Aristotle

Nicomachean Ethics

translated by

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Nicomachean Ethics

1. The Highest Good: Happiness

1.1 The Highest Good is Supreme in the Hierarchy of Goods

Goods correspond to ends

i 1
1094a Every craft and every investigation, and likewise every action and decision, seems to aim at some good; hence the good has been well described as that at which everything aims.

However, there is an apparent difference among the ends aimed at. For the end is sometimes an activity, sometimes a product beyond the activity; and when there is an end beyond the action, the product is by nature better than the activity. 5

The hierarchy of goods corresponds to the hierarchy of ends

Since there are many actions, crafts and sciences, the ends turn out to be many as well; for health is the end of medicine, a boat of boatbuilding, victory of generalship, and wealth of household management. 10

But whenever any of these sciences are subordinate to some one capacity – as e.g. bridlemaking and every other science producing equipment for horses are subordinate to horseman-

ship, while this and every action in warfare are in turn subordinate to generalship, and in the same way other sciences are subordinate to further ones – in each of these the end of the ruling science is more choiceworthy than all the ends subordinate to it, since it is the end for which those ends are also pursued. And here it does not matter whether the ends of the actions are the activities themselves, or some product beyond them, as in the sciences we have mentioned.

The highest good

i 2 Suppose, then, that (a) there is some end of the things we pursue in our actions which we wish for because of itself, and because of which we wish for the other things; and (b) we do not choose everything because of something else, since (c) if we do, it will go on without limit, making desire empty and futile; then clearly (d) this end will be the good, i.e. the best good.

1.2 The Ruling Science Studying the Highest Good is Political Science

The importance of finding the science of the highest good

Then surely knowledge of this good is also of great importance for the conduct of our lives, and if, like archers, we have a target to aim at, we are more likely to hit the right mark. If so, we should try to grasp, in outline at any rate, what the good is, and which science or capacity is concerned with it.

The relevant science is political science

It seems to concern the most controlling science, the one that, more than any other, is the ruling science. And political science apparently has this character.

(1) For it is the one that prescribes which of the sciences

ought to be studied in cities, and which ones each class in the city should learn, and how far. 1094b

(2) Again, we see that even the most honoured capacities, e.g. generalship, household management and rhetoric, are subordinate to it.

(3) Further, it uses the other sciences concerned with action, and moreover legislates what must be done and what avoided.

Hence its end will include the ends of the other sciences, and so will be the human good.

[This is properly called political science;] for though admittedly the good is the same for a city as for an individual, still the good of the city is apparently a greater and more complete good to acquire and preserve. For while it is satisfactory to acquire and preserve the good even for an individual, it is finer and more divine to acquire and preserve it for a people and for cities. And so, since our investigation aims at these [goods, for an individual and for a city], it is a sort of political science.

1.3 The Method of Political Inquiry

The demand for exactness must be limited by the nature of ethics

Our discussion will be adequate if its degree of clarity fits i 3 the subject-matter; for we should not seek the same degree of exactness in all sorts of arguments alike, any more than in the products of different crafts.

Moreover, what is fine and what is just, the topics of inquiry in political science, differ and vary so much that they seem to rest on convention only, not on nature. Goods, however, also vary in the same sort of way, since they cause harm to many people; for it has happened that some people have been destroyed because of their wealth, others because of their bravery.

The proper aim of ethical theory

Since these, then, are the sorts of things we argue from and about, it will be satisfactory if we can indicate the truth roughly and in outline; since [that is to say] we argue from and about what holds good usually [but not universally], it will be satisfactory if we can draw conclusions of the same sort.

How to judge an ethical theory

Each of our claims, then, ought to be accepted in the same way [as claiming to hold good usually], since the educated person seeks exactness in each area to the extent that the nature of the subject allows; for apparently it is just as mistaken to demand demonstrations from a rhetorician as to accept [merely] persuasive arguments from a mathematician.

Further, each person judges well what he knows, and is a good judge about that; hence the good judge in a particular area is the person educated in that area, and the unconditionally good judge is the person educated in every area.

Qualifications of the student of ethics

This is why a youth is not a suitable student of political science; for he lacks experience of the actions in life which political science argues from and about.

Moreover, since he tends to be guided by his feelings, his study will be futile and useless; for its end is action, not knowledge. And here it does not matter whether he is young in years or immature in character, since the deficiency does not depend on age, but results from being guided in his life and in each of his pursuits by his feelings; for an immature person, like an incontinent person, gets no benefit from his knowledge.

If, however, we are guided by reason in forming our desires and in acting, then this knowledge will be of great benefit.

These are the preliminary points about the student, about the way our claims are to be accepted, and about what we intend to do.

1.4 Common Beliefs About the Highest Good are Inadequate

1.41 Most people identify the good with happiness, but disagree about the nature of happiness

Let us, then, begin again. Since every sort of knowledge and decision pursues some good, what is that good which we say is the aim of political science? What [in other words] is the highest of all the goods pursued in action?

As far as its name goes, most people virtually agree [about what the good is], since both the many and the cultivated call it happiness, and suppose that living well and doing well are the same as being happy. But they disagree about what happiness is, and the many do not give the same answer as the wise.

For the many think it is something obvious and evident, e.g. pleasure, wealth or honour, some thinking one thing, others another; and indeed the same person keeps changing his mind, since in sickness he thinks it is health, in poverty wealth. And when they are conscious of their own ignorance, they admire anyone who speaks of something grand and beyond them.

[Among the wise,] however, some used to think that besides these many goods there is some other good that is something in itself, and also causes all these goods to be goods.

1.42 Ethical method

We must examine these common beliefs; but we must not take for granted our first principles, since we are arguing towards them, not from them

Presumably, then, it is rather futile to examine all these beliefs, and it is enough to examine those that are most current or seem to have some argument for them.

We must notice, however, the difference between arguments from origins and arguments towards origins. For indeed Plato was right to be puzzled about this, when he used to ask if [the argument] set out from the origins or led towards them—just as on a race course the path may go from the starting-line to the far end, or back again.

To argue towards first principles we must begin from common beliefs that are familiar to us

For while we should certainly begin from origins that are known, things are known in two ways; for some are known to us, some known unconditionally [but not necessarily known to us]. Presumably, then, the origin *we* should begin from is what is known to *us*.

To become familiar with common beliefs we need a good upbringing

This is why we need to have been brought up in fine habits if we are to be adequate students of what is fine and just, and of political questions generally. For the origin we begin from is the belief that something is true, and if this is apparent enough to us, we will not, at this stage, need the reason why it is true in addition; and if we have this good upbringing, we have the origins to begin from, or can easily acquire them. Someone who neither has them nor can acquire them should listen to Hesiod: 'He who understands everything

himself is best of all; he is noble also who listens to one who has spoken well; but he who neither understands it himself nor takes to heart what he hears from another is a useless man.'

1.43 Three conceptions of the best life reflect common beliefs about the good, but face criticism from other common beliefs

But let us begin again from [the common beliefs] from which we digressed. For, it would seem, people quite reasonably reach their conception of the good, i.e. of happiness, from the lives [they lead]; for there are roughly three most favoured lives—the lives of gratification, of political activity, and, third, of study.

The life of gratification: pleasure

The many, the most vulgar, would seem to conceive the good and happiness as pleasure, and hence they also like the life of gratification. Here they appear completely slavish, since the life they decide on is a life for grazing animals; and yet they have some argument in their defence, since many in positions of power feel the same way as Sardanapallus [and also choose this life].

The life of action: honour or virtue

The cultivated people, those active [in politics], conceive the good as honour, since this is more or less the end [normally pursued] in the political life. This, however, appears to be too superficial to be what we are seeking, since it seems to depend more on those who honour than on the one honoured, whereas we intuitively believe that the good is something of our own and hard to take from us.

Further, it would seem, they pursue honour to convince themselves that they are good; at any rate, they seek to be honoured by intelligent people, among people who know

them, and for virtue. It is clear, then, that in the view of active people at least, virtue is superior [to honour].

Perhaps, indeed, one might conceive virtue more than honour to be the end of the political life. However, this also is apparently too incomplete [to be the good]. For, it seems, someone might possess virtue but be asleep or inactive throughout his life; or, further, he might suffer the worst evils and misfortunes; and if this is the sort of life he leads, no one would count him happy, except to defend a philosopher's paradox. Enough about this, since it has been adequately discussed in the popular works also.

The life of study

The third life is the life of study, which we will examine in what follows.

The life of money-making may be safely ignored

The money-maker's life is in a way forced on him [not chosen for itself]; and clearly wealth is not the good we are seeking, since it is [merely] useful, [choiceworthy only] for some other end. Hence one would be more inclined to suppose that [any of] the goods mentioned earlier is the end, since they are liked for themselves. But apparently they are not [the end] either; and many arguments have been presented against them. Let us, then, dismiss them.

1.44 A philosophical conception of the good: Plato's theory of 'Forms' or 'Ideas'

Presumably, though, we had better examine the universal good, and puzzle out what is meant in speaking of it. This sort of inquiry is, to be sure, unwelcome to us, when those who introduced the Forms were friends of ours; still, it presumably seems better, indeed only right, to destroy even what is close to us if that is the way to preserve the truth. And we must especially do this when we are philosophers,

[lovers of wisdom]; for though we love both the truth and our friends, piety requires us to honour the truth first.

