Nicomachean Ethics

ARISTOTLE

384–322 BC

Nicomachean Ethics

Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



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Nicomachean Ethics · Aristotle (384–322 BC)

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CONTENTS

Introduction ix

Book I 1

What people say happiness is 3
Plato's form of the good 6
Happiness as the complete end 9
The human function 10
Happiness and fortune 15
Happiness is honored, not praised 19
The parts of the soul 20

Book II 23

Pleasure and pain as signs of character 26
Doing just acts and being just 27
Excellence is a state 29
The mean relative to us 30
The mean in each excellence 32
How the extremes are opposed 35
Hitting the mean 36

Book III 39

Acting through ignorance 41
Decision 43
Deliberation and wish 45
Excellence and vice are up to us 48
Courage 51
Things that resemble courage 54
Moderation 58

Book IV 65

Magnificence 70
Greatness of soul 73

Ambition and its nameless mean 78
Gentleness 79
Friendliness and flattery 81
Truthfulness and boastfulness 83
Wit and tact 85

Book V 89
Particular justice 92
Distributive justice 94
Corrective justice 96
Reciprocity and money 98
Political justice 101
Voluntary and involuntary wrongdoing 104
Equity 109

Book VI 113
The parts of the soul that have reason 113
Scientific knowledge and craft 115
Practical wisdom 117
Intellect and wisdom 118
Good deliberation, comprehension and judgement 122
What wisdom and practical wisdom are for 126

Book VII 131
Puzzles about self-control 132
How someone who knows can lack self-control 135
What self-control is concerned with 138
Brutish and diseased states 140
Anger and appetite 142
Why lack of self-control is not vice 146
Pleasure 150

Book VIII 157
What is lovable 158
Three kinds of friendship 159
Friendship between unequals 166
Friendship, justice and community 169

Constitutions and households 170
Friendship among kin 173
Complaints between friends 175

Book IX 179
Conflicting obligations 181
Friendship and one's relation to oneself 184
Goodwill and concord 186
Self-love 190
Does the happy person need friends? 193
How many friends 196
Friends in good and bad fortune 197

Book X 201
Arguments for and against pleasure 202
What pleasure is 205
Pleasure completes activity 207
Happiness is not amusement 211
The life of contemplation 213
The life of the other excellences 215
From ethics to lawgiving 218

INTRODUCTION

What is the best life for a human being? Aristotle's answer, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is happiness, *eudaimonia*: not a feeling but a whole life lived well, in activity that expresses excellence.

The book works through what that takes: good character formed by habit, the idea that each excellence is a mean between excess and deficiency, practical wisdom, justice, self-control, and friendship, which gets two full books. It ends by asking whether the happiest life is the life of contemplation.

The text comes down to us as Aristotle's lecture notes, probably edited by or dedicated to his son Nicomachus. Each of the ten books is on its own page.

Book I

Happiness, the highest good
Aristotle argues that the highest human good is happiness, activity of the soul in accordance with excellence.

1094a Every craft and every inquiry, and likewise every action and decision, seems to aim at some good. That is why people have rightly declared that the good is that at which all things aim. But there appears to be a difference among ends: some are activities, while others are products of some kind over and above the activities. And where there are ends beyond the actions, the products are by nature better than the activities. Since there are many actions, crafts and sciences, their ends turn out to be many as well: the end of medicine is health, of shipbuilding a ship, of generalship victory, of household management wealth. Wherever such pursuits fall under a single capacity—as bridle-making and all the other crafts concerned with a horse's equipment fall under horsemanship, and horsemanship and every action in war fall under generalship, and in the same way others fall under still others—in all of them the ends of the master crafts are more choiceworthy than all the ends subordinate to them, since it is for the sake of the former that the latter too are pursued. And it makes no difference whether the ends of the actions are the activities themselves or something else beyond them, as with the sciences just mentioned.

Suppose, then, that there is some end of the things we do that we wish for on account of itself, wishing for everything else on account of it, and that we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for in that way the process would go on

without limit, so that our desire would be empty and futile). Clearly this end would be the good—the best good. Won't knowledge of it, then, carry great weight for how we live? Like archers who have a target, wouldn't we be more likely to hit what we should? If so, we must try to grasp, in outline at least, what it is and which of the sciences or capacities it belongs to. It would seem to belong to the most authoritative one, the one that is most of all a master craft. Political science appears to be of this kind. For it is political science that lays down which of the sciences there must be in cities, [1094b] and which ones each group of citizens must learn, and up to what point. We see, too, that even the most honored capacities fall under it—generalship, for example, household management and rhetoric. And since it uses the rest of the practical sciences, and also legislates what people must do and what they must refrain from, its end would include the ends of the others, so that this end would be the human good. For even if the good is the same for an individual and for a city, the good of the city is evidently a greater and more complete thing both to attain and to preserve. It is welcome enough to secure it for one person alone, but finer and more divine to secure it for a people and for cities. This, then, is what our inquiry aims at, since it is a kind of political science.[1]

Our account will be adequate if it is made as clear as its subject matter allows. Precision should not be sought equally in all discussions, any more than in all the things craftsmen make. Fine and just things, which political science examines, involve a great deal of disagreement and variability, so much so that they are thought to exist only by convention and not by nature. Good things too involve variability of this kind, because they bring harm to many people: before now some have been ruined by their wealth, and others by their courage. So when we speak about such things, and from such premises, we must be content to indicate the truth roughly and in outline; and when we speak about what holds for the most part, and from premises of that

1 Greek politikē: the expertise concerned with the polis, the city-state; for Aristotle it includes ethics as well as legislation.

kind, we must be content to reach conclusions of the same kind. Each of the things we say should be received in the same way. For it is the mark of an educated person to look for precision in each kind of thing just so far as the nature of the subject admits. Accepting merely plausible arguments from a mathematician seems much the same as demanding demonstrations from an orator. Each person judges well the things he knows, and of these he is a good judge. 1095a So in a given field the person educated in that field judges well, and without qualification the person educated in everything. That is why a young person is not a suitable student of political science. He has no experience of the actions of life, and our discussions start from these and are about these. Besides, since he tends to follow his feelings, he will listen to no purpose and without benefit, because the end here is not knowledge but action. It makes no difference whether he is young in years or youthful in character. The deficiency is not a matter of time; it comes from living, and pursuing each thing, according to feeling. For such people knowledge proves useless, just as it does for those who lack self-control. But for those who form their desires and act in accordance with reason, knowing about these matters would be of great benefit. So much, then, by way of preface, about the student, about how our claims should be received, and about what we are setting out to do.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY HAPPINESS IS

Aristotle notes that all call the highest good happiness but disagree about pleasure, honor and wealth.

Let us take up the question again. Since all knowledge and every decision reaches for some good, let us say what it is that we say political science aims at, and what is the highest of all the goods achievable in action. As to its name, most people pretty much agree: both ordinary people and the refined call it happiness, and they take living well and doing well to be the same as being happy. But about what happiness is they disagree, and the many

do not give the same account as the wise. Some take it to be something plain and obvious, like pleasure or wealth or honor; others take it to be something else—and often the same person takes it to be different things: health when he is ill, wealth when he is poor. And when people are conscious of their own ignorance, they admire those who talk of something grand and above their heads.[2] Some, however, used to think that besides these many goods there is something else that is good by itself, which is also the cause of all these being good. Examining all the opinions would perhaps be rather futile; it is enough to examine those that are most widespread or that seem to have some reason in their favor. But let us not overlook the difference between arguments from first principles and arguments toward first principles. Plato too was right to raise this problem and to ask whether the path runs from the first principles or toward them, [1095b] as on a racecourse it may run from the judges to the far end or back again. We must begin from what is known; but this has two senses, since some things are known to us, others known without qualification. Perhaps, then, we at any rate must begin from what is known to us.

2 Happiness (eudaimonia) means flourishing: a whole life going well, not a passing mood.

> That is why anyone who is going to be an adequate student of what is fine and just, and of political matters generally, must have been well brought up in his habits. For the starting point is the fact that something is so, and if this is sufficiently clear, there will be no further need of the reason why. Such a person either has the starting points or can easily get them. As for someone who has neither, let him hear the words of Hesiod: "Best of all is he who understands all things himself;
> good, too, is he who listens to one who speaks well.
> But he who neither understands himself nor, hearing another,
> takes it to heart—that man is useless."[3]

But let us return to where we digressed. To judge from the lives they lead, the many and most vulgar seem—not unreasonably—to take the good, that is, happiness, to be pleasure; that is why they are content with the life of enjoyment. For there are three lives that stand out most: the one just mentioned, the political life, and third the contemplative life. The many appear quite slavish, choosing a life fit for grazing cattle; yet they get a hearing because many of those in positions of power share the tastes of Sardanapallus. Refined people and people of action, on the other hand, take the good to be honor, since this is roughly the end of the political life. But honor appears more superficial than what we are looking for. It seems to depend on those who confer it more than on the one who receives it, whereas we have a hunch that the good is something of one's own and hard to take away.[4] Further, people seem to pursue honor in order to convince themselves that they are good. At any rate they seek to be honored by the practically wise, by people who know them, and for their excellence. Clearly, then, on their own view at least, excellence is better. Perhaps one might even suppose that

3 From Hesiod's *Works and Days*, a poem of moral and practical advice composed around 700 BC.

4 Sardanapallus: a legendary Assyrian king, proverbial for luxurious self-indulgence.

excellence, rather than honor, is the end of the political life. But this too appears incomplete. For it seems possible to have excellence and yet be asleep, or inactive throughout one's life, and on top of this to suffer terribly and meet with the greatest misfortunes; 1096a and no one would call a person living that way happy, unless he were defending a thesis. But enough of this; these matters have been discussed adequately in our popular works as well. The third life is the contemplative, which we shall examine in what follows.[5] The life of money-making is a life of constraint, and wealth is clearly not the good we are looking for, since it is useful and for the sake of something else. So one might rather suppose the ends mentioned earlier to be the good, since they are liked for their own sake. But evidently they are not either, even though many arguments have been laid down in their support. So let us leave these aside.

PLATO'S FORM OF THE GOOD

Aristotle criticizes Plato's idea of a single universal Form of the good.

It is perhaps better to examine the universal good and to work through the difficulties about how it is meant, even though such an inquiry is an uphill task, because the forms were introduced by friends of ours. Yet it would perhaps seem better—indeed our duty—to do away even with what is our own for the sake of preserving the truth, especially since we are philosophers. For while both are dear to us, piety requires us to honor the truth first. Those who introduced this view did not posit forms of things in which they spoke of a prior and a posterior, which is why they did not set up a form of numbers either. But the good is spoken of in the category of what a thing is, in that of quality, and in that of relation; and what exists by itself, substance, is prior by nature to what is relative (the relative is like an offshoot, an accident, of being). So there could not be a common

5 "Popular works": probably Aristotle's writings for a general audience, now lost.

form over these.[6] Further, the good is spoken of in as many ways as being is: in the category of what a thing is, as god and intellect; in quality, as the excellences; in quantity, as the moderate amount; in relation, as the useful; in time, as the right moment; in place, as a suitable habitat; and so on. Clearly, then, it could not be something common, universal and one; for then it would not be spoken of in all the categories, but in one only. Further, since there is one science of the things that fall under one form, there would also have been one science of all goods. But in fact there are many sciences even of the goods that fall under a single category: of the right moment, for example—in war it is generalship, in disease medicine; and of the moderate amount—in diet it is medicine, in exercise gymnastics. One might also be puzzled about what on earth they mean by "the thing itself," if the account of man is one and the same in man-itself [1096b] and in a man. For insofar as they are man, they will not differ at all; and if so, neither will they differ insofar as they are good. Nor, again, will the good be any more good by being eternal, if a white thing that lasts a long time is no whiter than one that lasts a day. The Pythagoreans seem to give a more plausible account of the good, placing the One in their column of goods; and Speusippus seems to have followed them.[7] But let us leave these matters for another discussion. An objection to what we have said suggests itself: that the arguments were not meant to cover every good. Things pursued and liked for their own sake are called good by reference to a single form, while the things that produce these, or in some way preserve them, or prevent their opposites, are called good because of these, and in another way. Clearly, then, goods would be spoken of in two ways: some by themselves, the others because of these. So let us separate the things good by themselves from the useful ones and consider whether they are called good by reference to a single form.

6 The "friends" are Plato and his circle in the Academy, where Aristotle studied for some twenty years.

7 The Pythagoreans arranged pairs of opposites in two columns, the One heading the column of goods. Speusippus, Plato's nephew, succeeded him as head of the Academy.

What sort of things would one class as good by themselves? Those that are pursued even on their own, such as being practically wise, seeing, and certain pleasures and honors? For even if we also pursue these for the sake of something else, one would still class them among things good by themselves. Or is nothing good by itself except the form? In that case the form will be pointless. But if these things too are among the things good by themselves, the account of the good will have to show up as the same in all of them, just as the account of whiteness is the same in snow and in white lead. But the accounts of honor, practical wisdom and pleasure are distinct and different precisely insofar as they are goods. So the good is not something common answering to a single form. How, then, is it spoken of? It does not seem to be like things that merely happen to share a name. Is it by all goods deriving from one thing, or all contributing to one thing? Or is it rather by analogy? For as sight is in the body, so intellect is in the soul, and so on, one thing in another. But perhaps we should leave these questions for now, since going into them precisely would belong more properly to another branch of philosophy. The same goes for the form. For even if there is some one good that is predicated in common, or something separate, itself by itself, clearly it could not be done or acquired by a human being; and it is something of that kind that we are now looking for. Perhaps someone might think it better to know the form [1097a] with a view to the goods that can be acquired and done: with it as a kind of model, we shall know better the things that are good for us, and if we know them, we shall attain them. The argument has a certain plausibility, but it seems to clash with the sciences. All of them aim at some good and seek to supply what is lacking, yet they pass over knowledge of this good. And it is not reasonable that all craftsmen should be ignorant of so great an aid and not even look for it. It is also hard to see how a weaver or a carpenter will be helped in his own craft by knowing this good itself, or how someone who has beheld the form itself will be a better doctor or general. For the doctor does not even seem to consider health in this way, but

human health—or rather, perhaps, the health of this particular person, since he treats patients one by one. So much for these matters.

HAPPINESS AS THE COMPLETE END

Aristotle argues that happiness is the most complete end, chosen for itself and self-sufficient.

Let us return once more to the good we are looking for and ask what it might be. It appears to be different in different actions and crafts: one thing in medicine, another in generalship, and likewise in the rest. What, then, is the good of each? Isn't it that for the sake of which everything else is done? In medicine this is health, in generalship victory, in housebuilding a house, in another field something else, and in every action and decision it is the end, since it is for the sake of the end that everyone does everything else. So if there is some one end of everything done in action, this would be the good achievable in action; and if there are several, it would be these. So our argument, taking a different route, has arrived at the same point; but we must try to make this still clearer. Since there are evidently several ends, and we choose some of them for the sake of something else—wealth, for example, pipes, and instruments in general—clearly not all ends are complete; but the best good appears to be something complete. So if there is just one thing that is complete, this would be what we are looking for; and if there are several, the most complete of them. We call what is pursued for its own sake more complete than what is pursued for the sake of something else, and what is never chosen for the sake of something else more complete than things chosen both for their own sake and for the sake of that; and what is always chosen for its own sake and never for the sake of something else we call complete without qualification. Happiness above all seems to be like this. 1097b We always choose it for its own sake and never for the sake of anything else. Honor, pleasure, intellect and every excellence we do choose for their own sake (since we would choose each of

them even if nothing came of it), but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, supposing that through them we shall be happy. Happiness, on the other hand, no one chooses for the sake of these, or for the sake of anything else at all. The same conclusion appears to follow from self-sufficiency too, since the complete good seems to be self-sufficient. By self-sufficient we mean not sufficient for oneself alone, living a solitary life, but also for parents, children and wife, and in general for friends and fellow citizens, since a human being is by nature a political creature. But some limit must be set here, since if we extend it to parents and descendants and friends' friends, it goes on without limit. That, however, must be examined another time. We take the self-sufficient to be what on its own makes life choiceworthy and lacking in nothing; and this is what we think happiness is. Further, we think it the most choiceworthy of all things, not counted as one good among others. If it were so counted, it would clearly be more choiceworthy with the addition of even the smallest of goods; for what is added makes an excess of goods, and of goods the greater is always more choiceworthy. Happiness, then, appears to be something complete and self-sufficient, since it is the end of what is done in action.

