in the case of agreements or anything that extends into the realm of injustice or justice (for this would belong to another virtue). Rather, in the situations in which noth- 1127b ing of that sort is involved, the person we are speaking of is truthful both in speech and in life because such is his characteristic. A person of this sort would seem to be decent because he is a lover of truth; and if he is truthful in the situations in which being such makes no difference, still 5 more so will he be truthful in the situations in which it does. For he will guard against what is false on the grounds that it is

shameful, especially when he is also used to guarding against it in itself. And such a person is praiseworthy. He will incline more in the direction of [saying] less than what is true, for this appears more refined, given the irksomeness of the excesses in this regard.