1.441 Objections to the Form as a universal

(1) There are no universals for ordered series

Those who introduced this view did not mean to produce an Idea for any [series] in which they spoke of prior and posterior [members]; that was why they did not mean to establish an Idea [of number] for [the series of] numbers. But the good is spoken of both in the [category of] what-it-is [i.e. substance], and in [the categories of] quality and relative; and what is in itself, i.e. substance, is by nature prior to what is relative, since a relative would seem to be an appendage and coincident of being. And so there is no common Idea over these.

(2) There is no universal good across the categories

Further, good is spoken of in as many ways as being is spoken of. For it is spoken of in [the category of] what-it-is, as god and mind; in quality, as the virtues; in quantity, as the measured amount; in relative, as the useful; in time, as the opportune moment; in place, as the [right] situation; and so on. Hence it is clear that the good cannot be some common [nature of good things] that is universal and single; for if it were, it would be spoken of in only one of the categories, not in them all.

(3) There is no single Idea across different sciences

Further, if a number of things have a single Idea, there is also a single science of them; hence [if there were an Idea of Good] there would also be some single science of all goods. But in fact there are many sciences even of the goods under

one category; for the science of the opportune moment, e.g. in war is generalship, in disease medicine. And similarly the science of the measured amount in food is medicine, in exertion gymnastics. [Hence there is no single science of the good, and so no Idea.]

1.442 Objections to the Form as separated

(4) Separation is pointless for understanding goodness

One might be puzzled about what [the believers in Ideas] really mean in speaking of The So-and-So Itself, since Man Itself and man have one and the same account of man; for in so far as each is man, they will not differ at all. If that is so, then [Good Itself and good have the same account of good]; hence they also will not differ at all in so far as each is good, [hence there is no point in appealing to Good Itself].

(5) The eternity of the Form is irrelevant

Moreover, Good Itself will be no more of a good by being eternal; for a white thing is no whiter if it lasts a long time than if it lasts a day.

(6) The Pythagorean view

The Pythagoreans seemingly have a more plausible view about the good, since they place the One in the column of goods. Indeed, Speusippus seems to have followed them. But let us leave this for another discussion.

1.443 Further objections to the Form, arising from the diversity of goods

(7) There is no Form even for intrinsic goods

A dispute emerges about what we have said: 'The arguments [in favour of the Idea] are not concerned with every

sort of good. Goods pursued and liked in themselves are spoken of as one species of goods, while those that in some way tend to produce or preserve these goods, or to prevent their contraries, are spoken of as goods because of these and in a different way; clearly, then, goods are spoken of in two ways, and some are goods in themselves, others goods because of these. [And it is claimed only that there is a single Form for all goods in themselves.]'

Let us, then, separate the goods in themselves from the [merely] useful goods, and consider whether goods in themselves are spoken of in correspondence to a single Idea.

Well, what sorts of goods may be regarded as goods in themselves? (a) Perhaps they are those that are pursued even on their own, e.g. intelligence, seeing, some types of pleasures, and honours; for even if we also pursue these because of something else, they may still be regarded as goods in themselves. (b) Or perhaps nothing except the Idea is good in itself.

[If (b) is true], then the Form will be futile, [since it will not explain the goodness of anything. But if (a) is true], then, since these other things are also goods in themselves, the same account of good will have to turn up in all of them, just as the same account of whiteness turns up in snow and in chalk. In fact, however, honour, intelligence and pleasure have different and dissimilar accounts, precisely in so far as they are goods. Hence the good is not something common which corresponds to a single Idea.

(8) Though goods are not homonymous by chance, the connection between their definitions does not imply the existence of a single Form

But how after all, then, is good spoken of? For [these goods have different accounts, i.e. are homonymous, and yet] are seemingly not homonymous by mere chance. Perhaps they are homonymous by all being derived from a single source,

or by all referring to a single focus. Or perhaps instead they are homonymous by analogy; for example, as sight is to body, so understanding is to soul, and so on for other cases.

1.444 The irrelevance of the Form to ethics

(9) It is irrelevant to action

Presumably, though, we should leave these questions for now, since their exact treatment is more appropriate for another [branch of] philosophy. And the same is true about the Idea. For even if the good predicated in common is some single thing, or something separated, itself in itself, clearly it is not the sort of good a human being can pursue in action or possess; but that is just the sort we are looking for in our present inquiry.

(10) The sciences pay no attention to the Form

'But,' it might seem to some, 'it is better to get to know the Idea with a view to the goods that we can possess and pursue in action; for if we have this as a sort of pattern, we shall also know better about the goods that are goods for us, and if we know about them, we shall hit on them.'

This argument does indeed have some plausibility, but it would seem to clash with the sciences. For each of these, though it aims at some good and seeks to supply what is lacking, proceeds without concern for knowledge of the Idea; and if the Idea were such an important aid, surely it would not be reasonable for all craftsmen to be ignorant and not even to look for it.

(11) And they are right, for the Form is useless to sciences

Moreover, it is a puzzle to know what the weaver or carpenter will gain for his own craft from knowing this Good

Itself, or how anyone will be better at medicine or generalship from having gazed on the Idea Itself. For what the doctor appears to consider is not even health [universally, let alone good universally], but human beings' health, and even more than that, presumably, this human being's health, since it is particular patients he treats.

So much, then, for these questions.

1.5 Our Own View of the Good Takes Account of These Objections to Common Beliefs

1.51 Characteristics of the good

(1) The good is the end of action

But let us return once again to the good we are looking for, and consider just what it could be, since it is apparently one thing in one action or craft, and another thing in another; for it is one thing in medicine, another in generalship, and so on for the rest.

What, then, is the good in each of these cases? Surely it is that for the sake of which the other things are done; and in medicine this is health, in generalship victory, in house-building a house, in another case something else, but in every action and decision it is the end, since it is for the sake of the end that everyone does the other things.

And so, if there is some end of everything that is pursued in action, this will be the good pursued in action; and if there are more ends than one, these will be the goods pursued in action.

Our argument has progressed, then, to the same conclusion [as before, that the highest end is the good]; but we must try to clarify this still more.

(2) The good is complete

Though apparently there are many ends, we choose some of them, e.g. wealth, flutes and, in general, instruments,

because of something else; hence it is clear that not all ends are complete. But the best good is apparently something complete. Hence, if only one end is complete, this will be what we are looking for; and if more than one are complete, the most complete of these will be what we are looking for.

Criteria for completeness

An end pursued in itself, we say, is more complete than an end pursued because of something else; and an end that is never choiceworthy because of something else is more complete than ends that are choiceworthy both in themselves and because of this end; and hence an end that is always [choiceworthy, and also] choiceworthy in itself, never because of something else, is unconditionally complete.

(3) Happiness meets the criteria for completeness, but other goods do not

Now happiness more than anything else seems unconditionally complete, since we always [choose it, and also] choose it because of itself, never because of something else.

Honour, pleasure, understanding and every virtue we certainly choose because of themselves, since we would choose each of them even if it had no further result, but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, supposing that through them we shall be happy. Happiness, by contrast, no one ever chooses for their sake, or for the sake of anything else at all.

(4) The good is self-sufficient; so is happiness

The same conclusion [that happiness is complete] also appears to follow from self-sufficiency, since the complete good seems to be self-sufficient.

Now what we count as self-sufficient is not what suffices for a solitary person by himself, living an isolated life, but what suffices also for parents, children, wife and in general

for friends and fellow-citizens, since a human being is a naturally political [animal]. Here, however, we must impose some limit; for if we extend the good to parents' parents and children's children and to friends of friends, we shall go on without limit; but we must examine this another time.

Anyhow, we regard something as self-sufficient when all by itself it makes a life choiceworthy and lacking nothing; and that is what we think happiness does.

(5) What is self-sufficient is most choiceworthy; so is happiness

Moreover, we think happiness is most choiceworthy of all goods, since it is not counted as one good among many. If it were counted as one among many, then, clearly, we think that the addition of the smallest of goods would make it more choiceworthy; for [the smallest good] that is added becomes an extra quantity of goods [so creating a good larger than the original good], and the larger of two goods is always more choiceworthy. [But we do not think any addition can make happiness more choiceworthy; hence it is most choiceworthy.]

Happiness, then, is apparently something complete and self-sufficient, since it is the end of the things pursued in action.

1.52 A clearer account of the good: the human soul's activity expressing virtue

But presumably the remark that the best good is happiness is apparently something [generally] agreed, and what we miss is a clearer statement of what the best good is.

(1) If something has a function, its good depends on its function

Well, perhaps we shall find the best good if we first find the function of a human being. For just as the good, i.e. [do-

ing] well, for a flautist, a sculptor, and every craftsman, and, in general, for whatever has a function and [characteristic] action, seems to depend on its function, the same seems to be true for a human being, if a human being has some function.

(2) What sorts of things have functions?

Then do the carpenter and the leatherworker have their functions and actions, while a human being has none, and is by nature idle, without any function? Or, just as eye, hand, foot and, in general, every [bodily] part apparently has its functions, may we likewise ascribe to a human being some function besides all of theirs?

(3) The human function

What, then, could this be? For living is apparently shared with plants, but what we are looking for is the special function of a human being; hence we should set aside the life of nutrition and growth. The life next in order is some sort of life of sense-perception; but this too is apparently shared, with horse, ox and every animal. The remaining possibility, then, is some sort of life of action of the [part of the soul] that has reason.