THE HUMAN FUNCTION

Aristotle defines happiness as activity of the soul in accordance with excellence, based on the human function.

But perhaps saying that happiness is the best good seems a commonplace, and what is wanted is a clearer statement of what it is. This might perhaps be achieved if we grasped the function of a human being. For just as for a pipe-player, a sculptor and every craftsman, and in general for all things that have a function and an action, the good—the doing well—seems to lie in the function, so it would seem to be for a human being too, if he has a function. Do the carpenter and the shoemaker, then, have certain functions and actions, while a human being has none and is by nature idle? Or, just as the eye, the hand, the foot and in gen-

eral each of the parts evidently has a function, may one likewise posit a function for a human being over and above all these? What, then, could this be? Living is evidently shared even with plants, but we are looking for what is distinctive. 1098a So we must set aside the life of nutrition and growth. Next would be some sort of life of perception, but this too is evidently shared, with the horse, the ox and every animal. What remains, then, is some sort of practical life of the part that has reason. Of this, one part has reason in the sense that it obeys reason, the other in the sense that it has reason and thinks. And since this life too is spoken of in two ways, we must take the life in activity, since this seems to be the more authoritative sense. Suppose the function of a human being is activity of the soul in accordance with reason, or not without reason. We say that the function of a thing of a given kind and of an excellent thing of that kind are the same in kind—of a lyre-player and an excellent lyre-player, for example, and so without qualification in every case, superiority in excellence being added to the function: a lyre-player's function is to play the lyre, an excellent one's is to play it well. If so, and if we take the function of a human being to be a certain kind of life, and this to be activity of the soul and actions involving reason, and the function of an excellent man to be to do these things well and finely, and each thing is accomplished well when it is accomplished in accordance with its proper excellence—if all this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of the soul in accordance with excellence, and if there are several excellences, in accordance with the best and most complete. And further, in a complete life. For one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one day; and in the same way one day, or a short time, does not make someone blessed and happy. Let this, then, serve as an outline of the good; for perhaps we must first sketch it roughly and fill it in later. It would seem that anyone can carry forward and articulate what has been well outlined, and that time is a good discoverer of such things, or a good helper. That is also how advances in the crafts have come about, since anyone can add what is missing. We must also

remember what was said before, and not seek precision equally in all things, but in each case in keeping with the subject matter and only so far as suits the inquiry. A carpenter and a geometer both look for the right angle, but in different ways: the carpenter as far as it is useful for his work, while the geometer looks for what it is or what sort of thing it is, since he is a contemplator of the truth. We must proceed in the same way in other matters too, so that side issues do not outweigh the main work. [1098b] Nor should we demand the cause equally in all cases; in some it is enough that the fact be properly shown, as with first principles, where the fact is primary and is itself a starting point. Of first principles, some are grasped by induction, some by perception, some by a kind of habituation, and others in other ways. We must try to pursue each kind in the way natural to it, and take pains to define them well, since they carry great weight for what follows. For the starting point seems to be more than half of the whole, and through it many of the things we are inquiring into become clear.

We must examine this starting point not only on the basis of our conclusion and the premises of our argument, but also on the basis of what is said about it. For with what is true all the facts harmonize, whereas with what is false the truth soon clashes. Now goods have been divided into three kinds: some are called external, others goods of the soul, and others goods of the body. We say that the goods of the soul are goods in the most authoritative sense and to the highest degree, and we class actions and activities of the soul as belonging to the soul. So our account would be right, at least by this view, which is ancient and agreed on by philosophers. It is also right in saying that the end consists in certain actions and activities; for in this way it turns out to be among the goods of the soul and not among the external ones. Also in harmony with our account is the idea that the happy person lives well and does well, since we have practically described happiness as a sort of living well and doing well. And the things people look for in happiness all appear to be present in what we have described. For some think happiness

is excellence, others practical wisdom, others a kind of wisdom, others all these or one of them, with pleasure or not without pleasure; and others include external prosperity as well. Some of these views are held by many people and have come down from long ago, others by a few distinguished men; and it is not reasonable that either group should be wholly mistaken, but rather that they are right in at least one respect, or even in most. Now our account agrees with those who say happiness is excellence or some particular excellence, since activity in accordance with excellence belongs to excellence. But perhaps it makes no small difference whether we take the best good to lie in possessing or in using, in a state or in an activity. For a state can be present without producing any good, [1099a] as in someone who is asleep or inactive in some other way; but the activity cannot, since it will necessarily act, and act well. And just as at the Olympic Games it is not the finest and strongest who are crowned but those who compete (since it is some of these who win), so too it is those who act rightly who win the fine and good things in life. Their life is also pleasant in itself. For being pleased belongs to the soul, and to each person that is pleasant of which he is called a lover: a horse to the horse-lover, a spectacle to the lover of spectacles; and in the same way just things to the lover of justice, and in general things in accordance with excellence to the lover of excellence. Now for most people the things they find pleasant are at war with one another, because these things are not pleasant by nature; but to lovers of what is fine, the things that are pleasant by nature are pleasant. Actions in accordance with excellence are like this, so they are pleasant both to these people and in themselves. Their life, then, has no further need of pleasure as a kind of amulet hung around its neck, but has its pleasure in itself. For in addition to what has been said, a person who does not enjoy fine actions is not even good: no one would call someone just who does not enjoy acting justly, or generous who does not enjoy generous actions, and similarly in the other cases. If so, actions in accordance with excellence must be pleasant in themselves. And they are also

good and fine, and each of these to the highest degree, if the excellent person judges well about them; and he judges as we have said. Happiness, then, is the best, finest and most pleasant thing, and these qualities are not separated as the inscription at Delos has it: "Finest is what is most just, best is health; / but most pleasant is to win what one desires." For all of them belong to the best activities; and it is these, or the one that is best among them, that we say happiness is. All the same, as we said, happiness evidently needs external goods as well, since it is impossible, or not easy, to do fine things without resources. Many things are done 1099b by means of friends, wealth and political power, as if by instruments; and the lack of certain things spoils blessedness—good birth, for example, good children, beauty. For someone who is utterly ugly in appearance, or low-born, or solitary and childless, is not quite the happy type; still less, perhaps, someone whose children or friends are thoroughly bad, or were good but have died.[8] As we said, then, happiness seems to need this sort of prosperity as well. That is why some identify good fortune with happiness, while others identify excellence with it.

This is also why there is a puzzle whether happiness can be learned, or acquired by habituation or some other kind of training, or whether it comes by some divine dispensation or even by chance. Now if anything at all is a gift of the gods to human beings, it is reasonable that happiness too should be god-given, and more so than any other human good, inasmuch as it is the best. But this question perhaps belongs more properly to another inquiry. Even if happiness is not sent by the gods but comes through excellence and some kind of learning or training, it appears to be among the most divine things; for the prize and end of excellence appears to be the best thing, something divine and blessed. It would also be widely shared, since it can belong, through some kind of learning and care, to everyone who is not incapacitated for excellence. And if it is better to be

8 Delos, an Aegean island sacred to Apollo; the couplet was inscribed there, reportedly at his temple.

happy this way than through chance, it is reasonable that this is how things are. For things that come about by nature are naturally as fine as they can be, and likewise things that come about by craft or by any cause, and most of all those that come about by the best cause. To leave what is greatest and finest to chance would be a grave discord. What we are looking for is also evident from our account, since happiness has been said to be a certain kind of activity of the soul in accordance with excellence. Of the remaining goods, some must be present as prerequisites, while others are by nature helpful and useful as instruments. This would also agree with what we said at the beginning. We took the end of political science to be the best end, and political science takes the greatest care to make the citizens of a certain kind—good, and able to do fine things.

HAPPINESS AND FORTUNE

Aristotle asks whether misfortune, or the fortunes of one's descendants after death, can undo happiness.

It is reasonable, then, that we do not call an ox or a horse or any other animal happy, [1100a] since none of them can share in activity of this kind. For the same reason a child is not happy either, since his age does not yet allow him to do such things; children who are called blessed are called so because of the hope they hold out. For happiness requires, as we said, both complete excellence and a complete life. Many changes and all kinds of fortune occur in the course of a life, and even the most prosperous person may meet with great disasters in old age, as the Trojan stories tell of Priam; and no one calls happy someone who has met with such fortunes and come to a wretched end.[9]

Must we, then, call no other human being happy either as long as he is alive, but, as Solon says, look to the end? And if we are indeed to lay this down, is a person actually happy at the time when he has died? Or isn't that altogether absurd, especially for us, who say that happiness is a kind of activity? But if

9 Priam, king of Troy, lost most of his sons and was killed when the city fell.

we do not call the dead person happy, and Solon does not mean this either, but rather that only then can one safely call a human being blessed, as being at last beyond evils and misfortunes, even this is open to some dispute. For something seems to be both bad and good for a dead person, if indeed it is for a living person who is not aware of it: honors and dishonors, for example, and the successes and misfortunes of his children and of his descendants in general.[10] But this too raises a difficulty. Someone may have lived blessedly into old age and died in a manner to match, and yet many changes may befall his descendants: some of them may be good and get the life they deserve, others the opposite. And clearly they can stand at every sort of remove from their ancestors. It would be absurd, then, if the dead man changed along with them, becoming happy at one time and wretched again at another; but it would also be absurd if what happens to descendants did not reach their ancestors at all, not even for a time. But we must go back to the difficulty raised earlier; perhaps from it we will also see the answer to what we are now asking. If, then, we must look to the end and only then call each person blessed—not as being blessed but because he was so before—surely it is absurd that, at the time when he is happy, what is true of him will not be truly said of him, 1100b because we are unwilling to call the living happy on account of life's changes, and because we have taken happiness to be something stable and not easily changed, while fortunes often turn full circle for the same people. For clearly, if we followed people's fortunes, we would often call the same person happy and then wretched again, making the happy person out to be a kind of chameleon, standing on rotten foundations. Or is following fortunes not right at all? For doing well or badly does not lie in them; human life needs them in addition, as we said, but what controls happiness is activity in accordance with excellence, and the opposite activities control its opposite. What we have just puzzled over also bears witness to our account. For no

10 Solon, Athenian statesman and poet of the early sixth century BC; in Herodotus he tells King Croesus to call no one happy until he sees how his life ends.

human function has as much stability as activities in accordance with excellence; these seem to be more lasting even than the branches of scientific knowledge. And among them, the most honorable are the most lasting, because the blessed spend their lives in them most fully and most continuously; this seems to be why we do not forget them. The happy person, then, will have what we are looking for, and will be happy throughout his life. For always, or more than anyone, he will do and contemplate what accords with excellence, and he will bear his fortunes most finely and with complete good grace in every way—he who is truly good, "foursquare, without blame."[11] Many things happen by chance, and they differ in greatness and smallness. Small pieces of good fortune, and likewise of the opposite, clearly do not tip the scales of a life. But great and numerous ones, if they turn out well, will make life more blessed (for by nature they help to adorn it, and the use of them becomes fine and excellent), while if they turn out the other way they crush and spoil blessedness, since they bring pains and impede many activities. Yet even in these the fine shines through, when someone bears many great misfortunes calmly, not through insensitivity to pain but because he is noble and great-souled. And if activities are what control life, as we said, no blessed person could ever become wretched; for he will never do what is hateful and base. 1101a For we think that the truly good and sensible person bears all his fortunes gracefully and always does the finest things possible with what he has, just as a good general makes the most effective military use of the army he has, and a shoemaker makes the finest shoe out of the hides he is given, and so with all other craftsmen too. If so, the happy person could never become wretched—though he would not be blessed either, if he met with the fortunes of Priam. Nor, then, is he variable and easily changed. He will not be moved from his happiness easily, nor by ordinary misfortunes but only by great and numerous ones; and after such things he would not become

11 The phrase comes from a poem of Simonides (sixth–fifth century BC) on how hard it is to be truly good.

happy again in a short time, but, if at all, only in a long and complete one, in which he has achieved great and fine things. What, then, prevents us from calling happy the person who is active in accordance with complete excellence and is adequately equipped with external goods, not for some chance period but for a complete life? Or must we add that he will also go on living this way and die accordingly, since the future is obscure to us, and we take happiness to be an end and complete in every way? If so, we will call blessed those among the living who have, and will have, the things we have described—but blessed as human beings. On these matters, let this much be settled.

That the fortunes of one's descendants and of all one's friends should contribute nothing at all seems a very unfriendly view, and contrary to what people believe. But since what happens is so various and differs in all sorts of ways, some things touching us more closely and others less, to distinguish each case would evidently be a long, indeed endless, task; a general account in outline may perhaps be enough. Among one's own misfortunes, some have a certain weight and influence on one's life, while others seem lighter; suppose it is the same with those that befall one's friends in general. Suppose, too, that it makes much more difference whether a given misfortune befalls the living or the dead than whether the lawless and terrible deeds in tragedies are presupposed or actually performed on stage. Then we must take this difference into account as well—or rather, perhaps, the puzzle whether the departed share in any good or its opposite. [1101b] For it seems from these considerations that even if anything, good or the opposite, does get through to them, it is something faint and small, either in itself or to them; or if not, then at least of such a size and kind as not to make happy those who are not, nor to take away blessedness from those who are. The good fortunes of friends, then, and likewise their misfortunes, do seem to contribute something to the dead, but of such a kind and size as neither to make the happy unhappy nor to do anything else of that sort.

HAPPINESS IS HONORED, NOT PRAISED

Aristotle argues that happiness is honored as something divine rather than praised.

With these points settled, let us consider whether happiness is among the things that are praised or rather among those that are honored; for clearly it is not among capacities. Everything praised seems to be praised for being of a certain quality and standing in some relation to something. We praise the just person, the brave person, and in general the good person and excellence, because of their actions and deeds; and we praise the strong person, the good runner and each of the rest for being naturally of a certain kind and standing in some relation to something good and excellent. This is clear also from praises of the gods: they look ridiculous when measured against us, and this happens because praise involves reference to something else, as we said. If praise belongs to things like these, then clearly there is no praise of the best things, but something greater and better—as indeed appears to be the case. For we call the gods blessed and happy, and we call the most godlike of men blessed. So too with goods: no one praises happiness as he praises justice; he calls it blessed, as something more divine and better. Eudoxus, too, seems to have pleaded well for pleasure's claim to first prize: he thought that the fact that it is not praised, though it is a good, shows that it is superior to the things that are praised, and that the god and the good are like this, since everything else is referred to them. For praise belongs to excellence, since it is from excellence that people do fine things, while encomia are for deeds, of body and soul alike.[12] But perhaps working these points out precisely belongs more to those who have made a study of encomia. For us it is clear from what has been said 1102a that happiness is among the things that are honored and complete. It seems to be so also because it is a first

12 Eudoxus of Cnidus (fourth century BC), mathematician and astronomer, who held that pleasure is the good.

principle: it is for its sake that all of us do everything else, and we take the principle and cause of goods to be something honored and divine.

THE PARTS OF THE SOUL

Aristotle divides the soul into rational and non-rational parts, yielding intellectual and character excellences.

Since happiness is a certain activity of soul in accordance with complete excellence, we should examine excellence; perhaps in this way we will also get a better view of happiness. The true statesman, too, seems to have worked hardest at this, since he wants to make the citizens good and obedient to the laws. As examples of this we have the lawgivers of the Cretans and the Spartans, and any others of that kind there have been. And if this inquiry belongs to political science, clearly our investigation will be in keeping with our original plan. It is clear that the excellence we must examine is human excellence; for it was the human good we were seeking, and human happiness. By human excellence we mean not that of the body but that of the soul; and happiness too we call an activity of the soul.[13] If this is so, clearly the statesman must know in some way about the soul, just as someone who is going to treat eyes, or the body as a whole, must know about them—and all the more so since political science is more honorable and better than medicine; and the more accomplished doctors take a great deal of trouble to know about the body. So the statesman must study the soul, but study it for the sake of these ends, and only as far as is sufficient for what we are seeking; to go into more precise detail is perhaps more laborious than our present purposes require. Some things are said adequately about the soul in our external discussions as well, and we should make use of them: for instance,

13 Crete and Sparta were famous for ancient law codes designed to train citizens in excellence.

that one part of it is non-rational and another has reason.[14] Whether these are distinct like the parts of the body and everything divisible, or are two in definition but by nature inseparable, like the convex and the concave in the circumference of a circle, makes no difference for present purposes. Of the non-rational part, one division seems to be common to all living things and vegetative—I mean what causes nourishment and growth. For one would posit this sort of capacity of the soul in everything that takes nourishment, 1102b including embryos, and this same one in fully grown creatures; that is more reasonable than positing some other. The excellence of this part, then, appears to be common to all and not specifically human. For this part and this capacity seem to be most active in sleep, while the good and the bad person are least distinguishable in sleep (hence the saying that for half their lives the happy are no different from the wretched; and this is to be expected, since sleep is an inactivity of the soul in the respect in which it is called excellent or bad)—unless some movements do to a small extent get through, and in this way the dreams of decent people become better than those of ordinary people. But enough of this; we should leave the nutritive part aside, since by nature it has no share in human excellence. There seems also to be another nature in the soul that is non-rational, though it shares in reason in a way. For in the self-controlled and the uncontrolled person we praise their reason, the part of the soul that has reason, since it urges them rightly and toward what is best. But there also appears in them something else that is by nature contrary to reason, which fights and strains against reason. Just as paralyzed limbs, when we decide to move them to the right, swing the opposite way, to the left, so it is in the soul: the impulses of uncontrolled people go in contrary directions. But in bodies we see what swings away, whereas in the soul we do not. Still, perhaps we should think no less that in the soul too there is something contrary to reason, opposing and resisting it. In what way

14 Probably discussions meant for a wider audience than Aristotle's school, perhaps his own published works.

it is distinct makes no difference. But this part too appears to share in reason, as we said. At any rate, in the self-controlled person it obeys reason—and in the moderate and brave person it is perhaps still more ready to listen, since there it agrees with reason in everything. So the non-rational part too appears to be twofold. The vegetative part has no share in reason at all, while the appetitive, and in general the desiring, part shares in it in a way, insofar as it listens to it and obeys it. This is the sense in which we say we "heed the reason" of our father or our friends, not the sense in which we grasp the reasoning of mathematics. That the non-rational part is in some way persuaded by reason is shown also by admonition and by every sort of rebuke and encouragement. 1103a And if we should say that this part too has reason, then the part that has reason will also be twofold: one having it in the strict sense and in itself, the other as something that listens to it, as one listens to a father. Excellence too is divided according to this difference. We call some excellences intellectual and others excellences of character: wisdom, comprehension and practical wisdom are intellectual, while generosity and moderation are excellences of character. For when we speak of someone's character we do not say that he is wise or has comprehension, but that he is gentle or moderate. Yet we praise the wise person too for his state; and the praiseworthy states are the ones we call excellences.

Book II

Excellence of character and the mean
Aristotle argues that character comes from habit and that each excellence is a mean between two vices.

Excellence, then, is of two kinds, intellectual and of character. Intellectual excellence owes both its origin and its growth mostly to teaching, which is why it needs experience and time; excellence of character comes about from habit, which is also where it got its name, a slight variation on the word for habit. From this it is also clear that none of the excellences of character arises in us by nature. For nothing that is by nature one way can be habituated to be another: a stone, which by nature moves downward, could not be habituated to move upward, not even if someone tried to habituate it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor could fire be habituated to move downward, nor anything else that is naturally one way be habituated to be another. So the excellences arise in us neither by nature nor against nature: we are naturally able to receive them, and are brought to completion through habit.[1] Again, with the things that come to us by nature, we first acquire the capacities and later exercise the activities (this is clear with the senses: we did not get our senses from seeing often or hearing often; on the contrary, we had them and then used them, rather than getting them by using them). But the excellences we acquire by first exercising them, as happens with the crafts too. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them: people

1 In Greek, *ēthos*, "character", differs from *ethos*, "habit", only in the length of its first vowel.

become builders by building, for instance, and lyre players by playing the lyre. 1103b In the same way we become just by doing just things, moderate by doing moderate things, and brave by doing brave things. What happens in cities bears this out too: lawgivers make the citizens good by habituating them. This is what every lawgiver wants, and those who do not do it well miss the mark; this is what distinguishes a good constitution from a bad one. Again, every excellence both comes about and is destroyed from the same things and through the same things, and likewise every craft. For it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyre players come to be. The same goes for builders and all the rest: from building well people will become good builders, from building badly bad ones. If this were not so, there would be no need for anyone to teach; everyone would simply turn out good or bad. So it is with the excellences too. By doing what we do in our dealings with other people, some of us become just and others unjust; by doing what we do in the face of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, some become brave and others cowardly. The same holds for appetites and for anger. Some people become moderate and gentle, others self-indulgent and irascible, the one group from behaving one way in these situations, the other from behaving another way. In a word, states come about from activities like them. That is why we must make our activities of a certain quality, since the states follow the differences among them. So it makes no small difference whether we are habituated one way or another right from childhood; it makes a very great difference—or rather, all the difference.

The present inquiry, then, is not undertaken for the sake of contemplation, as the others are (for we are investigating not in order to know what excellence is, but in order to become good, since otherwise there would be no benefit in it). So we must examine matters concerning actions, and how they should be done; for actions are what determine the quality of our states, as we have said. Now, that we should act in accordance with correct reason is commonly agreed, and let it be assumed—we will

discuss it later, both what correct reason is and how it is related to the other excellences. [1104a] But let this be agreed beforehand: every account of matters of action has to be given in outline and not precisely, just as we said at the start that accounts must be demanded in keeping with their subject matter. And matters of action and of what is beneficial have nothing fixed about them, any more than matters of health do. And since the general account is like this, the account of particular cases is still less precise. For these do not fall under any craft or set of precepts; the agents themselves must always consider what suits the occasion, as happens in medicine and navigation too. But even though our present account is of this kind, we must try to be of help. First, then, we should observe that things of this sort are naturally destroyed by deficiency and excess (for we must use evident cases as evidence for what is not evident), as we see with strength and health. Exercise that is excessive or deficient destroys strength, and likewise food and drink, when too much or too little, destroy health, while the proportionate amount produces, increases and preserves it. So it is with moderation and courage and the other excellences. The person who runs from everything, fears everything and stands firm against nothing becomes a coward, while the one who fears nothing at all and walks into everything becomes rash. Likewise, the person who indulges in every pleasure and abstains from none becomes self-indulgent, while the one who shuns every pleasure, as boorish people do, becomes a sort of insensible person. Moderation and courage, then, are destroyed by excess and deficiency, and preserved by the mean. But not only do their origin, growth and destruction come from the same things and through the same things; their activities too will be exercised in the same things. This is so with other, more evident things as well, such as strength: it comes from taking a lot of food and enduring a lot of exertion, and it is the strong person who is most able to do these things. So too with the excellences: by abstaining from pleasures we become moderate, and once we have become moderate we are most able to abstain from them. [1104b] Likewise with cour-

age: by being habituated to despise what is frightening and to stand firm against it we become brave, and once we have become brave we will be most able to stand firm against what is frightening.

PLEASURE AND PAIN AS SIGNS OF CHARACTER

Aristotle argues that how a person feels about his actions reveals his character.

We must take the pleasure or pain that accompanies people's deeds as a sign of their states. The person who abstains from bodily pleasures and enjoys doing just that is moderate, while the one who finds it irksome is self-indulgent; and the one who stands firm against dangers and enjoys it, or at least is not pained by it, is brave, while the one who is pained is a coward. For excellence of character is concerned with pleasures and pains: it is because of pleasure that we do bad things, and because of pain that we hold back from fine ones. That is why we need to have been brought up in a certain way right from childhood, as Plato says, so as to enjoy and be pained by the things we should; for that is correct education. Again, if the excellences are concerned with actions and feelings, and every feeling and every action is accompanied by pleasure and pain, this too would make excellence concerned with pleasures and pains. Punishments, too, which are inflicted by means of these, point the same way: they are a kind of cure, and cures naturally work by means of opposites. Again, as we said just now, every state of soul has its nature in relation to, and concerned with, the things by which it naturally becomes worse or better. And it is through pleasures and pains that people become bad, by pursuing and avoiding them—either the ones they should not, or when they should not, or as they should not, or in any of the other ways that such distinctions are drawn by reason. That is why some people even define the excellences as states of impassivity and calm. But they do not do so well, because they speak without qualification, not adding "as one should" and "as

one should not" and "when", and the other qualifications. It is assumed, then, that excellence is the sort of state that does what is best in matters of pleasure and pain, and vice the opposite. It may also become clear to us from the following that they are concerned with the same things. There are three objects of choice and three of avoidance: the fine, the beneficial and the pleasant, and their three opposites, the shameful, the harmful and the painful. With respect to all of these the good person tends to get things right and the bad person to go wrong, but especially with respect to pleasure. For pleasure is shared with the animals, and it accompanies all objects of choice: 1105a the fine and the beneficial also appear pleasant. Again, it has grown up with all of us from infancy, which is why it is hard to rub off this feeling, ingrained as it is in our life. And we also measure our actions, some of us more and some less, by pleasure and pain. For this reason, then, the whole of our inquiry must be concerned with these; for it makes no small difference to our actions whether we feel pleasure and pain well or badly. Again, it is harder to fight pleasure than anger, as Heraclitus says, and both craft and excellence are always concerned with what is harder, since succeeding is better there. So for this reason too the whole concern, both of excellence and of political science, is with pleasures and pains: the person who uses them well will be good, and the one who uses them badly will be bad. Let it be taken as stated, then, that excellence is concerned with pleasures and pains; that the things from which it arises also increase it, and destroy it when they occur differently; and that it is active in the same things from which it arose.[2]

DOING JUST ACTS AND BEING JUST

Aristotle explains how doing just acts differs from acting as a just person does.

But someone might raise the difficulty of what we mean when we say that people must become just by doing just things and

moderate by doing moderate things. For if they do just and moderate things, they are already just and moderate, just as, if they do grammatical and musical things, they are already grammarians and musicians. Or is this not so even with the crafts? For it is possible to produce something grammatical by chance, or at someone else's prompting. So a person will be a grammarian only if he both produces something grammatical and does so grammatically—that is, in accordance with the grammatical knowledge in himself. Besides, the case of the crafts is not even similar to that of the excellences. The things produced by crafts have their goodness in themselves, so it is enough that they come out in a certain condition. But things done in accordance with the excellences are not done justly or moderately merely if they themselves are in a certain condition; the agent too must be in a certain condition when he does them: first, he must know what he is doing; second, he must decide on the actions, and decide on them for their own sake; and third, he must act from a firm and unchangeable state. [1105b] For having the other crafts these conditions do not count, except knowledge itself; but for having the excellences knowledge has little or no weight, while the others count not for a little but for everything—and they are just what results from often doing just and moderate things. Actions, then, are called just and moderate when they are such as the just or moderate person would do; but the just and moderate person is not the one who does these things, but the one who also does them in the way just and moderate people do. So it is rightly said that the just person comes to be from doing just things, and the moderate person from doing moderate things; and without doing them no one would have even a prospect of becoming good. But most people do not do them; instead they take refuge in argument, and think they are doing philosophy and that this is how they will become excellent. They behave rather like sick people who listen attentively to their doctors but do none of the things they are told. Just as

2 Heraclitus of Ephesus, philosopher of around 500 BC; his surviving saying is that it is hard to fight anger, which buys what it wants at the price of the soul.

those people will not be in good bodily condition if they are treated like that, neither will these be in good condition of soul if they do philosophy like that.

EXCELLENCE IS A STATE

Aristotle argues that excellence is a state, not a feeling or a capacity.

Next we must consider what excellence is. Since the things that arise in the soul are of three kinds—feelings, capacities and states—excellence would be one of these. By feelings I mean appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendly feeling, hatred, longing, emulation, pity—in general, whatever is accompanied by pleasure or pain. By capacities I mean what makes us said to be capable of these feelings, for instance, capable of getting angry or being pained or feeling pity. By states I mean what makes us well or badly disposed in relation to the feelings: in relation to getting angry, for example, if we are disposed to it violently or too slackly we are badly disposed, and if moderately, well; and likewise with the others. Neither the excellences nor the vices, then, are feelings. For we are not called excellent or bad on account of our feelings, but we are on account of our excellences and vices; and we are neither praised nor blamed for our feelings (the person who is afraid or angry is not praised, nor is the one who is simply angry blamed, but the one who is angry in a certain way), [1106a] whereas we are praised or blamed for our excellences and vices. Again, we get angry and afraid without deciding to, whereas the excellences are kinds of decision, or at least not without decision. Besides, with respect to our feelings we are said to be moved, but with respect to our excellences and vices we are said not to be moved but to be disposed in a certain way. For these reasons they are not capacities either: we are not called good or bad, nor praised or blamed, simply for being capable of feeling. Again, we have capacities by nature, but we do not become good or bad by nature; we spoke of this earlier. If, then, the excellences are neither feelings nor

capacities, it remains that they are states. So much for what excellence is in genus.

But we must not only say that it is a state; we must also say what kind of state. We should say, then, that every excellence both brings into good condition that of which it is the excellence and makes it perform its function well. The excellence of the eye, for example, makes both the eye and its function excellent, since it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well. Similarly the excellence of a horse makes the horse excellent, and good at running, at carrying its rider and at standing firm against the enemy. If this is so in every case, then human excellence too will be the state from which a person becomes good and from which he will perform his own function well. How this will come about we have already said, but it will also become clear in the following way, if we consider what sort of nature excellence has.

THE MEAN RELATIVE TO US

Aristotle defines excellence as a chosen state lying in a mean relative to us, set by reason.