Clarification of 'has reason' and 'life'

Now this [part has two parts, which have reason in different ways], one as obeying the reason [in the other part], the other as itself having reason and thinking. [We intend both.] Moreover, life is also spoken of in two ways [as capacity and as activity], and we must take [a human being's special function to be] life as activity, since this seems to be called life to a fuller extent.

(4) The human good is activity expressing virtue

(a) We have found, then, that the human function is the soul's activity that expresses reason [as itself having reason] or requires reason [as obeying reason]. (b) Now the function of F, e.g. of a harpist, is the same in kind, so we say, as the function of an excellent F, e.g. an excellent harpist. (c) The same is true unconditionally in every case, when we add to the function the superior achievement that expresses the virtue; for a harpist's function, e.g. is to play the harp, and a good harpist's is to do it well. (d) Now we take the human function to be a certain kind of life, and take this life to be the soul's activity and actions that express reason. (e) [Hence by (c) and (d)] the excellent man's function is to do this finely and well. (f) Each function is completed well when its completion expresses the proper virtue. (g) Therefore [by (d), (e) and (f)] the human good turns out to be the soul's activity that expresses virtue.

(5) The good must also be complete

And if there are more virtues than one, the good will express the best and most complete virtue. Moreover, it will be in a complete life. For one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one day; nor, similarly, does one day or a short time make us blessed and happy.

1.6 Defence of the Account of the Good, from Principles of Ethical Method

1.61 It is reasonable that our account is only a sketch

This, then, is a sketch of the good; for, presumably, the outline must come first, to be filled in later. If the sketch is good, then anyone, it seems, can advance and articulate it, and in such cases time is a good discoverer or [at least]

a good co-worker. That is also how the crafts have improved, since anyone can add what is lacking [in the outline].

1.62 The inexactness of our account suits the subject-matter

However, we must also remember our previous remarks, so that we do not look for the same degree of exactness in all areas, but the degree that fits the subject-matter in each area and is proper to the investigation. For the carpenter's and the geometer's inquiries about the right angle are different also; the carpenter's is confined to the right angle's usefulness for his work, whereas the geometer's concerns what, or what sort of thing, the right angle is, since he studies the truth. We must do the same, then, in other areas too, [seeking the proper degree of exactness], so that digressions do not overwhelm our main task.

1.63 Having found a first principle, we should not demand a further principle beyond it

1098b Nor should we make the same demand for an explanation in all cases. Rather, in some cases it is enough to prove that something is true without explaining why it is true. This is so, e.g. with origins, where the fact that something is true is the first principle, i.e. the origin.

Some origins are studied by means of induction, some by means of perception, some by means of some sort of habituation, and others by other means. In each case we should try to find them out by means suited to their nature, and work hard to define them well. For they have a great influence on what follows; for the origin seems to be more than half the whole, and makes evident the answer to many of our questions.

1.7 Defence of the Account of the Good, from Common Beliefs

However, we should examine the origin not only from the conclusion and premises [of a deductive argument], but also from what is said about it; for all the facts harmonize with a true account, whereas the truth soon clashes with a false one.

1.71 A common classification of goods

Goods are divided, then, into three types, some called external, some goods of the soul, others goods of the body; and the goods of the soul are said to be goods to the fullest extent and most of all, and the soul's actions and activities are ascribed to the soul. Hence the account [of the good] is sound, to judge by this belief anyhow – and it is an ancient belief agreed on by philosophers.

Our account is also correct in saying that some sort of actions and activities are the end; for then the end turns out to be a good of the soul, not an external good.

1.72 A common conception of happiness

The belief that the happy person lives well and does well in action also agrees with our account, since we have virtually said that the end is a sort of living well and doing well in action.

1.73 Commonly accepted features of happiness

Further, all the features that people look for in happiness appear to be true of the end described in our account. For to some people it seems to be virtue; to others intelligence; to others some sort of wisdom; to others again it seems to be these, or one of these, involving pleasure or requiring its addition; and others add in external prosperity as well.

Some of these views are traditional, held by many, while

others are held by a few reputable men; and it is reasonable for each group to be not entirely in error, but correct on one point at least, or even on most points.

Virtue

First, our account agrees with those who say happiness is virtue [in general] or some [particular] virtue; for activity expressing virtue is proper to virtue. Presumably, though, it matters quite a bit whether we suppose that the best good consists in possessing or in using, i.e. in a state or in an activity [that actualizes the state]. For while someone may be in a state that achieves no good, if, e.g., he is asleep or inactive in some other way, this cannot be true of the activity; for it will necessarily do actions and do well in them. And just as Olympic prizes are not for the finest and strongest, but for contestants, since it is only these who win; so also in life [only] the fine and good people who act correctly win the prize.

Pleasure

Moreover, the life of these [active] people is also pleasant in itself. For being pleased is a condition of the soul, [hence included in the activity of the soul]. Further, each type of person finds pleasure in whatever he is called a lover of, so that a horse, e.g. pleases the horse-lover, a spectacle the lover of spectacles, and similarly what is just pleases the lover of justice, and in general what expresses virtue pleases the lover of virtue. Hence the things that please most people conflict, because they are not pleasant by nature, whereas the things that please lovers of what is fine are things pleasant by nature; and actions expressing virtue are pleasant in this way; and so they both please lovers of what is fine and are pleasant in themselves.

Hence their life does not need pleasure to be added [to virtuous activity] as some sort of ornament; rather, it has its

pleasure within itself. For besides the reasons already given, someone who does not enjoy fine actions is not good; for no one would call him just, e.g., if he did not enjoy doing just actions, or generous if he did not enjoy generous actions, and similarly for the other virtues. If this is so, then actions expressing the virtues are pleasant in themselves.

Hence our account satisfies traditional ideals

Moreover, these actions are good and fine as well as pleasant; indeed, they are good, fine and pleasant more than anything else, since on this question the excellent person has good judgement, and his judgement agrees with our conclusions.

Happiness, then, is best, finest and most pleasant, and these three features are not distinguished in the way suggested by the Delian inscription: 'What is most just is finest; being healthy is most beneficial; but it is most pleasant to win our heart's desire.' For all three features are found in the best activities, and happiness we say is these activities, or [rather] one of them, the best one.

External goods

Nonetheless, happiness evidently also needs external goods to be added [to the activity], as we said, since we cannot, or cannot easily, do fine actions if we lack the resources.

For, first of all, in many actions we use friends, wealth and political power just as we use instruments. Further, deprivation of certain [externals]—e.g. good birth, good children, beauty—mars our blessedness; for we do not altogether have the character of happiness if we look utterly repulsive or are ill-born, solitary or childless, and have it even less, presumably, if our children or friends are totally bad, or were good but have died.

And so, as we have said, happiness would seem to need this sort of prosperity added also; that is why some people

identify happiness with good fortune, while others [reacting from one extreme to the other] identify it with virtue.

1.8 The Place of Virtue and of External Goods in Happiness

1.81 How is happiness acquired?

i 9 This [question about the role of fortune] raises a puzzle: Is happiness acquired by learning, or habituation, or by some
10 other form of cultivation? Or is it the result of some divine fate, or even of fortune?

Is happiness a gift of the gods?

First, then, if the gods give any gift at all to human beings, it is reasonable for them to give happiness also; indeed, it is reasonable to give happiness more than any other human [good], in so far as it is the best of human [goods]. Presumably, however, this question is more suitable for a different inquiry.

Happiness is acquired by virtue, and hence by our own actions, not by fortune

15 But even if it is not sent by the gods, but instead results from virtue and some sort of learning or cultivation, happiness appears to be one of the most divine things, since the prize and goal of virtue appears to be the best good, something divine and blessed.

Moreover [if happiness comes in this way] it will be widely shared; for anyone who is not deformed [in his capacity] for virtue will be able to achieve happiness through some sort
20 of learning and attention.

And since it is better to be happy in this way than because of fortune, it is reasonable for this to be the way [we become] happy. For whatever is natural is naturally in the finest state possible, and so are the products of crafts and of every other

cause, especially the best cause; and it would be seriously inappropriate to entrust what is greatest and finest to fortune.

The answer to our question is also evident from our account [of happiness]. For we have said it is a certain sort 25 of activity of the soul expressing virtue, [and hence not a product of fortune]; and some of the other goods are necessary conditions [of happiness], others are naturally useful and cooperative as instruments [but are not parts of it].

Further, this conclusion agrees with our opening remarks. For we took the goal of political science to be the best good; 30 and most of its attention is devoted to the character of the citizens, to make them good people who do fine actions, [which is reasonable if happiness depends on virtue, not on fortune].

It is not surprising, then, that we regard neither ox nor horse nor any other kind of animal as happy, since none of them can share in this sort of activity. And for the same 1100a reason a child is not happy either, since his age prevents him from doing these sorts of actions; and if he is called happy, he is being congratulated because of anticipated blessedness, since, as we have said, happiness requires both complete virtue and a complete life. 5

But fortune still affects happiness

[Happiness needs a complete life.] For life includes many reversals of fortune, good and bad, and the most prosperous person may fall into a terrible disaster in old age, as the Trojan stories tell us about Priam; but if someone has suffered these sorts of misfortunes and comes to a miserable end, no one counts him happy.

1.82 Is it correct to call someone happy only when he is dead?

i 10

Then should we count no human being happy during his 10 lifetime, but follow Solon's advice to wait to see the end?

And if we should hold that, can he really be happy during the time after he has died? Surely that is completely absurd, especially when we say happiness is an activity.