In everything continuous and divisible one can take more, less, or equal, and these either in terms of the thing itself or relative to us; and the equal is a sort of mean between excess and deficiency. By the mean of the thing I mean what is equidistant from each of the extremes, which is one and the same for everyone; by the mean relative to us, what neither exceeds nor falls short—and this is not one thing, nor the same for everyone. For example, if ten is many and two is few, six is taken as the mean in terms of the thing, since it exceeds and is exceeded by an equal amount. This is the mean according to arithmetical proportion. The mean relative to us, though, is not to be taken this way. [1106b] If ten pounds of food is a lot for someone to eat and two pounds a little, the trainer will not prescribe six pounds; for perhaps this too is a lot for the person who is to take it, or a little—little for Milo, a lot for someone just beginning his training. The same goes for running and wrestling. In this way every expert

avoids excess and deficiency and seeks out the mean and chooses it—the mean not of the thing but relative to us.[3] If, then, every science does its work well in this way—by looking to the mean and bringing its products into line with it (which is why people usually say of well-made works that nothing can be taken away or added, on the assumption that excess and deficiency destroy what is good in them while the mean preserves it; and good craftsmen, as we say, keep their eyes on this as they work)—and if excellence, like nature, is more precise and better than any craft, then excellence would be the sort of thing that aims at the mean. I mean excellence of character; for it is concerned with feelings and actions, and in these there is excess, deficiency, and the mean. For instance, one can feel fear, confidence, appetite, anger, pity, and pleasure and pain generally, both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them when one should, about the things one should, toward the people one should, for the sake of what one should, and in the way one should, is the mean and what is best—and this is what belongs to excellence. Similarly with actions, too, there is excess, deficiency, and the mean. Excellence is concerned with feelings and actions, in which excess is an error and deficiency is blamed, while the mean is praised and gets it right—and both of these belong to excellence. Excellence, then, is a kind of mean, since it is, at any rate, the sort of thing that aims at the mean. Again, there are many ways to go wrong (for evil belongs to the unlimited, as the Pythagoreans pictured it, and good to the limited), but only one way to get it right. That is why the one is easy and the other hard: it is easy to miss the target, hard to hit it. For these reasons, too, excess and deficiency belong to vice, and the mean to excellence: "People are good in just one way, but bad in every way."[4]

Excellence, then, is a state that issues in decisions, lying in a mean relative to us, 1107a a mean determined by reason, in the

3 Milo of Croton was a famous wrestler of the sixth century BC, legendary for his strength and his appetite. The Greek unit here, the mina, weighed roughly a pound.

way the practically wise person would determine it. It is a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency; and again, it is a mean in that the vices fall short of or exceed what is right in feelings and actions, while excellence both finds and chooses the mean. Hence, in respect of its substance and the account that states what it is to be, excellence is a mean; but with regard to what is best and doing well, it is an extreme. But not every action or every feeling admits of a mean. Some have names that already imply badness—for instance malicious glee, shamelessness, and envy, and among actions adultery, theft, and murder. All these and others like them are so called because they themselves are bad, not their excesses or deficiencies. So one can never get it right with them, but always goes wrong; nor does doing them well or badly depend on committing adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right way—simply to do any of them at all is to go wrong. It would be just as absurd, then, to claim that there is a mean, an excess, and a deficiency in doing wrong, being cowardly, and being self-indulgent; for then there would be a mean of excess and deficiency, an excess of excess, and a deficiency of deficiency. Just as there is no excess or deficiency of moderation and courage, because the mean is in a way an extreme, so too with those there is no mean, excess, or deficiency: however they are done, they are wrong. For in general there is no mean of excess and deficiency, nor excess and deficiency of a mean.

THE MEAN IN EACH EXCELLENCE

Aristotle applies the mean to particular excellences such as courage, generosity and truthfulness.

We must not only state this in general terms but also apply it to particular cases. For in discussions about actions, general accounts are broader, but those dealing with particulars are truer, since actions concern particulars, and our accounts must agree with these. Let us take the particular cases, then, from our

4 The line is quoted from an unknown poet.

table. About fears and confidence, courage is the mean. [1107b] Of those who exceed, the one who exceeds in fearlessness has no name (many states have no name); the one who exceeds in confidence is rash; and the one who exceeds in fear and falls short in confidence is a coward. About pleasures and pains—not all of them, and less so about pains—the mean is moderation, the excess self-indulgence. People who fall short with regard to pleasures are hardly found; that is why such people haven't even got a name, but let us call them insensible.[5] About giving and taking money, the mean is generosity, the excess and deficiency wastefulness and stinginess. In these the excess and deficiency run in opposite directions: the wasteful person exceeds in giving away and falls short in taking, while the stingy person exceeds in taking and falls short in giving away. For now we are speaking in outline and summarily, and that is enough for present purposes; later these will be defined more precisely. About money there are other dispositions too: the mean is magnificence (for the magnificent person differs from the generous one: the former deals with large sums, the latter with small), the excess tastelessness and vulgarity, the deficiency shabbiness. These differ from the states concerned with generosity; how they differ will be discussed later. About honor and dishonor, the mean is greatness of soul, the excess what is called a kind of vanity, and the deficiency smallness of soul. And just as we said that generosity is related to magnificence, differing in that it concerns small sums, so there is a state related to greatness of soul, which concerns great honor, while this one concerns small honor. For one can desire honor as one should, or more than one should, or less; the person who exceeds in these desires is called ambitious, the one who falls short unambitious, while the one in the middle has no name. Their dispositions have no names either, except the ambitious person's, ambition. That is why the extremes lay claim to the middle ground; and we ourselves sometimes call the person in the middle ambitious

5 Aristotle apparently refers to a chart used in his lectures, listing each excellence with its excess and deficiency.

and sometimes unambitious, [1108a] and sometimes praise the ambitious person, sometimes the unambitious one. Why we do this will be explained in what follows; for now let us speak about the remaining states in the way we have laid down. With anger, too, there is an excess, a deficiency, and a mean. Since these have practically no names, let us call the person in the middle gentle and the mean gentleness. Of the extremes, let the one who exceeds be irascible and his vice irascibility, and the one who falls short something like unirascible and the deficiency unirascibility. There are also three other means, which have a certain likeness to one another but differ from one another. All are concerned with shared life in words and actions, but they differ in that one concerns truth in these, the others what is pleasant—and of this, one sort is found in amusement, the other in all the dealings of life. So we must talk about these too, so as to see better that in everything the mean is praiseworthy, while the extremes are neither praiseworthy nor right but blameworthy. Most of these, too, have no names, but we must try, as with the others, to make up names ourselves, for the sake of clarity and so that we can be easily followed. About truth, then, let the person in the middle be called truthful and the mean truthfulness; pretense that exaggerates is boastfulness and the person who has it a boaster, and pretense that understates is self-deprecation and the person who has it self-deprecating. About the pleasant in amusement, the person in the middle is witty and the disposition wit; the excess is buffoonery and the person who has it a buffoon, while the one who falls short is a sort of boor and the state boorishness. About the remaining kind of pleasantness, the kind found in life generally, the person who is pleasant as one should be is friendly and the mean friendliness; the one who exceeds is obsequious if he has no further aim, a flatterer if he aims at his own advantage; and the one who falls short and is unpleasant in everything is a quarrelsome, difficult sort. There are means also in experiences and concerning feelings. Shame is not an excellence, yet the person with a sense of shame is praised. For in these, too, one per-

son is said to be in the middle and another to exceed, like the bashful person who is ashamed of everything; while the one who falls short, or is not ashamed of anything at all, is shameless, and the one in the middle has a sense of shame. [1108b] Righteous indignation is a mean between envy and malicious glee, and these are concerned with pain and pleasure at what happens to one's neighbors. The righteously indignant person is pained at people who do well undeservedly; the envious person goes beyond him and is pained at everyone's doing well; and the person given to malicious glee falls so far short of being pained that he actually rejoices. But there will be an opportunity to discuss these elsewhere. As for justice, since it is not spoken of in just one sense, after this we will distinguish its two kinds and say how each is a mean; and similarly with the excellences of reason.

HOW THE EXTREMES ARE OPPOSED

Aristotle explains how the two vices oppose each other and the mean, and which is more opposed.

There are three dispositions, then: two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency, and one excellence, the mean; and all are in some way opposed to all. The extremes are contrary both to the mean and to each other, and the mean is contrary to the extremes. For just as the equal is greater relative to the less and less relative to the greater, so the middle states exceed relative to the deficiencies and fall short relative to the excesses, in both feelings and actions. The courageous person appears rash compared with the coward, and cowardly compared with the rash person; similarly the moderate person appears self-indulgent compared with the insensible person, and insensible compared with the self-indulgent one; and the generous person appears wasteful compared with the stingy person, and stingy compared with the wasteful one. That is why each extreme pushes the person in the middle toward the other: the coward calls the courageous person rash, and the rash person calls him a coward, and

correspondingly in the other cases. Since these are opposed to one another in this way, the extremes are more contrary to each other than to the mean; for they are further from each other than from the mean, just as the large is further from the small, and the small from the large, than both are from the equal. Again, some extremes show a certain likeness to the mean, as rashness does to courage and wastefulness to generosity, whereas the extremes are most unlike each other. And things furthest apart from each other are defined as contraries, so that things further apart are more contrary. To the mean [1109a] it is in some cases the deficiency that is more opposed, in others the excess. For instance, what is more opposed to courage is not rashness, which is an excess, but cowardice, which is a deficiency; and to moderation not insensibility, which is a lack, but self-indulgence, which is an excess. This happens for two reasons. One comes from the thing itself: because one extreme is closer and more similar to the mean, we set not it but its contrary against the mean. For example, since rashness seems more similar and closer to courage, and cowardice less similar, it is cowardice we set against courage; for things further from the mean seem more contrary to it. This, then, is one reason, coming from the thing itself. The other comes from ourselves: the things we are somehow more naturally inclined toward appear more contrary to the mean. For instance, we are naturally more inclined toward pleasures, which is why we are more easily carried off toward self-indulgence than toward orderliness. So we call those things more contrary toward which we more readily drift; and this is why self-indulgence, which is an excess, is more contrary to moderation.

HITTING THE MEAN

Aristotle notes that hitting the mean is hard and gives practical advice for approaching it.

That excellence of character is a mean, then, and in what sense; that it is a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of

deficiency; and that it is such because it aims at the mean in feelings and actions—all this has been sufficiently stated. That is also why it is hard work to be excellent. In each case it is hard work to find the middle—finding the center of a circle, for instance, is not for everyone but for someone who knows how. In the same way, getting angry is something anyone can do, and easy, and so is giving money away or spending it; but to do it to the right person, in the right amount, at the right time, for the right reason, and in the right way is no longer something anyone can do, nor is it easy. That is why doing it well is rare, praiseworthy, and fine. So someone aiming at the mean must first steer away from the more contrary extreme, as Calypso too advises: "Keep the ship clear of that spray and surf." For of the extremes one is more of an error, the other less; since, then, it is extremely hard to hit the mean, we must take the second-best course, as they say, and choose the least of the evils—and this will best be done in the way we describe. 1109b We must also consider what we ourselves are easily carried off toward, since different people are naturally inclined toward different things; and this will become clear from the pleasure and pain that arise in us. We must drag ourselves off in the contrary direction; for by pulling far away from error we will arrive at the middle, as people do when they straighten warped timber.[6] In everything we must be most on guard against what is pleasant and against pleasure, since we are not impartial judges of it. So we should feel toward pleasure what the elders of the people felt toward Helen, and repeat their words on every occasion; for if we send pleasure away like this, we will go wrong less. To sum up, then, by doing these things we will be best able to hit the mean. But this is perhaps difficult, especially in particular cases: it is not easy to determine how, with whom, over what, and for how long one should be angry. We ourselves sometimes praise those who fall short and call them gentle, and sometimes call those who

6 The line is from Homer's *Odyssey* (12.219), spoken by Odysseus but echoing Circe's advice, not Calypso's. The "second sailing" was proverbial: taking to the oars when the wind fails.

are harsh manly. Yet someone who deviates a little from what is right, whether toward more or toward less, is not blamed—only someone who deviates more, since he doesn't escape notice.[7] But up to what point and how far someone is blameworthy is not easy to define in an account—nor is anything else perceptible. Such matters lie in particulars, and the judgment rests with perception. This much, then, is clear: the middle state is praiseworthy in everything, but we must sometimes lean toward the excess and sometimes toward the deficiency; for this is the easiest way to hit the mean and what is right.

7 In the *Iliad* (3.156–60) the Trojan elders, seeing Helen on the wall, grant her beauty but wish her sent away before she brings ruin on them.

Book III

Voluntary action; courage and moderation
Aristotle analyzes voluntary action, decision and deliberation, then examines courage and moderation.

Since excellence is concerned with feelings and actions, and since voluntary ones meet with praise and blame, while involuntary ones meet with forgiveness and sometimes even pity, it is presumably necessary for those inquiring into excellence to distinguish the voluntary and the involuntary; it is also useful for lawgivers in assigning honors and punishments. Things that happen by force or through ignorance seem to be involuntary. 1110a Something is forced when its origin is outside, being the kind of origin to which the person acting, or rather being acted on, contributes nothing—as when a wind carries him off somewhere, or people who have him in their power. But things done from fear of greater evils, or for the sake of something fine, are disputed: are they involuntary or voluntary? Suppose, for instance, that a tyrant who had someone's parents and children in his power ordered him to do something shameful, and that if he did it they would be saved, but if not they would be put to death. Something similar happens with throwing cargo overboard in storms: no one throws things away voluntarily, considered simply, but to save himself and the others anyone with sense does. Such actions, then, are mixed, but they are more like voluntary ones; for they are choiceworthy at the time they are done, and the end of an action depends on the occasion. So the terms "voluntary" and "involuntary" must be applied with reference to the time when someone acts. And he acts voluntarily; for

in such actions the origin of moving the limbs that serve as instruments is in him, and when the origin is in him, it is up to him to do it or not. Such things, then, are voluntary, though considered simply they are perhaps involuntary, since no one would choose any such thing for its own sake. For such actions people are sometimes even praised, when they endure something shameful or painful in return for great and fine things; if it's the other way round, they are blamed, since to endure the most shameful things for nothing fine, or for something trivial, is the mark of a bad person. In some cases there is no praise, but there is forgiveness, when someone does what he shouldn't because of pressures that overstrain human nature and that no one could endure. But some things, perhaps, one cannot be compelled to do; one should rather die after suffering the most terrible things. The things that "compelled" Euripides' Alcmaeon to kill his mother, for instance, seem ridiculous. It is sometimes hard to judge what should be chosen at what price, and what should be endured in return for what, and harder still to abide by one's judgment. For as a rule what is expected is painful, and what people are compelled to do is shameful; that is why praise and blame are given according to whether people have been compelled or not. 1110b What sort of things, then, should be called forced? Is it simply those whose cause lies in external things, when the agent contributes nothing? But things that are in themselves involuntary, yet choiceworthy now and in return for these particular things, and whose origin is in the agent, are involuntary in themselves, but now and in return for these things voluntary.[1] They are more like voluntary actions, though; for actions are in particulars, and these are voluntary. What should be chosen at what price is not easy to state, since there are many differences among particular cases. If someone were to say that pleasant and fine things are forced (since they compel us from outside), everything would be forced for him; for everyone does everything for the sake of these. And those who

1 In a lost play of Euripides, Alcmaeon killed his mother Eriphyle, apparently under pressure of his father's curse.

act by force and unwillingly act with pain, while those who act for the sake of what is pleasant or fine act with pleasure. It is ridiculous to blame external things rather than oneself for being easily caught by such things, and to hold oneself responsible for fine actions but pleasant things responsible for shameful ones. The forced, then, seems to be that whose origin is outside, the person forced contributing nothing.

ACTING THROUGH IGNORANCE

Aristotle examines acting through ignorance and argues that acts done from anger or appetite are voluntary.

Whatever is done through ignorance is in every case not voluntary; but it is involuntary only when it brings pain and regret. For someone who has done something through ignorance, and feels no distress at the action, has not acted voluntarily, since he didn't know what he was doing, but not involuntarily either, since he feels no pain. Of those who act through ignorance, then, the one who regrets it seems to be an involuntary agent, while the one who doesn't regret it—since he is different—let us call a non-voluntary agent; for since he differs, it is better that he have a name of his own. Acting through ignorance also seems different from acting in ignorance. Someone who is drunk or angry does not seem to act through ignorance but because of one of the conditions just mentioned, though not knowingly but in ignorance. Every wicked person is ignorant of what he should do and what he should refrain from, and it is through this sort of error that people become unjust and, in general, bad. But the term "involuntary" is not meant to apply when someone is ignorant of what is beneficial. For ignorance in decision is a cause not of involuntariness but of wickedness; nor is ignorance of the universal (people are blamed for that, at any rate), but ignorance of the particulars, the circumstances and objects of the action. 1111a It is in these that pity and forgiveness come in, since someone ignorant of one of these acts involuntarily. Perhaps, then, it is not a bad idea to distinguish them—what they

are and how many: who is acting, what he is doing, about what or in what he is acting, and sometimes also with what (with what instrument, for instance), for the sake of what (safety, for instance), and how (gently or violently, for instance). No one who isn't mad could be ignorant of all of these, and obviously not of who is acting either—how could he be ignorant of himself? But someone might be ignorant of what he is doing, as when people say something "slipped out" while they were speaking, or that they didn't know it was secret, as Aeschylus said about the mysteries; or that they meant only to demonstrate it and it went off, like the man with the catapult. Someone might also think his son was an enemy, as Merope did; or that a pointed spear had a guard on its tip, or that a stone was pumice; or he might kill someone with a drink given to save him; or, wanting just to touch someone, as sparrers do, he might strike him. Since ignorance can concern all these things, the circumstances of the action, someone who is ignorant of any of them seems to have acted involuntarily, especially if ignorant of the most important ones; and the most important seem to be the circumstances of the action and its purpose.[2] But when something is called involuntary on the basis of this kind of ignorance, the action must, in addition, be painful and bring regret.