Is his happiness assured even then?

We do not say, then, that someone is happy during the time he is dead, and Solon's point is not this [absurd one], but rather that when a human being has died, we can safely pronounce [that he was] blessed [before he died], on the assumption that he is now finally beyond evils and misfortunes.

Still, even this claim is disputable. For if a living person has good or evil of which he is not aware, then a dead person also, it seems, has good or evil when, e.g., he receives honours or dishonours, and his children, and descendants in general, do well or suffer misfortune. [Hence, apparently, what happens after his death can affect whether or not he was happy before his death.]

However, this view also raises a puzzle. For even if someone has lived in blessedness until old age, and has died appropriately, many fluctuations of his descendants' fortunes may still happen to him; for some may be good people and get the life they deserve, while the contrary may be true of others, and clearly they may be as distantly related to their ancestor as you please. Surely, then, it would be an absurd result if the dead person's condition changed along with the fortunes of his descendants, so that at one time he became happy [in his lifetime] and at another time miserable. But it would also be absurd if the condition of descendants did not affect their ancestors at all or for any length of time.

These puzzles reflect the belief that happiness must be stable

But we must return to the previous puzzle, since that will perhaps also show us the answer to our present question.

If, then, we must wait to see the end, and must then count

someone blessed, not as being blessed [during the time he is dead] but because he previously was blessed, surely it is absurd if at the time when he is happy we will not truly ascribe to him the happiness he has.

[We hesitate] out of reluctance to call him happy during his lifetime, because of the variations, and because we suppose happiness is enduring and definitely not prone to fluctuate, whereas the same person's fortunes often turn to and fro. For clearly, if we are guided by his fortunes, so that we often call him happy and then miserable again, we will be representing the happy person as a kind of chameleon, insecurely based.

Virtue is a stable and controlling element in happiness

But surely it is quite wrong to be guided by someone's fortunes. For his doing well or badly does not rest on them; though a human life, as we said, needs these added, it is the activities expressing virtue that control happiness, and the contrary activities that control its contrary.

Indeed, the present puzzle is further evidence for our account [of happiness]. For no human achievement has the stability of activities that express virtue, since these seem to be more enduring even than our knowledge of the sciences; and the most honourable of the virtues themselves are more enduring [than the others] because blessed people devote their lives to them more fully and more continually than to anything else – for this [continual activity] would seem to be the reason we do not forget them.

It follows, then, that the happy person has the [stability] we are looking for and keeps the character he has throughout his life. For always, or more than anything else, he will do and study the actions expressing virtue, and will bear fortunes most finely, in every way and in all conditions appropriately, since he is truly 'good, foursquare and blameless'.

Still, the virtuous person can lose happiness because of misfortune

However, many events are matters of fortune, and some are smaller, some greater. Hence, while small strokes of good or ill fortune clearly will not influence his life, many great strokes of good fortune will make it more blessed, since in themselves they naturally add adornment to it, and his use of them proves to be fine and excellent. Conversely, if they are great misfortunes, they oppress and spoil his blessedness, since they involve pain and impede many activities.

And yet, even here what is fine shines through, whenever someone bears many severe misfortunes with good temper, not because he feels no distress, but because he is noble and magnanimous.

And since it is activities that control life, as we said, no blessed person could ever become miserable, since he will never do hateful and base actions. For a truly good and intelligent person, we suppose, will bear strokes of fortune suitably, and from his resources at any time will do the finest actions, just as a good general will make the best use of his forces in war, and a good shoemaker will produce the finest shoe from the hides given him, and similarly for all other craftsmen.

If this is so, then the happy person could never become miserable. Still, he will not be blessed either, if he falls into misfortunes as bad as Priam's. Nor, however, will he be inconstant and prone to fluctuate, since he will neither be easily shaken from his happiness nor shaken by just any misfortunes. He will be shaken from it, though, by many serious misfortunes, and from these a return to happiness will take no short time; at best, it will take a long and complete length of time that includes great and fine successes.

This, then, is the partial truth in Solon's remark

Then why not say that the happy person is the one who

expresses complete virtue in his activities, with an adequate supply of external goods, not for just any time but for a complete life? Or should we add that he will also go on living this way and will come to an appropriate end?

The future is not apparent to us, and we take happiness to be the end, and altogether complete in every way; hence we will say that a living person who has, and will keep, the goods we mentioned is blessed, but blessed as a human being is. So much for a determination of this question.

What happens after our deaths can affect the happiness we had in our lives

Still, it is apparently rather unfriendly and contrary to the [common] beliefs to claim that the fortunes of our descendants and all our friends contribute nothing. But since they can find themselves in many and various circumstances, some of which affect us more, some less, it is apparently a long, indeed endless, task to differentiate all the particular cases, and perhaps a general outline will be enough of an answer.

Misfortunes, then, even to the person himself, differ, and some have a certain weight and influence on his life, while others would seem to be lighter. The same is true for the misfortunes of his friends; and it matters whether they happen to living or to dead people—much more than it matters whether lawless and terrible crimes are committed before a tragic drama begins or in the course of it. In our reasoning, then, we should also take account of this difference, and even more, presumably, of the puzzle about whether the dead share in any good or evil.

But neither gains nor losses are decisive for the presence or absence of happiness

For if we consider this, anything good or evil penetrating to the dead would seem to be weak and unimportant, either unconditionally or for them; and even if it is not, still its

size and character are not enough to make people happy who are not happy, or to take away the blessedness of those who are happy. And so, when friends do well, and likewise when they do badly, it appears to contribute something to the dead, but of a character and size that neither makes happy people not happy nor anything else of this sort.

1.83 The insufficiency of virtue for happiness is supported by other common beliefs, showing that happiness is honoured, not praised

i 12 Now that we have determined these points, let us consider whether happiness is something praiseworthy, or instead something honourable; for clearly it is not a capacity [which is neither praiseworthy nor honourable].

Whatever is praiseworthy appears to be praised for its character and its state in relation to something. We praise, e.g., the just and the brave person, and in general the good person and virtue, for their actions and achievements; and we praise the strong person, the good runner and each of the others because he naturally has a certain character and is in a certain state in relation to something good and excellent. This is clear also from praises of the gods; for these praises appear ridiculous because they are referred to us, but they are referred to us because, as we said, praise depends on such a reference.

If praise is for these sorts of things, then clearly for the best things there is no praise, but something greater and better. And indeed this is how it appears. For the gods and the most godlike of men are [not praised, but] congratulated for their blessedness and happiness. And the same is true of goods; for we never praise happiness, as we praise justice, but count it blessed, as something better and more godlike [than anything that is praised].

Indeed, Eudoxus seems to have used the correct argument for the victory of pleasure. By not praising pleasure though

it is a good, we indicate, so he thought, that it is superior to everything praiseworthy; and [only] the god and the good have this superiority since the other goods are [praised] by reference to them.

[Here he seems to have argued correctly.] For praise is given to virtue, since it makes us do fine actions; but celebrations are for [successful] achievements, either of body or of soul. But an exact treatment of this is presumably more proper for specialists in celebrations. For us, anyhow, it is clear from what has been said that happiness is something honourable and complete.

Our conclusions are supported by other claims about happiness

A further reason why this would seem to be correct is that happiness is an origin; for the origin is what we all aim at in all our other actions; and we take the origin and cause of goods to be something honourable and divine.

1.9 Introduction to the Account of Virtue

1.91 An account of happiness requires an account of virtue

i 13 Since happiness is an activity of the soul expressing complete virtue, we must examine virtue; for that will perhaps also be a way to study happiness better.

Moreover, the true politician seems to have spent more effort on virtue than on anything else, since he wants to make the citizens good and law-abiding. We find an example of this in the Spartan and Cretan legislators and in any others with their concerns. Since, then, the examination of virtue is proper for political science, the inquiry clearly suits our original decision [to pursue political science].

1.92 A discussion of virtue requires a discussion of the soul

It is clear that the virtue we must examine is human virtue, since we are also seeking the human good and human happiness. And by human virtue we mean virtue of the soul, not of the body, since we also say that happiness is an activity of the soul. If this is so, then it is clear that the politician must acquire some knowledge about the soul, just as someone setting out to heal the eyes must acquire knowledge about the whole body as well. This is all the more true to the extent that political science is better and more honourable than medicine—and even among doctors the cultivated ones devote a lot of effort to acquiring knowledge about the body. Hence the politician as well [as the student of nature] must study the soul.

But he must study it for the purpose [of inquiring into virtue], as far as suffices for what he seeks; for a more exact treatment would presumably take more effort than his purpose requires. [We] have discussed the soul sufficiently [for our purposes] in [our] popular works as well [as our less popular], and we should use this discussion.

1.93 The rational and nonrational parts of the soul

We have said, e.g., that one [part] of the soul is nonrational, while one has reason. Are these distinguished as parts of a body and everything divisible into parts are? Or are they two only in account, and inseparable by nature, as the convex and the concave are in a surface? It does not matter for present purposes.

The nonrational part: (a) One part of it is unresponsive to reason

Consider the nonrational [part]. One [part] of it, i.e. the cause of nutrition and growth, is seemingly plant-like and

shared [with other living things]: for we can ascribe this capacity of the soul to everything that is nourished, including embryos, and the same one to complete living things, since this is more reasonable than to ascribe another capacity to them.

Hence the virtue of this capacity is apparently shared, not [specifically] human. For this part and capacity more than others seem to be active in sleep, and here the good and the bad person are least distinct, which is why happy people are said to be no better off than miserable people for half their lives.

And this lack of distinction is not surprising, since sleep is inactivity of the soul in so far as it is called excellent or base, unless to some small extent some movements penetrate [to our awareness], and in this way the decent person comes to have better images [in dreams] than just any random person has. Enough about this, however, and let us leave aside the nutritive part, since by nature it has no share in human virtue.

(b) Another part is also nonrational

Another nature in the soul would also seem to be nonrational, though in a way it shares in reason.

[Clearly it is nonrational.] For in the continent and the incontinent person we praise their reason, i.e. the [part] of the soul that has reason, because it exhorts them correctly and towards what is best; but they evidently also have in them some other [part] that is by nature something besides reason, conflicting and struggling with reason.

For just as paralysed parts of a body, when we decide to move them to the right, do the contrary and move off to the left, the same is true of the soul; for incontinent people have impulses in contrary directions. In bodies, admittedly, we see the part go astray, whereas we do not see it in the soul; nonetheless, presumably, we should suppose that the soul

also has a [part] besides reason, contrary to and countering reason. The [precise] way it is different does not matter.

But it is responsive to reason

However, this [part] as well [as the rational part] appears, as we said, to share in reason. At any rate, in the continent person it obeys reason; and in the temperate and the brave person it presumably listens still better to reason, since there it agrees with reason in everything.

Hence it differs both from the wholly unresponsive part . . .

The nonrational [part], then, as well [as the whole soul] apparently has two parts. For while the plant-like [part] shares in reason not at all, the [part] with appetites and in general desires shares in reason in a way, in so far as it both listens to reason and obeys it.

It listens in the way in which we are said to 'listen to reason' from father or friends, not in the way in which we ['give the reason'] in mathematics.

The nonrational part also [obeys and] is persuaded in some way by reason, as is shown by chastening, and by every sort of reproof and exhortation.

And from the wholly rational part

If we ought to say, then, that this [part] also has reason, then the [part] that has reason, as well [as the nonrational part] will have two parts, one that has reason to the full extent by having it within itself, and another [that has it] by listening to reason as to a father.

1.94 The division of the virtues corresponds to the parts of the soul

The distinction between virtues also reflects this difference. For some virtues are called virtues of thought, other virtues

of character; wisdom, comprehension and intelligence are called virtues of thought, generosity and temperance virtues of character.

For when we speak of someone's character we do not say that he is wise or has good comprehension, but that he is gentle or temperate. [Hence these are the virtues of character.] And yet, we also praise the wise person for his state, and the states that are praiseworthy are the ones we call virtues. [Hence wisdom is also a virtue.]

2. Virtues of Character in General

2.1 How a Virtue of Character is Acquired

Virtue, then, is of two sorts, virtue of thought and virtue of character. Virtue of thought arises and grows mostly from teaching, and hence needs experience and time. Virtue of character [i.e. of *ēthos*] results from habit [*ethos*]; hence its name 'ethical', slightly varied from '*ethos*'.

Virtue comes about, not by a process of nature, but by habituation

Hence it is also clear that none of the virtues of character arises in us naturally.

(1) What is natural cannot be changed by habituation

For if something is by nature [in one condition], habituation cannot bring it into another condition. A stone, e.g., by nature moves downwards, and habituation could not make it move upwards, not even if you threw it up ten thousand times to habituate it; nor could habituation make fire move downwards, or bring anything that is by nature in one condition into another condition.

Thus the virtues arise in us neither by nature nor against

nature, but we are by nature able to acquire them, and reach our complete perfection through habit.

(2) Natural capacities are not acquired by habituation

Further, if something arises in us by nature, we first have the capacity for it, and later display the activity. This is clear in the case of the senses; for we did not acquire them by frequent seeing or hearing, but already had them when we exercised them, and did not get them by exercising them.

Virtues, by contrast, we acquire, just as we acquire crafts, by having previously activated them. For we learn a craft by producing the same product that we must produce when we have learned it, becoming builders, e.g., by building and harpists by playing the harp; so also, then, we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions.

(3) Legislators concentrate on habituation

What goes on in cities is evidence for this also. For the legislator makes the citizens good by habituating them, and this is the wish of every legislator; if he fails to do it well he misses his goal. [The right] habituation is what makes the difference between a good political system and a bad one.

(4) Virtue and vice are formed by good and bad actions

Further, just as in the case of a craft, the sources and means that develop each virtue also ruin it. For playing the harp makes both good and bad harpists, and it is analogous in the case of builders and all the rest; for building well makes good builders, building badly, bad ones. If it were not so, no teacher would be needed, but everyone would be born a good or a bad craftsman.

It is the same, then, with the virtues. For actions in dealings with [other] human beings make some people just, some unjust; actions in terrifying situations and the acquired habit of fear or confidence make some brave and others cowardly. The same is true of situations involving appetites and anger; for one or another sort of conduct in these situations makes some people temperate and gentle, others intemperate and irascible.

Conclusion: The importance of habituation

To sum up, then, in a single account: A state [of character] arises from [the repetition of] similar activities. Hence we must display the right activities, since differences in these imply corresponding differences in the states. It is not unimportant, then, to acquire one sort of habit or another, right from our youth; rather, it is very important, indeed all-important.

2.12 What is the right sort of habituation?

This is an appropriate question, for the aim of ethical theory is practical

Our present inquiry does not aim, as our others do, at study; for the purpose of our examination is not to know what virtue is, but to become good, since otherwise the inquiry would be of no benefit to us. Hence we must examine the right way to act, since, as we have said, the actions also control the character of the states we acquire.

First, then, actions should express correct reason. That is a common [belief], and let us assume it; later we will say what correct reason is and how it is related to the other virtues.

But let us take it as agreed in advance that every account of the actions we must do has to be stated in outline, not exactly. As we also said at the start, the type of accounts we demand should reflect the subject-matter; and questions about actions and expediency, like questions about health, have no fixed [and invariable answers].

And when our general account is so inexact, the account of particular cases is all the more inexact. For these fall under no craft or profession, and the agents themselves must consider in each case what the opportune action is, as doctors and navigators do.

The account we offer, then, in our present inquiry is of this inexact sort; still, we must try to offer help.

The right sort of habituation must avoid excess and deficiency

First, then, we should observe that these sorts of states naturally tend to be ruined by excess and deficiency. We see this happen with strength and health, which we mention because we must use what is evident as a witness to what is not. For both excessive and deficient exercises ruin strength; and likewise, too much or too little eating or drinking ruins health, while the proportionate amount produces, increases and preserves it.

The same is true, then, of temperance, bravery and the other virtues. For if, e.g., someone avoids and is afraid of everything, standing firm against nothing, he becomes cowardly, but if he is afraid of nothing at all and goes to face everything, he becomes rash. Similarly, if he gratifies himself with every pleasure and refrains from none, he becomes intemperate, but if he avoids them all, as boors do, he becomes some sort of insensible person. Temperance and bravery, then, are ruined by excess and deficiency but preserved by the mean.

The same actions, then, are the sources and causes both of the emergence and growth of virtues and of their ruin; but further, the activities of the virtues will be found in these same actions. For this is also true of more evident cases, e.g. strength, which arises from eating a lot and from withstanding much hard labour, and it is the strong person who is most able to do these very things. It is the same with the

virtues. Refraining from pleasures make us become temperate, and when we have become temperate we are most able to refrain from pleasures. And it is similar with bravery; habituation in disdaining what is fearful and in standing firm against it makes us become brave, and when we have become brave we shall be most able to stand firm.

2.13 Pleasure and pain are important in habituation

But [actions are not enough]; we must take as a sign of someone's state his pleasure or pain in consequence of his action. For if someone who abstains from bodily pleasures enjoys the abstinence itself, then he is temperate, but if he is grieved by it, he is intemperate. Again, if he stands firm against terrifying situations and enjoys it, or at least does not find it painful, then he is brave, and if he finds it painful, he is cowardly.

[Pleasures and pains are appropriately taken as signs] because virtue of character is concerned with pleasures and pains.

Virtue is concerned with pleasure and pain

(1) For it is pleasure that causes us to do base actions, and pain that causes us to abstain from fine ones. Hence we need to have had the appropriate upbringing—right from early youth, as Plato says—to make us find enjoyment or pain in the right things; for this is the correct education.

(2) Further, virtues are concerned with actions and feelings; but every feeling and every action implies pleasure or pain; hence, for this reason too, virtue is concerned with pleasures and pains.

(3) Corrective treatment [for vicious actions] also indicates [the relevance of pleasure and pain], since it uses pleasures and pains; it uses them because such correction is a form

Notes

Book I

1094a1-22 The *EN* seeks to describe and understand the highest good and to prescribe ways to achieve it. Here Aristotle explains what sort of thing the highest good will be, assuming for the moment that there is one (see ch. 2, 7). He calls it 'the good', 1094a22; for 'highest' see 1095a16.

There are subordinate and superordinate CRAFTS and SCIENCES with subordinate and superordinate ENDS; the highest superordinate end is the highest good. The argument is fuller at 1097a15.

1094a2 'seems to aim' We begin with an APPEARANCE.

'has been well described . . . ' cf. 1172b9. Aristotle need not agree that the description is completely accurate. If 'action and decision' refers to action on a decision, then he need not mean that every single thing we do aims at some good; for we do things that are not ACTIONS on a DECISION (cf. 1111b9-15).