Since what is involuntary is what is done by force or through ignorance, the voluntary would seem to be that whose origin is in the agent himself, when he knows the particular circumstances of the action. For perhaps it is not right to say that things done from anger or appetite are involuntary. First, none of the other animals would then act voluntarily, and neither would children. Second, do we do nothing voluntarily that we do from appetite or anger? Or do we do the fine things voluntarily and the shameful ones involuntarily? Isn't that ridiculous, when the cause is one and the same? And it is presumably odd to call involuntary the things we ought to desire; and we ought

2 Aeschylus was accused of revealing the secret rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries in his plays. In Euripides' lost *Cresphontes*, Merope nearly killed her own son, mistaking him for his murderer.

to be angry at some things and to have an appetite for some things, such as health and learning. Also, involuntary things seem to be painful, while things done from appetite are pleasant. Further, what difference is there, as regards being involuntary, between errors committed through calculation and those committed through anger? Both are to be avoided, 1111b and non-rational feelings seem to be no less human, so that a person's actions that come from anger and appetite are human too. It is odd, then, to class these as involuntary.

DECISION

Aristotle distinguishes decision from appetite, anger, wish and opinion.

Now that the voluntary and the involuntary have been distinguished, the next thing is to discuss decision. For it seems to be most closely bound up with excellence and to be a better way than actions of judging people's characters. Decision, then, appears to be something voluntary, but not the same thing; the voluntary is wider. Children and the other animals share in the voluntary, but not in decision; and things done on the spur of the moment we call voluntary, but not done by decision. Those who say it is appetite, or anger, or wish, or some kind of opinion do not seem to be right. For decision is not shared by non-rational creatures, but appetite and anger are. And the uncontrolled person acts from appetite, but not from decision, whereas the self-controlled person, on the contrary, acts from decision, but not from appetite. And appetite is opposed to decision, but appetite is not opposed to appetite. Appetite is concerned with what is pleasant and painful, but decision is concerned with neither the painful nor the pleasant. Anger is even less like it; for things done from anger seem least of all to be done by decision. Nor, again, is it wish, though it appears closely akin. For there is no decision about impossible things, and if someone said he decided on them, he would seem a fool; but there is wish even for impossible things, such as immortality.

And wish concerns also things that could never be brought about by oneself, such as a certain actor or athlete winning; no one decides on such things, only on things he thinks could come about through himself. Again, wish is more for the end, decision for what contributes to the end. For example, we wish to be healthy, but we decide on the things through which we will become healthy; and we wish to be happy and say so, but it doesn't fit to say we decide to be happy. For in general decision seems to be about things that are up to us. Nor would it be opinion. For opinion seems to be about everything, no less about eternal and impossible things than about things up to us; and it is divided by falsity and truth, not by bad and good, whereas decision is divided more by these. [1112a] Perhaps no one even says that it is the same as opinion in general. But it is not the same as some particular opinion either; for it is by deciding on good or bad things that we are people of a certain kind, not by holding opinions. And we decide to take or avoid something, or something of that sort, whereas we have opinions about what a thing is, or whom it benefits, or how; we hardly have an opinion to take or avoid something. And decision is praised for being of the right object rather than for being correct, while opinion is praised for being true. And we decide on things we know best to be good, but have opinions about things we don't really know. Nor does it seem that the same people make the best decisions and have the best opinions; some have better opinions but through vice choose what they shouldn't. Whether opinion precedes decision or accompanies it makes no difference; that is not what we are investigating, but whether decision is the same as some kind of opinion. What, then, is it, or what sort of thing, since it is none of those mentioned? It appears to be something voluntary, but not everything voluntary is decided on. Is it, then, what has been deliberated on beforehand? For decision involves reason and thought. Even the name seems to hint at this, as meaning something chosen before other things.[3]

3 The Greek word for decision, *prohairesis*, literally means "choosing before" or "choosing in preference."

DELIBERATION AND WISH

Aristotle explains that we deliberate about means, not ends, and that we wish for the good.

Do people deliberate about everything—is everything a matter for deliberation—or are there some things about which there is no deliberation? We should presumably call a matter for deliberation not what a fool or a madman would deliberate about, but what a person with sense would. Now no one deliberates about eternal things, such as the universe, or the incommensurability of the diagonal and the side of a square. Nor about things in motion that always happen in the same way, whether of necessity or by nature or through some other cause, such as the solstices and the risings of the stars. Nor about things that happen now one way and now another, such as droughts and rains. Nor about things that happen by chance, such as finding treasure. Nor even about all human affairs: no Spartan, for instance, deliberates about how the Scythians might best be governed. For none of these things could come about through us. We deliberate about things that are up to us and can be done—and these are in fact what is left. For the causes of things are thought to be nature, necessity and chance, and in addition intellect and everything that comes about through human agency. And each group of human beings deliberates about the things that can be done through their own efforts. [1112b] About the exact and self-sufficient sciences there is no deliberation—about letters, for instance, since we are in no doubt how a word should be spelled. Rather, we deliberate about the things that come about through us but not always in the same way: for instance, about matters of medicine and of making money; and more about navigation than about athletic training, to the extent that it has been worked out less precisely; and likewise about the rest. And we deliberate more about crafts than about sciences, since we are more in doubt about them. Deliberation concerns what holds for the most part, where it is unclear how things will turn

out, and where the answer is not determinate. And on important matters we call in others to deliberate with us, distrusting ourselves as not up to deciding on our own. We deliberate not about ends but about what leads to the ends. A doctor does not deliberate whether he will cure, nor an orator whether he will persuade, nor a statesman whether he will bring about good order, nor does anyone else deliberate about the end. Instead, they set down the end and consider how and by what means it will come about. If it appears that it can come about through several means, they consider by which it will come about most easily and best; if it is achieved by one means only, they consider how it will come about through this one, and through what that one will come about, until they arrive at the first cause, which is the last thing in the order of discovery. For the person deliberating seems to search and analyze in the way described, as though analyzing a geometrical diagram. (Not all searching appears to be deliberation—mathematical inquiries, for instance, are not—but all deliberation is searching.) And what comes last in the analysis seems to come first in the coming-to-be. If people run into something impossible, they give up—if money is needed, for instance, and it cannot be obtained; but if it appears possible, they set about doing it. By "possible" I mean what could come about through us; for what comes about through our friends in a sense comes about through us, since the starting point is in us. Sometimes what we are searching for is the tools, sometimes the use of them; and similarly in the other cases, sometimes it is the means, sometimes how or through whom. It seems, then, as has been said, that a human being is a starting point of actions, and deliberation is about the things that can be done by oneself, while actions are for the sake of other things. So the end would not be an object of deliberation, but what leads to the ends. Nor are particulars objects of deliberation— 1113a whether this is bread, for instance, or whether it has been baked as it should be—since these are matters for perception. And if one is always going to deliberate, one will go on to infinity. The object of deliberation and the object of

decision are the same, except that the object of decision has already been determined: what has been judged as a result of deliberation is the object of decision. For each of us stops searching for how he will act once he has traced the starting point back to himself, and to the leading part of himself, since that is what decides. This is clear also from the ancient constitutions that Homer depicted: the kings announced to the people what they had decided. Since the object of decision is something up to us that we desire after deliberating, decision too would be a deliberative desire for things up to us. For once we have come to a judgment as a result of deliberating, we desire in accordance with our deliberation. Let this, then, serve as an outline account of decision: what sort of things it is about, and that it concerns what leads to the ends.

That wish is for the end has already been said. But some think it is for the good, others for the apparent good. Those who say that what is wished for is the good are committed to saying that what someone who chooses incorrectly wishes for is not an object of wish at all—for if it were an object of wish, it would also be good, whereas in fact, as it happened, it was bad. Those who say, on the other hand, that the apparent good is what is wished for are committed to saying that nothing is by nature an object of wish, but only what seems good to each person; and different things appear good to different people, perhaps even opposite things. If these consequences are unsatisfactory, should we say that, without qualification and in truth, what is wished for is the good, but for each person it is what appears good to him? For the excellent person, then, it will be what is truly good; for the bad person, whatever it happens to be. It is just as with bodies: for those in good condition, what is healthy is what truly is so, while for those in poor health it is other things; and the same holds for what is bitter, sweet, hot, heavy, and so on. For the excellent person judges each case correctly, and in each case the truth appears to him. Each state of character has its own fine and pleasant things, and perhaps what most distinguishes the excellent person is that he sees the truth in

each case, being as it were the standard and measure of them. In most people, deception seems to come about because of pleasure: it appears good when it is not. 1113b So they choose the pleasant as good and avoid pain as bad.

EXCELLENCE AND VICE ARE UP TO US

Aristotle argues that excellence and vice are voluntary, since we are responsible for our states.

Since, then, the end is something wished for, and the things that lead to the end are objects of deliberation and decision, the actions concerned with these will be in accordance with decision and voluntary. And the activities of the excellences are concerned with these. So excellence, too, is up to us, and likewise vice. For where it is up to us to act, it is also up to us not to act, and where it is up to us to say no, it is also up to us to say yes. So if acting, when it is fine, is up to us, not acting, when it is shameful, will also be up to us; and if not acting, when it is fine, is up to us, then acting, when it is shameful, is also up to us. And if it is up to us to do fine and shameful things, and likewise not to do them, and this, as we saw, is what being good or bad consists in, then it is up to us to be decent or base. The saying that "no one is willingly wicked or unwillingly blessed" seems to be partly false and partly true. For no one is blessed unwillingly, but wickedness is voluntary. Otherwise we must dispute what has just been said, and deny that a human being is a starting point and begetter of his actions as he is of his children. But if these things appear to be so, and we cannot trace our actions back to any starting points other than those in us, then the things whose starting points are in us are themselves up to us and voluntary. This seems to be borne out both by individuals in private life and by lawgivers themselves. They punish and take penalties from those who do wicked things—unless they acted under force or through ignorance for which they were not themselves responsible—and they honor those who do fine things, intending to encourage the latter and deter the former. Yet no

one encourages us to do things that are neither up to us nor voluntary, since there is no point in being persuaded not to get hot, or feel pain, or be hungry, or anything else of that sort; we will feel these things all the same. In fact they punish people for the ignorance itself, if the person seems responsible for it: penalties are doubled for those who are drunk, for instance, since the starting point is in the person himself, who had it in his power not to get drunk, and that was the cause of his ignorance. They also punish those who are ignorant of something in the laws that they ought to know and that is not difficult, [1114a] and likewise in other cases where people seem to be ignorant through carelessness, on the ground that it was up to them not to be ignorant, since they had it in their power to take care. But perhaps someone is the sort of person not to take care. Yet people are themselves responsible for having become that sort, by living slackly; and for being unjust or self-indulgent, some by doing harm, others by spending their time drinking and the like. For activities of each kind make people of a corresponding kind. This is clear from those who train for any contest or action: they spend their time constantly engaged in the activity. Not to know that states come about from being active in particular ways is the mark of someone utterly obtuse. Moreover, it is unreasonable to suppose that someone who does unjust things does not wish to be unjust, or that someone who acts self-indulgently does not wish to be self-indulgent. If someone, not in ignorance, does the things that will make him unjust, he will be unjust voluntarily. It does not follow, though, that if he wishes, he will stop being unjust and be just—any more than a sick person will become healthy that way. Yet he may well be sick voluntarily, by living without self-control and disobeying his doctors. At that point it was open to him not to be sick; but once he has let himself go, it no longer is—just as, once you have let go of a stone, you can no longer get it back. Still, throwing it was up to you, since the starting point was in you. In the same way, it was open to the unjust and the self-indulgent person at the outset not to become such people, which is why they are so voluntarily;

but once they have become so, it is no longer possible for them not to be. And not only are the vices of the soul voluntary; in some people those of the body are too, and we censure them for these. No one censures those who are ugly by nature, but we do censure those who are so through lack of exercise and neglect. The same goes for weakness and disability: no one would reproach someone blind by nature, or from disease or a blow—rather, they would pity him—but everyone would censure someone blind from heavy drinking or some other self-indulgence. So among the vices of the body, those that are up to us are censured, and those that are not up to us are not. If so, then in other cases too, the vices that are censured would be up to us. Suppose someone says that everyone aims at the apparent good, but that we have no control over how things appear to us; 1114b rather, the end appears to each person in a way that corresponds to the sort of person he is. Then, if each person is in some way responsible for his own state, he will also be in some way responsible for how things appear to him. If not, no one is responsible for his own wrongdoing; instead he does these things through ignorance of the end, thinking that through them he will get what is best for himself. And on this view, one's aiming at the end is not self-chosen: one has to be born with something like sight, by which to judge well and choose what is truly good, and a person is well endowed by nature if he is well endowed in this respect. For it is the greatest and finest thing, something one cannot get or learn from another, but will have just as one was born with it; and to be well and finely endowed with it by nature would be complete and true natural endowment. If this is true, how will excellence be any more voluntary than vice? For to both alike, the good person and the bad, the end appears and is set by nature or in whatever way, and they act by referring everything else to it, in whatever way they act. So whether the end, whatever it is, does not appear to each person by nature but is also partly due to him, or the end is natural but excellence is voluntary because the excellent person does the rest voluntarily, in either case vice will be no less voluntary.

For the bad person likewise has what is due to himself in his actions, even if not in the end. If, then, as is said, the excellences are voluntary—for we are ourselves in some way jointly responsible for our states, and it is by being people of a certain kind that we set up an end of a certain kind—the vices too will be voluntary, since the same holds for them.

We have now discussed the excellences in general: we have given an outline of their genus—that they are means and that they are states—and said that they come about from certain actions and in themselves tend to produce those same actions; that they are up to us and voluntary; and that they act in whatever way correct reason prescribes. But actions and states are not voluntary in the same way. We are in control of our actions from the beginning to the end, since we know the particulars; but of our states we control only the beginning, 1115a and the gradual addition in each particular case is not noticeable, as with illnesses. Still, because it was up to us to use our capacities in this way or not, the states are voluntary.

COURAGE

Aristotle defines courage as facing death in battle for the sake of what is fine.

Let us take up the excellences again one by one and say what they are, what sort of things they are concerned with, and how. At the same time it will become clear how many there are. First, courage.