1094a3 'difference' Cf. *Met.* 1050a21-b2. Here and in a16 the difference between ACTIVITIES with and without further products (see FUNCTION) corresponds to the later distinction between PRODUCTION and ACTION. In a5 'action' must have the sense noted in ACTION #2.

1094a10-18 'But whenever . . .' 'Sciences' is supplied except in 'sciences we have mentioned', a18. Aristotle refers to all the 'actions, crafts and sciences' of a7. None of these meets his most stringent conditions for a SCIENCE.

1094a23 'and if . . . right mark.' Or: 'like archers who have a target to aim at, we are more likely to hit what is right [if we know what the target is].' The version in the text implies that knowledge of the good gives us a target we would otherwise lack (cf. Plato, *Rep.* 519c2); the alternative version does not imply this.

1094a26 'It seems . . .' The argument is this:

(1) The highest good is the all-inclusive end.

(2) The all-inclusive end is the end of political science.

(3) Therefore the highest good is the end of political science.

This argument answers the question not answered in 1094a18-22, if we can continue:

(4) We pursue the end of political science in the way described in (a).

(5) Hence we pursue the highest good.

1094b11-1095a2 Having introduced political science and set himself the task (1094a22, 'Then surely . . .') of saying what its end is, Aristotle explains how he will proceed, and how he expects his success to be judged. Hence he now describes the method of ETHICS, and the limitations of the method.

1094b12 'fits the subject-matter' See 1098a28, 1137b19.

1094b15 'difference and variation' People see that what is JUST and FINE depends on circumstances—e.g. it is USUALLY but not always just to pay your debts (Plato, *Rep.* 331a); and they infer that there is no objective truth about what is just and fine. They think that these rest on convention (lit. 'are by convention', *nomos*—see LAW), and not on NATURE.

Aristotle remarks, at a16, that similar variations apply to goods, without inclining us to infer that goods are merely conventional. Aspirin, e.g., is not always good for a headache, but it is not a matter of convention that it is good for headaches on those occasions when it is. Hence the argument from variation to convention is invalid. See Plato, *Pr.* 334a-c, *Tht.* 172a, 177a-179b; and notes to 1113a29, 1134b27-30.

1095a2-10 'Hence a youth . . .' Two reasons are given for excluding a youth (see HUMAN BEING #7) from these lectures ('student' lit. = 'hearer') on ethics. The first ('for he is . . .') is closely connected with the remarks about the EDUCATED person. The second ('Moreover . . .') relies more generally on the practical character of ETHICS #1, which has also been assumed in the restriction of ethics to USUAL truths. On upbringing, cf. 1095b4, 1179b25.

1095a14-28 We return to the question at 1094a24 ('we should try . . .'), and consider what the good might be. As usual, we begin with APPEARANCES: (a) Everyone thinks the good is HAPPINESS; Aristotle argues for this in 1097a34. (b) But we need some clearer account (see REASON) and DEFINITION of happiness—of the types of states and activities it consists in; and we begin with a survey of some common views.

1095a27 'In itself' here means 'in its own right', not dependent on anything else; hence it refers to the independence of the Platonic Form from its sensible instances.

1095a28-b13 To justify beginning with appearances Aristotle adds

a further remark on method. We must begin from ORIGINS known to us (see ETHICS #4). The translation tries to clarify Aristotle's different uses of 'origin' here. The 'belief that' which we begin from is probably something like 'It is just to pay debts' or 'Bravery is a good thing'. These are true or nearly true, but they need defence and justification from a first principle that explains why they are true.

1095b1 'far end' Lit. 'limit'. Aristotle thinks of a Greek stadium, in which the midpoint of the race is at the end farthest from the starting line.

1095b6-8 'For the . . . find them.' Lit. 'For the origin is the that, and if this appears adequately, he will not at all need in addition the because. Such a one has origins or would get them easily.' The origins we are looking for are those known UNCONDITIONALLY, and we do not have them simply as a result of good upbringing; these tell us the 'because' or 'reason why'. The origins we have from good upbringing are simply those that allow us to begin the inquiry. See 1095a2, 1179b25, EDUCATION.

1095b14-1096a2 Three traditional ways of life are discussed, since they embody three conceptions of the good and of happiness; cf. *EE* 1214a31, 1215a32-b14.

The criticisms of the three lives reflect Aristotle's own criteria for the good:

(1) The good involves distinctively human activities, not those of 'grazing animals', b20.

(2) It must be our own, not heavily dependent on external conditions.

(3) It must be complete ('it appears . . .', b32).

For defence of these criteria see (1) 1097b33, 1118b1, 1170b12, 1174a1; (2) 1099b13; (3) 1097a28.

1095b14-19 'For, it would . . . slavish' Aristotle's sentences have been rearranged. Lit: 'For they would seem to conceive, not unreasonably, the good and happiness from the lives, the many and most vulgar as pleasure, whence they also like the life of gratification. For the most favoured lives are roughly three, the one just mentioned, the political life, and, third, the life of study. Now the many appear completely slavish . . .'

1095b19 The life of pleasure is rather brusquely dismissed as slavish (see HUMAN BEING #9). Aristotle discusses it more fully when he has examined pleasure; see note to 1176b9.

1095b22 Sardanapallus An Assyrian king who lived in legendary luxury.

1095b23 The proper value of HONOUR is more fully discussed in the account of magnanimity; see note to 1123a34. On the inadequacy

of honour see 1159a22.

1095b26 'our own' *Oikeion*; see PROPER. Here Aristotle means that it must be some genuine intrinsic feature of ourselves, not simply the product of other people's attitudes towards us. **'Intuitively believe'** lit. 'divine'—cf. Plato, *Rep.* 505a1. We have not yet given a reason for our conviction.

1096a2 'philosopher's paradox' Lit. 'thesis' or 'position'. This is a dialectical term (ETHICS #4); see *Top.* 104b18. It is implied in the views of Socrates in *Gorg.* 470e, 507c (cf. *Rep.* 354a), and accepted by his professed followers, the Cynics. Cf. notes to 1106b24, 1153b19. Aristotle is himself committed to the claim (cf. *Rep.* 361d) that virtue makes someone happier than he would be by living any other way, not to the claim that virtue alone is sufficient for happiness.

1096a3 'the popular works' *(enkuklia)* Probably these are by Aristotle himself, and are the same as the 'popular' (or 'external', *exōterika*) works of 1102a26, 1140a3.

1096a11 Aristotle mentioned the Platonic belief in a universal and separated Form of the good at 1095a26, and now proceeds to criticize it at length (cf. *EE* i 8, *MM* i 1). Much of the discussion is important for Aristotle's general criticism of Plato (cf. esp. *Met.* i 9), but less important for ethics. Aristotle is primarily concerned to argue against the view that goodness is a single property. If it were one, then knowledge of what is good for human beings would ultimately rest on knowledge of the single type of goodness found throughout the universe, such as is expressed in Plato's Form of the Good (*Rep.* 508-9, 517c, 534bc). The effect of Aristotle's claim that goods are HOMONYMOUS is to sever ethical argument from general cosmological theories about goodness (cf. 1155b1-10).

1096a13 'friends' cf. note to 1164b1.

1096a23 'good is spoken of . . .' In (1) and (2) Aristotle considers the Platonic claims compared with his doctrine of the categories and his associated belief in the homonymy of being (cf. *Catg.* 4, *Top.* i 9, *Met.* v 7, vii 1). There is nothing that all beings are—i.e. there is no general answer to the question 'What is it?' for every being. The categories provide the most general answers that are available to this question. Since the goodness of any thing depends on the kind of thing it is, goodness can be no more of a unified property than being is. If the categories indicate ten ways of being a being, they must also indicate ten different ways of being good (cf. *Top.* 107a3).

1096a24 'as god . . .' Probably Aristotle means not just that these are examples of goods that are SUBSTANCES, but that they are what it is to be good in the category of substance.

1096a34 Arguments (4)-(7) object to the separation of the Forms as both paradigms and instances of the properties to which they correspond. In the Platonic view the Form of Just is perfectly just and is separable from sensible just things. See *Met.* 987a32, 1078b9-1079a4, 1086a24-b13, Plato, *Phd.* 74.

1096b1 'Man Itself and man' The second 'man' here probably refers to the universal that is immanent in particulars. (Less probably it means 'a man', i.e. a particular man.) Aristotle accuses Plato of pointlessly introducing separated, independent Forms when the immanent universals (good, man etc.) recognized by Aristotle are all that we need if we want to understand the natures of things.

1096b23 'Chalk' is not a translation; but Aristotle is just looking for another example of something white. The term he uses, *psimuthion*, refers to lead carbonate ('white lead') produced from lead, and used for whitening.

1096b27 'homonymous by mere chance' See HOMONYMY, note to 1129a27.

1096b27-9 'Perhaps they . . . in other cases.' Lit. 'Then by being from one thing or all contributing to one thing, or rather by analogy? For as sight in body, so mind in soul, and something else in something else.'

'All referring . . .' Cf. *Met.* 1003a27, *EE* 1236a14, b20. Analogy is the option that Aristotle apparently prefers for goods, judging by 1097b25; cf. *Phys.* 191a8, *Met.* 1048a37 on analogy.

1096b31 'is more appropriate' Cf. note to 1155b1.