That courage is a mean concerning fear and confidence has already become evident. Clearly, the things we fear are frightening things, and these are, broadly speaking, bad things; that is why people define fear as expectation of something bad. We fear all bad things—disgrace, poverty, disease, friendlessness, death—but the courageous person does not seem to be concerned with all of them. Some things one actually should fear, and it is fine to fear them and shameful not to—disgrace, for instance. Someone who fears it is decent and has a sense of shame;

someone who does not is shameless. Some people call such a person courageous, by a metaphor, since he has something in common with the courageous person: the courageous person too is a sort of fearless person. Poverty, perhaps, one should not fear, nor disease, nor in general anything that does not come from vice or is not due to oneself. But someone who is fearless about these things is not courageous either. We do call him that too, by a resemblance; for some people who are cowardly in the dangers of war are generous and face the loss of money with confidence. Nor is someone a coward if he fears outrage against his children or wife, or envy, or anything of that sort; nor courageous if he is confident when about to be flogged. With what sort of frightening things, then, is the courageous person concerned? Surely with the greatest? For no one endures terrible things better than he does. And death is the most frightening of all, since it is an end, and nothing further seems to be either good or bad for the dead. But the courageous person would not seem to be concerned even with death in every circumstance—at sea, for instance, or in illness. In what circumstances, then? Surely in the finest? And such are deaths in war, since they occur in the greatest and finest danger. The honors given in cities and at the courts of monarchs agree with this. In the strict sense, then, the courageous person would be the one who is fearless in the face of a fine death and of whatever situations bring death suddenly upon us; and such situations belong above all to war. Still, the courageous person is fearless at sea and in illness too, [1115b] though not in the way that sailors are. For the courageous have given up hope of safety and are distressed at a death of that kind, whereas the sailors are hopeful because of their experience. Besides, people show courage in situations where there is room for prowess, or where dying is fine; and in deaths of these kinds neither is the case.

What is frightening is not the same for everyone, but we do say that some things are beyond what a human being can bear. These are frightening to everyone, at least to anyone with sense. The frightening things within human scale differ in size and in

degree; and likewise the things that inspire confidence. The courageous person is undaunted, as far as a human being can be. So he will fear such things too, but he will endure them as he should and as reason directs, for the sake of the fine, since this is the end of excellence. One can fear these things more or less than one should, and also fear things that are not frightening as if they were. Errors arise when one fears what one should not, or in the way one should not, or when one should not, or something of the sort; and similarly with the things that inspire confidence. The one who endures and fears the right things, for the right reason, in the right way and at the right time, and is confident in the same way, is courageous; for the courageous person feels and acts as the situation merits and as reason directs. The end of every activity is what accords with the state. And to the courageous person courage is something fine. So the end too is of that kind, since each thing is defined by its end. It is for the sake of the fine, then, that the courageous person endures and does what courage requires. Of those who go to excess, the one who exceeds in fearlessness has no name (we said earlier that many states are nameless); but he would be a madman or insensible to pain if he feared nothing, neither earthquake nor waves, as they say of the Celts. The one who exceeds in confidence about frightening things is rash. The rash person also seems to be a boaster, one who pretends to courage. At any rate, he wants to appear to be disposed toward frightening things the way the courageous person actually is; so where he can, he imitates him. That is why most of them are rash cowards: they put on a bold front in these situations but do not endure what is frightening. The one who exceeds in fearing is a coward, since he fears what he should not, and in the way he should not, and all the other failings of this kind attach to him. 1116a He is also deficient in confidence, but he is more conspicuous for exceeding in pain. The coward, then, is a sort of despairing person, since he fears everything. The courageous person is the opposite, since confidence belongs to someone hopeful. The coward, the rash person and the courageous person, then, are concerned

with the same things, but they are differently disposed toward them. The first two exceed and fall short, while the third holds the middle position, as he should. Rash people are headlong: they are eager before the dangers arrive but pull back once in them, whereas the courageous are keen in action but calm beforehand.

As has been said, then, courage is a mean concerning things that inspire confidence and things that are frightening, in the circumstances described; and it chooses and endures things because that is fine, or because not doing so is shameful. But dying to escape poverty, or love, or something painful is not the mark of a courageous person but rather of a coward. For it is softness to flee from what is burdensome, and such a person endures death not because it is fine but to escape something bad.

THINGS THAT RESEMBLE COURAGE

Aristotle describes five states that resemble courage, such as civic courage and hopeful confidence.

Courage, then, is something of this sort. But other kinds are also spoken of, in five ways. First, civic courage, since it most resembles the real thing. Citizens seem to endure dangers because of the penalties and reproaches imposed by the laws, and because of the honors. That is why the most courageous people seem to be found where cowards are dishonored and the courageous are honored. Homer, too, portrays people of this kind, such as Diomedes and Hector: "Polydamas will be the first to heap reproach on me"; and Diomedes: "For Hector will one day say, speaking among the Trojans, 'The son of Tydeus, fleeing from me...'" This kind is most like the one described earlier, because it comes about through excellence: through a sense of shame, and desire for something fine (namely honor), and avoidance of reproach, which is shameful.[4] One might also put

4 The quotations are from Homer's *Iliad*: Hector at 22.100 and Diomedes at 8.148–149.

in the same class those who are compelled by their commanders. But they are worse, inasmuch as they act not from a sense of shame but from fear, avoiding not what is shameful but what is painful. For their masters compel them, as Hector does: "Whomever I see cowering apart from the battle, he will not escape the dogs." Those who post soldiers in the line and beat them if they retreat do the same, 1116b as do those who draw them up with trenches and the like behind them: they are all using compulsion. But one should be courageous not because of compulsion but because it is fine. Experience of particular situations is also thought to be courage; that is why Socrates thought that courage was knowledge.[5] Different people have this kind of experience in different situations, and in matters of war it is professional soldiers who have it. For war seems to be full of false alarms, which these men have seen through better than anyone; so they appear courageous because the others do not know what these things are. Then too, their experience makes them best able to inflict harm without suffering it, since they can use their weapons and have the sort of equipment that is best for both attack and defense. So they fight like armed men against unarmed, or trained athletes against amateurs; for in contests of this sort too, it is not the most courageous who are the best fighters, but those who are strongest and in the best physical condition. But professional soldiers turn coward when the danger becomes too great and they are outmatched in numbers and equipment. They are the first to run, while the citizen troops stand their ground and die—which is just what happened at the Hermaeum.[6] For to the citizens, flight is shameful, and death is more choiceworthy than safety bought that way; whereas the professionals ran the risk from the start on the assumption that they were stronger, and once they realize otherwise they run, fearing death more than disgrace. The cour-

5 In our text of the *Iliad* (2.391–393) these threatening words are spoken by Agamemnon, not Hector.

6 The Hermaeum was a temple of Hermes at Coronea in Boeotia, where, in a battle of the mid-fourth century BC, citizen troops held their ground and died after their mercenaries fled.

ageous person is not like that. People also count spirit as courage. Those who act from spirit, like wild animals rushing at those who have wounded them, also seem courageous, because the courageous are spirited too; for spirit is the thing most eager to rush into danger. Hence Homer's "he put strength into his spirit," "he roused his might and spirit," "bitter might rose up in his nostrils," and "his blood boiled." All expressions of this kind seem to signify the arousal and surge of spirit. The courageous, then, act because of the fine, and spirit works alongside them; but wild animals act because of pain—because they have been struck, or because they are afraid; for if they are in a forest or a marsh, they do not come at you. It is not courage, then, to rush into danger driven by pain and spirit, foreseeing none of the dangers; for in that case even donkeys would be courageous when hungry, since they do not leave off grazing even when beaten. [1117a] Adulterers, too, do many daring things because of their appetite. So things driven into danger by pain or spirit are not courageous. Still, the courage that comes from spirit seems to be the most natural kind, and to be courage once decision and the proper aim are added to it. Human beings, too, feel pain when they are angry and pleasure when they take revenge. Those who fight for these reasons are good fighters, but not courageous, since they fight not because of the fine, nor as reason directs, but because of feeling; though they have something close to courage. Nor are the hopeful courageous. Because they have often won, and against many opponents, they are confident in dangers. They resemble the courageous, since both are confident; but the courageous are confident for the reasons given earlier, whereas the hopeful are confident because they think they are the strongest and would suffer nothing. People who get drunk behave this way too, since they become hopeful. But when things do not turn out that way for them, they run; whereas, as we saw, it is the mark of the courageous person to endure things that are and appear frightening to a human being, because doing so is fine and not doing so is shameful. That is why it seems a mark of greater courage to be fearless and undis-

turbed in sudden alarms than in those that are foreseen; for this comes more from one's state, because it comes less from preparation. What is foreseen one might choose on the basis of calculation and reasoning, but what is sudden one chooses in accordance with one's state. Those who act in ignorance also appear courageous, and they are not far from the hopeful; but they are worse, inasmuch as they have no self-esteem, whereas the hopeful do. That is why the hopeful hold out for some time, whereas those who have been deceived run away if they learn, or suspect, that things are otherwise—which is what happened to the Argives when they fell in with the Spartans, thinking they were Sicyonians. We have now said what the courageous are like, and what those who seem courageous are like.[7]

Although courage is concerned with confidence and fear, it is not concerned with both equally, but more with frightening things. For someone who is undisturbed in these and is disposed toward them as he should be is more truly courageous than someone who is so in situations that inspire confidence. It is, then, by enduring painful things, as has been said, that people are called courageous. That is why courage is painful, and it is justly praised, since it is harder to endure painful things than to abstain from pleasant ones. 1117b Still, the end that courage aims at would seem to be pleasant, though obscured by the circumstances surrounding it, as happens in athletic contests too. For boxers, the end for the sake of which they fight—the wreath and the honors—is pleasant, but being hit is agonizing, since they are flesh and blood, and painful, as is all the toil. And because these things are many, and the end for the sake of which they fight is small, it appears to have nothing pleasant in it. If courage too is like this, death and wounds will be painful to the courageous person, and he will suffer them unwillingly; but he will endure them because it is fine to do so, or because not doing so is shameful. And the more fully he has excellence in its entirety, and the happier he is, the more pain he will feel at death. For to

7 An episode at Corinth in 392 BC, when the Argives mistook Spartan troops carrying captured Sicyonian shields for Sicyonians and were routed.

such a person life is most worth living, and he is knowingly being deprived of the greatest goods; and this is painful. But he is no less courageous for that—perhaps even more so, because he chooses what is fine in war in preference to those goods. So it is not true of all the excellences that exercising them is pleasant, except insofar as one attains the end. Perhaps, though, nothing prevents the best professional soldiers from being not people of this kind but those who are less courageous and have no other good; for these are ready to face dangers, and they trade their lives for small gains. So much, then, for courage; from what has been said it is not hard to grasp what it is, at least in outline.

MODERATION

Aristotle limits moderation to bodily pleasures of touch and taste and contrasts it with self-indulgence.

After courage, let us discuss moderation, since these seem to be the excellences of the non-rational parts. We have said that moderation is a mean concerning pleasures; it is concerned with pains to a lesser degree, and not in the same way. Self-indulgence too shows itself in the same area. Let us now determine what sort of pleasures it is concerned with. Let us distinguish pleasures of the soul from pleasures of the body—love of honor, for instance, and love of learning. Each of these people delights in what he loves without his body being affected at all; rather, it is his mind that is affected. Those concerned with pleasures of this kind are called neither moderate nor self-indulgent. Nor are those concerned with any of the other pleasures that are not bodily. People who love stories, who like to tell tales, and who spend their days on whatever comes along we call idle chatterers, not self-indulgent; 1118a nor do we call people self-indulgent who are pained over money or friends. Moderation, then, would be concerned with bodily pleasures, though not with all of these either. People who delight in the objects of sight, such as colors, shapes and painting, are called neither moderate nor self-indulgent; and yet it would seem possible to delight in these too as

one should, and to excess or deficiency. The same goes for the objects of hearing: no one calls those who delight excessively in music or acting self-indulgent, nor those who do so as they should moderate. Nor do we call people so for the pleasures of smell, except incidentally. We do not call people self-indulgent who delight in the smell of apples or roses or incense, but rather those who delight in the smell of perfumes or rich dishes; for self-indulgent people delight in these because they remind them of the objects of their appetites. One can also see other people, when they are hungry, delighting in the smell of food; but to delight in such things is the mark of a self-indulgent person, since these are the objects of his appetites. Nor do the other animals take pleasure through these senses, except incidentally. Dogs do not delight in the scent of hares, but in eating them; the scent merely made them aware of the hares. Nor does the lion delight in the lowing of the ox, but in devouring it; he perceived through the lowing that the ox was near, and so he appears to delight in the sound. Similarly, it is not the sight or discovery of a deer or a wild goat that pleases him, but the prospect of a meal. Moderation and self-indulgence are concerned with the kind of pleasures that the other animals share in too, which is why they appear slavish and brutish. These are touch and taste. But they seem to make little or no use even of taste. For taste has to do with discriminating flavors, which is what people do when they test wines or season dishes; and people don't much enjoy doing that—or at least the self-indulgent don't. What they enjoy is the gratification, which comes about entirely through touch, in food and drink and in what are called the pleasures of sex. That is why a certain glutton prayed that his throat might become longer than a crane's, since it was the touching that gave him pleasure. [1118b] So the sense that self-indulgence is concerned with is the most widely shared of the senses; and it would seem justly open to reproach, since it belongs to us not insofar as we are human but insofar as we are animals. To enjoy such things,

then, and to like them most of all, is brutish.[8] For even the most refined of the pleasures of touch are excluded, such as those produced in the gymnasium by massage and warmth; for the self-indulgent person's touching does not concern the whole body, only certain parts of it.

Of appetites, some seem to be common, others peculiar to individuals and acquired. The appetite for food, for example, is natural: everyone who lacks it has an appetite for dry or liquid nourishment, sometimes for both, and—as Homer says—for a bed, if he is young and in his prime. But not everyone has an appetite for this or that particular kind, nor for the same things. That is why such appetite seems to be our own. Still, it has something natural about it too: different things are pleasant to different people, and some things are more pleasant to everyone than just anything at random. Now in the natural appetites few people go wrong, and only in one direction, toward too much. For eating or drinking whatever is at hand until one is overfull is exceeding the natural amount in quantity, since natural appetite is the replenishment of a lack. That is why these people are called "belly-mad": they fill their bellies beyond what is right.[9] It is people who are excessively slavish who turn out like this. But with the pleasures peculiar to individuals many people go wrong, and in many ways. People called "fond of" this or that are so called either for enjoying what they shouldn't, or for enjoying it more than most people do, or not in the way they should; but the self-indulgent exceed in all these ways. They enjoy some things they shouldn't (since those things are hateful), and if there are some such things one should enjoy, they enjoy them more than one should and more than most people do. It is clear, then, that excess in pleasures is self-indulgence and is blameworthy. With pains, though, it is not as with courage: one is not called moderate for enduring them, or self-indul-

8 The glutton is named elsewhere (*Eudemian Ethics* 1231a) as Philoxenus, son of Eryxis.

9 The phrase echoes *Iliad* 24.129–31, where Thetis urges the grieving Achilles to eat and to go to bed with a woman.

gent for not enduring them. Rather, the self-indulgent person is so called for being more pained than he should be at not getting pleasant things (even his pain is produced by pleasure), and the moderate person for not being pained at their absence and at abstaining from what is pleasant.

1119a The self-indulgent person, then, has an appetite for all pleasant things, or for the most pleasant, and is led by his appetite to choose these over everything else. That is why he is pained both when he fails to get them and while he has the appetite, since appetite involves pain—though it seems absurd to be pained on account of pleasure. People who fall short with regard to pleasures, and enjoy them less than they should, hardly occur at all; such insensibility is not human. Even the other animals discriminate among foods, enjoying some and not others; and if there is someone to whom nothing is pleasant, and one thing is no different from another, he would be far from being human. Such a person has not received a name, because he hardly occurs. The moderate person is in a middle condition with respect to these things. He takes no pleasure in what the self-indulgent person most enjoys—rather, it annoys him—nor at all in what he shouldn't, nor intensely in anything of this sort. He is not pained at their absence and has no appetite for them, or only moderately, and not more than he should, nor when he shouldn't, nor anything of that kind at all. But whatever pleasant things make for health or fitness he will desire moderately and as he should, and other pleasant things too, provided they do not hinder these, and are not contrary to what is fine or beyond his means. For someone who is disposed that way loves such pleasures more than they are worth; the moderate person is not like that, but loves them as correct reason prescribes.