1097a15 'But let us . . .' Aristotle begins from the diversity of goods that we apparently must recognize when we reject the Platonic attempt to find unity in goods. He wants to show that this diversity does not require us to reject unity in the human good. First (15-25) he repeats the argument of i 1; in a24 'the same conclusion' refers to i 2.

1097a25-b21 Here we make progress, with arguments to show that (1) the good satisfies some formal criteria (see note to 1095b14) and (2) happiness is the good, 1095a17, because it satisfies these criteria. They are formal criteria because Aristotle thinks (cf. Plato, *Phil.* 20d, and notes to 1172b26-35) that they are reasonable conditions for us to impose on the good before we consider the claims of specific candidates claiming to be the good.

The formal criteria require the good to be (a) complete, (b) self-sufficient, and (c) most choiceworthy, not counted as one good among many. Here (a) follows from our choosing the good only for its own sake and not also for the sake of something else; if there were some more comprehensive and complete end than the good, we would choose the

good for the sake of that. The other two criteria explain what is required by completeness.

1097a28 'complete' *Teleion*; see HAPPINESS #2. *Teleion* is cognate with *telos*, 'end', and hence the translations 'final' and 'perfect' have also been proposed. But the close association of *teleion* with the other criteria for happiness, and its use in 1098a18, 1101a13, justify the translation 'complete'.

1097a30 Why is 'the most complete of these' rather than 'all of these' what we are seeking? Cf. 1098a17, 1099a30, *EE* 1219a35. Perhaps Aristotle means that we are not to pursue merely an unordered collection of ends, but the complete single end that is the whole formed by them.

1097a33 'and hence an end . . .' The supplement seems necessary to give the sense Aristotle intends for 'always choiceworthy in itself'. The weaker claim 'choiceworthy in itself on those occasions when we choose it' would not distinguish this case from the preceding case ('and an end that is never . . .').

1097b3 'for we would choose . . .' Since the highest good is comprehensive, it is composed of goods in themselves; if any of these were left out, we would not have found the final good. Being goods in themselves, these components of happiness are not chosen only for their contribution to happiness, but also for their own sakes. Cf. 1174a4. At the same time they are not merely instrumental means to happiness; see DECISION #2.

1097b6 Self-sufficiency See HAPPINESS #3, note to 1177a27. If happiness by itself makes life lacking in nothing, it must include all the intrinsic goods that a rational person chooses as part of his life.

1097b9 'solitary . . . political' See 1142a9, 1157b18, 1158a23, 1169b16, 1170b12, 1172a6, 1178b5, *Pol.* 1253a7, 1280b33.

1097b16-20 For argument (5) see note to 1172b26, *MM* 1184a8-30. An alternative translation is: '. . . of all goods, when it is not counted with other goods. When it is so counted, then, clearly, we think the addition of the smallest good to it makes it more choiceworthy . . . ', implying that happiness does not embrace all intrinsic goods. This alternative is hard to reconcile with the demands for completeness and self-sufficiency. Cf. notes to 1170b17, 1172b26-35.

The demand for completeness must not be taken to imply the maximum quantity of each intrinsic good; see 1100b22-8, 1101b1-9.

1097b22-1098a20 Aristotle now offers his own account of the good, which ought to satisfy the formal criteria just presented. He appeals to the FUNCTION of a human being, found by consideration of the human

SOUL, 1097b34. The life of ACTION expressing REASON will be a life that includes other activities besides reasoning (just as a dog's life includes more than just PERCEPTION); but it is still guided by reasoning, as a dog's activities are guided by perception. Cf. note to 1166a13.

We may be surprised by Aristotle's move from function to life, and then to soul, first mentioned in 1098a7, 'the soul's activity'. But the connections between soul, life, activity, function and essence make the move legitimate. An organism's soul is the characteristic form and activity that defines the type of life that is essential to it.

1097b26 'depend on their function' Lit. 'in their function'. 'In' in Aristotle is often ambiguous between 'consists in' and 'depends on'; cf. *Phys.* 210a14-24. Since Aristotle takes good performance, not mere performance, of the function to be necessary for doing well, 'depends on' seems to be needed here.

1098a4 'obeying reason' Cf. 1102b26.

1098a4-8 'One as obeying the reason' (a4) = 'requires reason'—lit. 'not without reason'—(a8) and refers to the role of non-rational desires. **'Itself having reason and thinking'** (a4) = 'EXPRESSES reason'—lit. 'according to reason'—(a7) and refers to the role of reason and rational desires. On these rational and non-rational parts of the soul see 1102b26.

Here Aristotle recognizes that the human function includes activities that are distinct from reasoning. The task of adapting them to obey reason in the right way is a task for the moral training that is described in Book II. See also note to 1144b26.

1098a12 'do it well' Here (as in 1097b27,'[doing] well') 'well' must be understood to include more than competent or skilful performance; doing it well is achieving one's good as a harpist, i.e. one's good in so far as one is considered simply as a harpist. Similarly, the virtue that makes someone do well as a human being is the virtue that makes him achieve his own good as a human being; this matters more than his good as a harpist, since his essential function is to be a human being, not to be a harpist. Unless Aristotle is entitled to this connection between virtue, doing well, and achieving one's own good, he is not entitled to his argument from the actions of a good and virtuous human being to the good of a human being.

1098a17 'expresses virtue' A human being's good requires him to perform the function of a human being. But simply performing the function will not ensure his good; many people may live human lives, and in doing so perform human functions to some extent, and still may be badly off in their lives (*EE* 1215b27-31). In that case 'performing one's

function' cannot be a sufficient account of a person's good. Aristotle sees this, and replies that in such cases people are not performing the human function well. He therefore insists that to achieve our good we must perform the human function well, and that to perform it well is to perform it in the way that expresses virtue. These claims are not very adventurous if 'well' means 'so as to achieve one's good', and 'virtue' means 'the sort of state that causes him to perform his function well' (cf. 1106a15). To make his claims more interesting Aristotle needs to answer these two additional questions: (1) What is a virtue? What states of a person meet the conditions for being virtues that are implied here? It will not do for Aristotle simply to assume that the states commonly called virtues really promote happiness; to show that they are really virtues he needs to show that they really promote happiness. He does try to show this through (a) the division of the soul (see note to 1102a25); (b) the general account of virtue of character (ii 6); and (c) its application to the individual virtues in iii 6–iv 9. A virtue is the state that allows the full, rationally-controlled, harmonious realization of human capacities. (Cf. 1170a13 ff.)

(2) Why is it so important to be virtuous? It is not made clear here, but it is assumed in i 8 and gradually explained in i 9-10, that the active expression of the virtues is a component of happiness that we never have good reason to sacrifice for the sake of any other good, even though it does not by itself guarantee happiness. Virtue has this dominant place in happiness because (a) happiness requires a life expressing reason, performing the human function well; and (b) the life of virtue is this sort of life, since it achieves the best sort of rational control over our lives. A proper defence of (b) requires a full account of the virtues; Aristotle summarizes his defence in ix 4.

1098a18 'complete life' See 1101a6, 1177b25, *EE* 1219b5, *MM* 1185a5. Complete virtue needs a complete life (which need not, however, be a whole lifetime; see 1101a6-13) because virtuous activities need time to develop and to express themselves fully. This is especially clear with friendship, 1157a10, 1158a14, and with intelligence, 1143b7. Here the enduring character of virtue is important; see notes to 1100b11, 1140b29, 1156b12.

1098a20-b8 The comments on method (1094b11, 1095a28) are now applied to the discussion of the highest good.

1098a31 'what or what sort' See DEFINITION #3.

1098b1-3 'Rather, in . . . i.e. the origin.' Lit. 'But it is enough in some cases for the that to be proved well, e.g. in the case of origins; and the that is first and origin.' Here Aristotle uses the phrase 'the that'

for the ORIGINS known unconditionally, i.e. the first principles of his theory (in this case, the account of happiness), and not (as in 1095b6) for the origins known to us, the starting-points in our inquiry. Starting-points are beliefs that need some further 'because'. First principles provide the necessary 'because', and a further 'because' cannot be given for the first principles, since they are first, and themselves give the 'because'.

1098b7 'the origin seems . . .' A Greek proverb—i.e., 'well begun is more than half done'.

1098b9 'should examine the origin' Here Aristotle states a general method for evaluating claims to have found an origin. Following the method of considering APPEARANCES (see ETHICS #7), we appeal to common beliefs to confirm our claims. Here the origin in question is happiness (cf. 1102a2); we have reached an account of this origin, and now we appeal to common beliefs about happiness to confirm the conclusions stated in our account.

'From the conclusion . . .' refers to the method of argument in i 7, where Aristotle has been arguing from general formal features of the good and from the human function; though these are not rejected in common beliefs, they do not simply have the status of common beliefs in his account.

In 'what is said . . . facts . . . truth' Aristotle seems to assume rather hastily that the beliefs he will consider are true. For a more discriminating attitude see 1145b1-7.

1098b12 By 'goods of the soul' Aristotle does not mean just 'good for the soul'; all three types of goods are good for the soul. He means 'goods that depend on the condition of the soul, rather than on the body or on conditions outside the agent'. Goods of the soul are preferable for the reason given in 1099b11-25.

1098b14 'are said' Lit. 'we say'; but Aristotle must be reporting it as a widely held belief.

1098b25 'involving . . .' Lit. 'with pleasure or not without pleasure'. Aristotle seems to be distinguishing (a) life consisting of activities that are in activities that are sources of pleasure in themselves, and (b) life consisting in activities that are not in themselves sources of pleasure, plus added sources of pleasure. The same distinction is assumed at 1099a15.