Self-indulgence seems more voluntary than cowardice. The one is caused by pleasure, the other by pain, and of these the first is something to choose and the second something to avoid. Pain also unsettles and ruins the nature of the one who feels it, while pleasure does nothing of the sort. So self-indulgence is more voluntary—and that is why it is also more open to

reproach. For it is easier to become habituated to resist pleasures, since there are many such things in life and the habituation carries no danger, whereas with frightening things it is the reverse. Cowardice, however, would seem not to be voluntary in the same way as its particular instances. Cowardice itself involves no pain, but the particular situations unsettle a person through pain, so that he throws away his arms and disgraces himself in other ways; that is why they are even thought to be forced. For the self-indulgent person it is the reverse: the particular acts are voluntary (since he has an appetite and a desire for them), but the condition as a whole less so, since no one has an appetite to be self-indulgent. We also apply the name "self-indulgence" to the faults of children, [1119b] since they bear a certain resemblance. Which is named after which makes no difference for present purposes, but clearly the later is named after the earlier. And the transfer seems not a bad one. For what needs to be chastened is whatever desires shameful things and has great capacity for growth, and that is above all what appetite and a child are like: children too live by appetite, and the desire for what is pleasant is strongest in them. So if it is not obedient and under the authority of the ruling part, it will go far. For in someone without sense the desire for what is pleasant is insatiable and comes from every direction; the exercise of appetite increases what is akin to it; and if the appetites are great and intense, they even knock out reasoning.[10] That is why appetites must be moderate and few, and must not oppose reason in anything—this is what we call obedient and chastened. Just as a child should live according to the instructions of his tutor, so the appetitive part should live according to reason. So in the moderate person the appetitive part should be in harmony with reason, since the aim of both is the fine; the moderate person has an appetite for the things he should, in the way he should,

10 The Greek word *akolasia*, "self-indulgence", literally means "unchastened-ness" (from *kolazein*, "to chasten, punish"), hence its use for spoiled children.

and when he should, and this is also what reason prescribes. So much, then, for moderation.[11]

11 The "tutor" (*paidagōgos*) was a household slave who escorted a boy and supervised his behavior.

Book IV

The other excellences of character
Aristotle describes generosity, magnificence, greatness of soul, gentleness, and the social excellences.

Let us next discuss generosity. It seems to be the mean concerning wealth. For the generous person is praised not in matters of war, nor in those where the moderate person is praised, nor again in judicial decisions, but in the giving and taking of wealth, and more in the giving. By "wealth" we mean everything whose value is measured by money. Wastefulness and stinginess are excesses and deficiencies concerning wealth. Stinginess we always attach to those who care about wealth more than they should; but "wastefulness" we sometimes apply by lumping things together, since we call people wasteful who lack self-control and spend lavishly on self-indulgence. That is why they are thought to be the worst sort of people: they have many vices at once.[1] But this is not the proper name for them. For "wasteful" is meant for someone with one vice, 1120a that of destroying his substance. The wasteful person is one who is ruined through his own fault, and the destruction of one's substance seems to be a kind of ruin of oneself, since living depends on it. This, then, is how we understand wastefulness. Things that have a use can be used both well and badly, and wealth is a useful thing; and each thing is used best by the person who has the excellence concerned with it. So wealth too will be used best by the person

1 The Greek for "generosity", *eleutheriotēs*, literally means the quality befitting a free person (*eleutheros*); its opposite, *aneleutheria* ("stinginess"), suggests something unworthy of a free person.

who has the excellence concerned with wealth, and this is the generous person. Using wealth seems to consist in spending and giving; taking and keeping are more a matter of possessing. That is why it is more characteristic of the generous person to give to the right people than to take from the right sources and not take from the wrong ones.[2] For it belongs to excellence more to do good than to have good done to one, and more to do fine things than not to do shameful ones. And it is quite clear that doing good and doing fine things go with giving, while having good done to one, or not doing what is shameful, goes with taking. Gratitude goes to the giver, not to the one who does not take, and so, even more, does praise. Not taking is also easier than giving, since people are less willing to part with what is their own than to refrain from taking what belongs to others. It is givers, too, who are called generous; those who do not take are praised not for generosity but no less for justice; and those who take are hardly praised at all. Of all people who are loved for their excellence, the generous are perhaps loved most, since they are beneficial, and this lies in their giving. Actions in accordance with excellence are fine and done for the sake of the fine. So the generous person too will give for the sake of the fine, and rightly: to the right people, in the right amounts, at the right time, with everything else that goes with right giving. And he will do so with pleasure, or without pain, since what accords with excellence is pleasant or painless, and least of all painful. Someone who gives to the wrong people, or not for the sake of the fine but for some other reason, will be called not generous but something else. Nor will someone who gives with pain, since he would prefer the wealth to the fine action, and that is not the generous person's way. Nor will the generous person take from the wrong sources, since such taking is not characteristic of someone who does not value wealth. Nor would he be one to ask for things, since it is not characteristic of someone who does good to others to accept benefits readily. He will take from the

2 The Greek for "wasteful", *asōtos*, literally means "unsaved" or "past saving", which Aristotle takes as self-ruin.

right sources, [1120b] for instance from his own possessions—not as something fine but as something necessary, so that he has something to give. Nor will he neglect his own property, since he wants to help others by means of it. Nor will he give to just anyone, so that he can give to the right people, at the right time, and where it is fine to do so. It is also very characteristic of the generous person to go to excess in giving, so that he leaves less for himself, since not looking out for oneself is characteristic of the generous person. Generosity is spoken of relative to one's means. For generosity lies not in the quantity given but in the state of the giver, and this state gives in proportion to one's means. So nothing prevents the person who gives less from being more generous, if he gives from smaller means. Those who have not made their fortune themselves but inherited it seem to be more generous: they have no experience of need, and everyone is fonder of their own creations, as parents and poets are. It is not easy for the generous person to be rich, since he is not inclined to take or to keep, but is free with his money and values it not for its own sake but for the sake of giving. That is why people complain against fortune that those who most deserve to be rich are the least rich. But this happens not without reason: one cannot have money without taking care to have it, just as with anything else. He will not, however, give to the wrong people or at the wrong time, and so on; for then he would no longer be acting in accordance with generosity, and having spent on these things he would not have enough to spend on the right ones. For, as has been said, the generous person is the one who spends in accordance with his means and on the right things; the one who exceeds is wasteful. That is why we do not call tyrants wasteful: it does not seem easy for their gifts and expenditures to exceed the size of their holdings. Since generosity is a mean concerning the giving and taking of wealth, the generous person will give and spend on the right things and in the right amounts, in small matters and large alike, and do so with pleasure; and he will take from the right sources and in the right amounts. For since the excellence is a mean concerning

both, he will do both as he should: taking of this kind goes along with decent giving, while taking of the other kind is contrary to it. So the kinds that go together are found together in the same person, while the contrary kinds clearly are not. 1121a If he happens to spend contrary to what is right and fine, he will be pained, but moderately and as he should, since it belongs to excellence to be pleased and pained at the right things and in the right way. The generous person is also easy to deal with in money matters. He can be wronged, since he does not value wealth, and he is more upset if he has failed to spend something he should have than pained if he has spent something he should not have; and he does not agree with Simonides. The wasteful person goes wrong in these respects too: he is neither pleased nor pained at the right things or in the right way. This will become clearer as we go on. We have said, then, that wastefulness and stinginess are excesses and deficiencies, and in two things, giving and taking; for we count spending as part of giving.[3] Wastefulness exceeds in giving and not taking, and falls short in taking; stinginess falls short in giving and exceeds in taking, except in small matters. Now the features of wastefulness do not often go together, since it is not easy to give to everyone while taking from nowhere: private individuals who give quickly run through their substance, and they are the ones who are thought to be wasteful. Yet such a person would seem to be considerably better than the stingy one. He is easily cured, both by age and by lack of means, and he can come to the mean. For he has the features of the generous person: he gives and does not take, though he does neither as he should or well. If he were trained in this, or changed in some other way, he would be generous, since he would give to the right people and not take from the wrong sources. That is why he is thought not to be bad in character; for exceeding in giving and not taking is the mark not of a wicked or ignoble person but of a foolish one. The person who is wasteful in this way seems much better than the stingy person, both for the reasons given and because the one benefits

3 Simonides was proverbial for his love of money.

many people while the other benefits no one, not even himself. But most wasteful people, as has been said, also take from the wrong sources, and in this respect they are stingy. They become grasping because they want to spend but cannot easily do so, since their resources quickly run out. So they are forced to get supplies from elsewhere. 1121b At the same time, because they give no thought to what is fine, they take carelessly and from every source; they have an appetite for giving, but how or from where makes no difference to them. That is why their gifts are not generous either: they are not fine, nor given for the sake of the fine, nor in the right way. Sometimes they make rich those who ought to be poor; they would give nothing to people of moderate character, but a great deal to flatterers or to those who provide them with some other pleasure. That is also why most of them are self-indulgent: since they spend readily, they are lavish on self-indulgence as well, and because they do not live with a view to the fine, they slide toward pleasures. The wasteful person, then, drifts into these things if he is left without guidance, but with care he might reach the mean and what is right. Stinginess, on the other hand, is incurable (old age and every kind of incapacity seem to make people stingy), and it is more innate in human beings than wastefulness: most people are fonder of money than of giving. It is also far-reaching and takes many forms, since there seem to be many kinds of stinginess. It consists in two things, deficiency in giving and excess in taking, and it does not come whole to everyone; sometimes the two are separated, and some people exceed in taking while others fall short in giving. Those who go by such names as "tight-fisted", "miserly" and "cheapskate" all fall short in giving, but they do not covet other people's property or want to take it. Some do so from a kind of decency and a wariness of what is shameful (some seem, or at least claim, to hold on to their money for this reason, so that they may never be forced to do anything shameful; among these is the cumin-splitter and everyone of that sort, who is so called from his excessive unwillingness to give anything). Others, again, keep away from other people's property

out of fear, on the ground that it is not easy to take what belongs to others without others taking what is yours; so they are content neither to take nor to give. Others, again, exceed in taking by taking anything from anywhere, such as those who practice occupations unworthy of a free person—brothel-keepers and all such people—and those who lend small sums at high interest.[4] 1122a For all of these take from the wrong sources, and more than they should. What they have in common is evidently shameful profiteering, since all of them put up with reproach for the sake of gain, and small gain at that. For those who take great things from the wrong sources, and take what they should not—tyrants who sack cities and plunder temples, for instance—we do not call stingy but rather wicked, impious and unjust. The gambler, however, and the clothes-thief and the bandit are among the stingy, since they are shameful profiteers. Both kinds pursue their business for the sake of gain and put up with reproach: the one runs the greatest risks for the sake of the loot, while the other makes gains from his friends, to whom one ought to give. Both, then, since they want to make gains from the wrong sources, are shameful profiteers; and all such taking is stingy. It is reasonable that stinginess is called the opposite of generosity: it is a greater evil than wastefulness, and people go wrong more in this direction than in the direction of wastefulness as we have described it. So much, then, for generosity and the vices opposed to it.

MAGNIFICENCE

Aristotle describes magnificence as fitting spending on a large scale, with its vulgar and petty extremes.

It would seem to follow next to discuss magnificence as well, since this too seems to be an excellence concerned with wealth. But unlike generosity it does not extend to all actions involving wealth, only to those involving expenditure; and in these it sur-

4 A "cumin-splitter" was a proverbial skinflint, one who would split even a tiny cumin seed rather than give it away.

passes generosity in scale. For, as the name itself suggests, it is fitting expenditure on a large scale. But scale is relative: the expense is not the same for a trierarch as for the leader of a sacred embassy. What is fitting, then, is relative to the person himself, to the occasion and to the object. The person who spends as befits the worth of small or moderate things is not called magnificent—as in "many a time I gave to a wanderer"—but only the one who does so in great things. For the magnificent person is generous, but the generous person is no more magnificent for that.[5] The deficiency of this state is called shabbiness, and the excess vulgarity, tastelessness and the like, which exceed not in the scale of spending on the right things but by making a splash in the wrong things and in the wrong way. We will speak about these later. The magnificent person is like an expert: he can see what is fitting and spend great sums tastefully. 1122b For, as we said at the beginning, a state is defined by its activities and by its objects. The expenditures of the magnificent person, then, are great and fitting. So too are the works he produces, for in this way the expenditure will be great and also fitting to the work. So the work must be worthy of the expenditure, and the expenditure worthy of the work, or even exceed it. The magnificent person will spend such sums for the sake of the fine, since this is common to the excellences. And further, he will do so with pleasure and freely, since precise accounting is shabby. He will consider how to make the work finest and most fitting rather than how much it will cost and how it can be done most cheaply. The magnificent person, then, must also be generous. For the generous person too will spend what he should and as he should; and it is in these things that the greatness of the magnificent person—his scale, as it were—lies, generosity being concerned with the same things; and from an equal expenditure he will make the work more magnificent. For the excellence of a possession and of a work is not the same. The most valuable pos-

5 A trierarch paid to fit out and command a warship; the leader of a sacred embassy headed a city's delegation to a festival abroad—both costly public services. The quotation is from *Odyssey* 17.420.

session is the one worth the most, gold for example; but the most valuable work is one that is great and fine (for the sight of such a thing is wonderful, and what is magnificent is wonderful). And the excellence of a work, magnificence, lies in scale. Among expenditures, magnificence belongs to those we call honorable, such as those connected with the gods—votive offerings, buildings and sacrifices—and likewise with everything divine; and to those that are objects of honorable ambition in public life, as when people think they should fund a chorus splendidly, or equip a warship, or even give a feast for the city. In all these cases, as has been said, the question also refers to the agent: who he is and what means he has. For the expenditures must be worthy of these, and befit not only the work but also the one who produces it. That is why a poor man could not be magnificent: he does not have the means to spend large sums fittingly, and the one who tries is foolish, since it goes against what is due and proper, whereas acting rightly is what accords with excellence.[6] It also befits those who already have such resources, whether through their own efforts or from their ancestors or from people they are connected with, and the well-born and the famous and so on, since all these things carry greatness and prestige. The magnificent person, then, is above all of this kind, and magnificence lies in expenditures of this kind, as has been said, since these are the greatest and most honored. Among private expenditures it lies in those that happen once, [1123a] such as a wedding or anything of that kind; in anything the whole city, or people of standing, take seriously; in receiving and sending off foreign guests; and in gifts and return gifts. For the magnificent person spends not on himself but on public things, and gifts have something in common with votive offerings. It is also characteristic of the magnificent person to furnish his house in a way that befits his wealth (since this too is a kind of adornment), and to spend more on works that last a long time (since these are the finest), and in each case on what is

6 Funding a chorus for a dramatic festival was one of the public services that Athens imposed on its wealthiest citizens.

fitting; for the same things do not suit gods and human beings, or a temple and a tomb. Each expenditure is great in its own kind: the most magnificent without qualification is a great expenditure on a great object, but in a given case it is what is great in those circumstances. And greatness in the work differs from greatness in the expenditure: the finest ball or oil flask has the magnificence of a present for a child, though its price is small and mean. That is why it is characteristic of the magnificent person, whatever kind of thing he produces, to produce it magnificently (for such a thing is not easily surpassed), and in a way that matches the worth of the expenditure. Such, then, is the magnificent person. The one who exceeds, the vulgar person, exceeds, as has been said, by spending beyond what is right. On small expenses he spends a great deal and makes a tasteless display—entertaining his dining club as if it were a wedding feast, for instance, or, when funding a chorus for a comedy, bringing it on for its entrance in purple, as they do at Megara. And he will do all such things not for the sake of the fine but to show off his wealth, thinking he is admired for them, spending little where he should spend much and much where he should spend little. The shabby person will fall short in everything. After spending enormous sums he will spoil the fine effect for a trifle; whatever he does, he hesitates and considers how he can spend the least, and even then he grumbles, thinking he is doing everything on a bigger scale than he should.[7] These states are vices, then, but they do not bring reproach, since they are neither harmful to one's neighbor nor too unseemly.