1099a7 On pleasure cf. 1104b3, note to 1175a21.

1099a12 'conflict' I.e., with each other. If I have an excessive desire for food, I may make myself sick by overeating, and so interfere with my other pleasures. **'Pleasant by nature'** Cf. 1153a5, 1176a19.

1099a16 'does not need . . .' Cf. 1169b26.

1099a30 'one of them' See note to 1097a30.

1099a31 On external goods, see GOOD.

1099b3 'character of happiness' (*eudaimonikos*) I.e., we are not good candidates for happiness. Cf. 1176b16, 1177a6, 1178b23.

1099b11-1100a5 Aristotle returns to the assumption in 1095b25 ('we believe intuitively'). His account shows that happiness depends largely on our own actions; we are not at the mercy of FORTUNE for the major components of our happiness. Happiness partly consists in virtuous actions; and being virtuous—so Aristotle will argue in iii 5—is up to us, not entirely dependent on fortune.

1099b32 Children, animals and happiness; see note to 1177a8; 1178b27; *Phys.* 197b6. A different reason is given in *EE* 1219b5.

1100a10 Solon's question is reasonable if we consider the differences between Aristotle's conception of HAPPINESS (#1) and a conception that may seem more natural to us. Solon thinks of happiness as complete success; and someone lacks this complete success if his success does not last for his entire life. Since external conditions beyond his control can interfere with his success, we are wise to wait until the end of his life, when we can be sure that they have not interfered, before we say that he was happy.

1100a18 'Still, even . . . ' Aristotle suggests that the end of a person's life may be too soon to tell if he was or was not really successful in his aims. A happy person, according to the conception that Aristotle considers, is one who succeeds in fulfilling the aims that he sets himself; and if these include, e.g., the welfare of his children, then his success, and hence his happiness, depends on what happens after his death, when his children succeed or fail.

1100a27-30 'Surely, then . . .' Queen Victoria died in 1901; her descendant Czar Nicholas was deposed in 1917. The absurdity that Aristotle considers here is not (a) 'Victoria has now become unhappy' (said in 1917)—though he certainly thinks this is absurd (a14-15, 'we do not say . . .'). He considers the different absurdity (b) 'It has now (in 1917) become true that Victoria was (before 1901) unhappy'. What was true of her in her lifetime cannot be affected by every fluctuation of fortune after her death (though it can be altered by some such fluctuations; see previous note).

1100b7 'Surely it is not . . . ' Aristotle's reply urges that Solon's worry is mostly, but not entirely, wrong. A virtuous person's main aim will be to exercise his virtues in his life. He can succeed in this, and hence achieve the main component of his happiness, independently of

fortune. However, some conditions of happiness do depend on fortune, and here, Aristotle admits, happiness is not entirely stable.

1100b11 The stability of virtue; see 1105a33; notes to 1140b29, 1156b12; 1159b2, 1164a12, 1172b9. The virtues deal with a person's life as a whole, and so he has reason to exercise them in all his dealings. This continuous exercise is supported by friendship. See 1170a7 (cf. 1154b20, 1175a3, 1177a21), 1172a1-8.

1100b26 The role for external goods suggested in 'add adornment', *sunepikosmein*, is illustrated in 1123a7, 1124a1.

1100b32 'magnanimous' See note to 1123b29. Because the virtuous person does not overestimate external goods, he will not be crushed by misfortune and will see no reason to give up his virtuous actions. See note to 1166a29.

On making the best of available resources, see *Pol.* 1332a19.

1101a16-21 'Or should we . . . human being is.' This translation assumes that 'who has and will keep' implies a 'complete life' that may be shorter than a whole lifetime. Hence Aristotle's answer to 'Or should we . . . ?' is 'No'.

An alternative translation would be 'an appropriate end, since the future . . . every way? Hence . . . '. This would suggest that the answer to 'Or should we . . . ?' is 'Yes'; but this would be strange when Aristotle has just answered 'No' in a6-16, where he says that we can be happy for something less than a complete lifetime. The alternative translation should therefore be rejected.

1101b10 Praise and honour *MM* 1183b20-38. Praise is accorded to what is FINE #3 because it is the agent's own achievement, resulting from his own voluntary effort under human conditions (hence it is inappropriate to the gods; 1178b16). Congratulation, however, belongs to success in action; this is what distinguishes happiness from virtuous action, which is not sufficient by itself for the complete success required in happiness (cf. note to 1177b18).

1101b24 'godlike' Or 'divine'. Cf. 1145a18-27.

1101b27 Eudoxus See 1172b9, note to 1094a2. Aristotle is endorsing Eudoxus' claim that some goods are too great to be praised, not the argument for hedonism that Eudoxus derives from this claim.

1102a2 'for the origin . . .' Lit. 'for for the sake of this we do all the other things'. The antecedent of 'this' is probably 'origin', and Aristotle's implicit premise is that we do all our actions for the sake of happiness. It is the ORIGIN, since our deliberation (see DECISION) begins from our conception of happiness as the highest good; and we aim at it as

the END, since we try to find the action that will best realize our conception of happiness.

1102a5 In his account of happiness Aristotle has not yet said what the virtues are; see note to 1098a17. We still want to see whether happiness requires justice or injustice, kindness or cruelty, bravery or cowardice. Aristotle begins his answer to that question, according to the suggestion in 1098a3, by considering the human SOUL, and especially its division into rational and non-rational parts (see DESIRE). The condition that promotes happiness will be the proper relation between the rational and the nonrational parts.

1102a13 'decision' The decision made in i 2.

1102a26 'as well . . . ' Or perhaps 'even in the popular works', on which see note to 1096a3.

1102a30 'two in account' For this question about parts of the soul see *DA* 413b13-32, 432a15-b8, 433a31-b13. By 'two in account' Aristotle means what he means when he speaks of things that are 'the same, but their being is not the same'; cf. note to 1130a12.

1102b28 'for there it agrees . . . ' For this important difference between continence and virtue cf. 1111b14, 1115b10, 1119a11, 1151b34, and note to 1104b6.

1102b32 'listen to reason' Alternatively, 'take account'—lit., have *logos* (reason, account)—of father or friends, not in the way in which we [give an account]. . . .'

1103a3-10 'Virtue is distinguished . . .' This does not mean the virtues of character involve only the nonrational part; for they all require INTELLIGENCE, which belongs to the rational part. Moreover, some of the virtues of thought—intelligence, good deliberation, understanding and consideration—will require the right training of the nonrational part too; see vi 9, 11.

Book II

1103a18 'hence its name' Aristotle plays on the similarity between *ēthos* (character) and *ethos* (habit). On habit see EDUCATION #1. For etymological speculations cf. 1112a16, 1132a30, 1140b11, 1152b7; they are part of the appeal to ordinary language, which in turn is part of Aristotle's appeal to APPEARANCES.

1103a25 'reach our complete perfection (or just 'completion' or 'perfection', *teleiōsis*) **through habit'** NATURE (see #2) is not neutral, equally suited for virtue or vice, but appropriately completed by virtue. On 'complete' see note to 1097a28, HAPPINESS #2.

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1103b3 'legislator' See LAW.

1103b22 'similar activities' The translation and supplement assume that 'similar' means 'similar to each other', i.e. that habituation involves the repetition of the same sort of activity in the same conditions. Alternatively, 'similar' might mean 'similar to the state resulting from them', assuming that, e.g., brave actions are similar to bravery.

1103b22 'Hence we must . . .' The account of moral EDUCATION strongly stresses habituation; the activities of the virtues (e.g. standing firm as an activity of bravery) must be practised, if we are to acquire the right STATE of character. (1) Habituation is needed because we need more than just the learning of instructions, 1103a15; nonrational desires must also be trained. (2) However, these activities are not caused by the state of which they are activities; although we do what the brave person does when we are being trained, we do not do it because of our bravery until the habituation is completed and we have become brave. (See ii 4.) (3) We do not learn simply to repeat the actions until they become automatic or 'second nature' (cf. 1152a32). We must also acquire the virtuous person's state and motive, 1105a32. Hence habituation must include more than simply becoming accustomed to a type of action.

1103b26 On practical results see ETHICS #1. True theories are nonetheless important; indeed they are all the more important when the practical purpose of ethics is considered; see note to 1172a27.

1103b31 'First, then . . .' Aristotle begins with an APPEARANCE, a common belief about virtue, which he gradually explains and defends; see 1107a1, 1138b18, 1144b21.

1104a13 For the maxim 'we must use . . .' cf. Anaxagoras, DK 59 B 21a.

1104a26 'the mean' The doctrine expounded in ii 6 is anticipated here. So far, however, Aristotle only argues that virtue is acquired by a mean—neither total repression nor total indulgence of a natural desire or FEELING. He later argues that virtue consists in an intermediate condition too.

1104b3 'take as a sign' Virtue requires the right kind of pleasure (1099a7) as a 'consequent' (cf. 1174b33). It is not simply that the virtuous person gets pleasure from virtuous action (he has come to feel the pleasure that in the early stages of his training was the result of some external reward); he must also take pleasure in the fact that the actions are virtuous—hence 'enjoys this [abstinence] itself'. See note to 1175a21.

1104b6 'someone who is grieved . . .' We might think that Aristotle is referring here to the continent (see INCONTINENT) person de-