GREATNESS OF SOUL

Aristotle portrays the great-souled person, who claims great honor and deserves it.

Greatness of soul seems, even from its name, to be concerned with great things; let us first grasp what sort of things. [1123b] It

makes no difference whether we examine the state or the person who has it. The great-souled person seems to be one who thinks himself worthy of great things and is worthy of them. For someone who does this beyond his worth is a fool, and no one who acts in accordance with excellence is foolish or senseless. The great-souled person, then, is the one described. For the person who is worthy of small things and thinks himself worthy of them is moderate, but not great-souled; greatness of soul lies in greatness, just as beauty lies in a large body—small people are neat and well proportioned, but not beautiful. The person who thinks himself worthy of great things when he is unworthy of them is vain; but not everyone who thinks himself worthy of more than he is worth is vain. The person who thinks himself worthy of less than he is worth is small-souled, whether he is worthy of great things or moderate ones, or even if he is worthy of small things and thinks himself worthy of still less. And the one who is worthy of great things would seem to be small-souled most of all; for what would he do if he were not worthy of so much? The great-souled person, then, is at an extreme in terms of greatness, but at the mean in terms of doing as he should, since he thinks himself worthy of what he is worth, while the others exceed and fall short. If, then, he thinks himself worthy of great things, and is worthy of them, and above all of the greatest things, he would be concerned above all with one thing. Worth is spoken of in relation to external goods. And we would take the greatest of these to be what we render to the gods, what people of standing most aim at, and the prize awarded for the finest deeds; and such a thing is honor, since this is the greatest of external goods. So the great-souled person is concerned with honors and dishonors as he should be. Even without argument, great-souled people are evidently concerned with honor, since it is honor above all that great people think themselves worthy of, though in accordance with their worth. The small-souled person falls short both in relation to himself

7 Megara, a neighbor of Athens, was known to Athenians for crude comedy; purple-dyed costumes were an extravagant luxury.

and in relation to the worth of the great-souled person. The vain person exceeds in relation to himself, though not in relation to the great-souled person. The great-souled person, since he is worthy of the greatest things, would be the best person; for the better person is always worthy of more, and the best person of the greatest things. So the truly great-souled person must be good. And what is great in each excellence would seem to belong to the great-souled person. It would be quite out of character for a great-souled person to run away with his arms flailing, or to do wrong; for why would someone do shameful things when nothing is great to him? And if we look at the particulars one by one, a great-souled person who was not good would appear utterly ridiculous. Nor would he be worthy of honor if he were bad, since honor is the prize of excellence and is rendered to the good. 1124a Greatness of soul seems, then, to be a kind of adornment of the excellences, since it makes them greater and does not arise without them. That is why it is hard to be truly great-souled: it is impossible without being fine and good in every respect. It is chiefly with honors and dishonors, then, that the great-souled person is concerned. At great honors conferred by excellent people he will be moderately pleased, as getting what is properly his, or even less; for no honor could be worthy of complete excellence. Still, he will accept it, since they have nothing greater to bestow on him. But honor from just anyone, and for small things, he will utterly disdain, since that is not what he is worthy of; and likewise dishonor, since it will not justly apply to him. So although, as has been said, the great-souled person is concerned chiefly with honors, he will nevertheless also be moderately disposed toward wealth and power and every kind of good and bad fortune, however it turns out; he will be neither overjoyed at good fortune nor overwhelmed by bad. For he does not even regard honor as the greatest thing. For power and wealth are choiceworthy because of honor; at any rate, those who have them want to be honored for them. But someone to whom even honor is a small thing will regard the rest as small too. That is why great-souled people are thought to

be disdainful. Good fortune is also thought to contribute to greatness of soul. For the well-born are thought worthy of honor, and so are the powerful and the wealthy, since they stand in a position of superiority, and whatever is superior in something good is held in greater honor. So things like these also make people more great-souled, because they are honored by some for them. In truth, though, only the good person deserves honor; but someone who has both is thought more worthy of honor. Those who have goods of this sort without excellence neither have a just claim to think themselves worthy of great things nor are rightly called great-souled, since that is impossible without complete excellence. Instead, people who have such goods become disdainful and arrogant too. For without excellence it isn't easy to bear good fortune gracefully. 1124b Unable to bear it, and thinking themselves superior to everyone else, they look down on others while themselves doing whatever they happen to feel like. They imitate the great-souled person without being like him, and they do so where they can: they don't perform the actions that come from excellence, but they do look down on others. For the great-souled person is justified in his disdain, since his judgments are true, whereas most people's disdain is random. He doesn't court small dangers, nor is he fond of danger, since there are few things he values highly; but he will face great dangers, and when he does, he doesn't spare his life, since he thinks life is not worth living at any price. He is the sort to do good turns, but he is ashamed to receive them, since the one is the mark of a superior, the other of an inferior. And he repays a benefit with a greater one, since that way the one who started it will end up in his debt in turn and will be the one who has been well treated. Such people also seem to remember the good they do but not the good they receive (for the recipient of a benefit is inferior to the benefactor, and the great-souled person wants to be superior), and to enjoy hearing about the former but not the latter. That, it seems, is why Thetis doesn't mention to Zeus the services she has done him, and why the Spartans didn't mention theirs to the Atheni-

ans, but only the benefits they had received.[8] It is also characteristic of the great-souled person to need nothing, or scarcely anything, yet to be eager to help others; and to carry himself with dignity toward people of rank and good fortune, but with moderation toward those of the middling sort. For it is difficult and impressive to be superior to the former, but easy to be superior to the latter; and to put on airs among the former is not ill-bred, while to do so among humble people is vulgar, like showing off one's strength against the weak. He also doesn't go after the usual objects of honor, or things where others hold first place. He is idle and slow to act except where great honor or a great deed is at stake; and he does few things, but those great and notable. He must also be open in his hatreds and open in his friendships (for concealment belongs to someone who is afraid, and to care less for the truth than for what people will think), and he must speak and act openly. For he speaks frankly because he is disdainful, and he is truthful, except when he is being self-deprecating, as he is with the many. He is also unable to live in dependence on another, unless it is a friend, 1125a since that is slavish. That is why all flatterers are servile, and people of low standing are flatterers. Nor is he given to admiration, since nothing is great to him. Nor does he bear grudges, since it isn't characteristic of a great-souled person to keep remembering things, especially wrongs; rather, he overlooks them. Nor is he a gossip: he won't talk about himself or about anyone else, since he isn't concerned to be praised or to have others blamed. Then again, he isn't given to praising others either. So he doesn't speak ill of others, not even of his enemies, except to insult them deliberately. And about necessities or small matters he is the last person to lament or plead, since to behave that way about such things is the mark of someone who takes them seriously. He is also the sort to own beautiful things that bring no return rather than profitable and useful ones, since that is more fitting for someone self-sufficient. The great-souled person is also

8 Thetis, the sea goddess and mother of Achilles, petitions Zeus in the first book of Homer's *Iliad*.

thought to have a slow gait, a deep voice and a steady way of speaking. For someone who takes few things seriously is not in a hurry, and someone who thinks nothing is great is not tense; shrillness of voice and haste come from those things. Such, then, is the great-souled person. The one who falls short is small-souled, and the one who exceeds is vain. These people too are not thought to be bad (since they do no harm), but mistaken. For the small-souled person, though worthy of good things, deprives himself of what he deserves, and seems to have something bad about him from not thinking himself worthy of good things, and seems not to know himself; otherwise he would have reached for what he deserved, since those things are good. Yet such people are not thought to be foolish, but rather timid. But this sort of opinion of themselves seems actually to make them worse. For each kind of person aims at what accords with their worth; and these people hold back from fine actions and pursuits because they consider themselves unworthy, and likewise from external goods. Vain people, on the other hand, are foolish and don't know themselves, and this is plain to see. For they attempt honorable undertakings though they aren't worthy of them, and then they are shown up. They adorn themselves with clothes and posturing and the like; they want their good fortune to be conspicuous, and they talk about it, as though they will be honored for it. Smallness of soul is more opposed to greatness of soul than vanity is, since it is both more common and worse. Greatness of soul, then, is concerned with great honor, as has been said.

AMBITION AND ITS NAMELESS MEAN

Aristotle identifies an unnamed mean concerning ordinary honor, between ambition and lack of ambition.

1125b But there also seems to be an excellence concerned with honor, as was said in our first discussion, which would seem to be related to greatness of soul much as generosity is related to magnificence. For both of these stand apart from what is great,

and dispose us as we should be toward moderate and small matters. Just as in the taking and giving of money there is a mean, and an excess and a deficiency, so too in the desire for honor there is more than one should and less, and seeking it from the right sources and in the right way. For we blame the ambitious person for aiming at honor more than he should and from the wrong sources, and the unambitious person for not choosing to be honored even for fine things. But sometimes we praise the ambitious person as manly and a lover of what is fine, and the unambitious person as modest and moderate, as we also said in our first discussion. It is clear that, since "lover of such-and-such" is said in more than one way, we don't always apply the term "lover of honor" to the same thing: when we praise, we apply it to loving honor more than most people do; when we blame, to loving it more than one should. And since the mean has no name, the extremes seem to dispute over it as if it were unclaimed. But where there is excess and deficiency, there is also a mean. People desire honor both more than they should and less; so it is also possible to desire it as one should. In any case, this state is praised, being a nameless mean concerned with honor. Compared with ambition it appears as lack of ambition, compared with lack of ambition it appears as ambition, and compared with both it appears in a way as both. This seems to hold of the other excellences too. But in this case the extremes appear to be opposed only to each other, because the person in the middle has not been given a name.

GENTLENESS

Aristotle treats gentleness as the mean concerning anger, between irascibility and lack of spirit.

Gentleness is a mean concerned with anger. Since the middle state has no name, and the extremes are almost nameless too, we apply "gentleness" to the middle state, though it leans toward the deficiency, which has no name. The excess might be called a kind of irascibility. For the feeling is anger, but what produces it

is many and various. The person who gets angry at the right things and with the right people, and also in the right way, at the right time and for the right length of time, is praised. This, then, would be the gentle person, since gentleness is praised. For the gentle person wants to be unperturbed and not to be led by his feeling, but to be angry in the way reason prescribes, at the things and for the length of time it prescribes. 1126a But he seems to err rather in the direction of deficiency, since the gentle person is not inclined to revenge, but rather to forgiveness. The deficiency, whether it is a kind of unirascibility or whatever it may be, is blamed. For those who don't get angry at the things they should are thought to be fools, and so are those who don't get angry in the right way, at the right time, or with the right people. Such a person seems not to perceive things or be pained by them, and, since he doesn't get angry, not to be inclined to defend himself; and to put up with being insulted, and to let one's own people be insulted, is slavish. The excess occurs in all these respects (being angry with the wrong people, at the wrong things, more than one should, more quickly, and for longer), but not all of them belong to the same person. That would be impossible, since what is bad destroys even itself, and if it is present in full it becomes unbearable. Irascible people, then, get angry quickly, with the wrong people, at the wrong things and more than they should, but they stop quickly, which is the best thing about them. This happens to them because they don't hold their anger in, but, being quick-tempered, retaliate openly and then stop. The choleric are excessively quick, irascible about everything and at every occasion, hence their name. Sulky people are hard to appease and stay angry for a long time, since they keep their anger in. It stops when they retaliate, for revenge puts an end to anger by producing pleasure in place of pain. If this doesn't happen, they carry the weight of it; for since it isn't out in the open, no one even tries to talk them round, and digesting one's anger inside oneself takes time. People like this are most troublesome to themselves and to their closest

friends.[9] We call "bad-tempered" those who are angry at the wrong things, more than they should be and for longer, and who aren't reconciled without revenge or punishment. It is the excess that we set more in opposition to gentleness, since it occurs more often (for taking revenge is more human), and bad-tempered people are worse to live with. What was said earlier is also clear from what we are saying now: it isn't easy to determine how, with whom, at what and for how long one should be angry, and up to what point one acts rightly or goes wrong. For someone who strays a little, whether toward more or toward less, is not blamed; sometimes we praise those who fall short and call them gentle, [1126b] and call those who are harsh manly, as being capable of ruling. So how far and in what way someone must stray to be blameworthy is not easy to state in an account, since the judgment lies in particulars and in perception. But this much at least is clear: the middle state is praiseworthy, the one in virtue of which we are angry with the right people, at the right things, in the right way and so on, while the excesses and deficiencies are blameworthy—mildly so if they go a little way, more so if further, and severely if a long way. Clearly, then, we should hold to the middle state. So much, then, for the states concerned with anger.

FRIENDLINESS AND FLATTERY

Aristotle describes the unnamed mean in social life between obsequiousness and quarrelsomeness.

In social encounters, in living together and in sharing conversation and activities, some people are thought to be obsequious: those who praise everything to give pleasure and never object, but think they must avoid causing pain to whomever they meet. Those who, on the contrary, object to everything and don't care in the least about causing pain are called cantankerous and quarrelsome. It is plain enough that the states just described are

9 "Choleric" renders *akrocholoi*, literally "bile at the top," i.e. people whose anger is always at the surface.

blameworthy, and that the middle state between them is praiseworthy, the one in virtue of which a person will accept what he should and in the way he should, and likewise object. No name has been given to this state, but it most resembles friendship. For the person in the middle state is the kind we mean when we speak of a decent friend, except with affection added. It differs from friendship in being without feeling or affection for those one associates with. For such a person accepts each thing as he should not because he loves or hates, but because of the sort of person he is. He will behave the same way toward people he doesn't know and people he knows, toward intimates and strangers, though in each case as is fitting; for it isn't appropriate to show the same concern for intimates and for strangers, or, for that matter, to cause them pain in the same way. It has been said in general terms, then, that he will associate with people as he should; and it is by reference to what is fine and what is beneficial that he will aim not to cause pain or to contribute pleasure. For he seems to be concerned with the pleasures and pains that arise in social encounters. Of these, whenever it is not fine, or is harmful, for him to share in someone's pleasure, he will object and decide to cause pain instead. And if something would bring discredit, and no small discredit, or harm to the person doing it, while opposing it would cause only a little pain, he won't accept it but will object. He will behave differently with people of rank and with ordinary people, 1127a and with those he knows more or less well, and similarly with respect to other differences, giving each what is fitting. In itself he prefers to contribute pleasure and is wary of causing pain, but he is guided by the consequences if these are weightier—I mean consequences for what is fine and beneficial. And for the sake of a great pleasure later on, he will cause small pains. Such, then, is the person in the middle, but he has no name. Of those who contribute to others' pleasure, the one who aims at being pleasant for no further reason is obsequious, while the one who does it to get some advantage for himself, in money or in what money buys, is a flatterer. The one who objects to everything is, as has been said,

cantankerous and quarrelsome. The extremes appear to be opposed to each other because the middle has no name.

TRUTHFULNESS AND BOASTFULNESS

Aristotle describes truthfulness about oneself as the mean between boastfulness and self-deprecation.

The mean between boastfulness and self-deprecation is concerned with roughly the same things, and it too is nameless. It's not a bad idea to go through these states as well; for we would understand what concerns character better if we went through each one, and we would be more confident that the excellences are means once we saw that this holds in every case. Now in living together, those who associate with others with a view to pleasure and pain have been discussed; let us speak in the same way about those who are truthful and those who are false in what they say and do and in the claims they make. The boaster, then, is thought to be someone who lays claim to distinctions he doesn't have, or greater ones than he has; the self-deprecator, conversely, to be someone who disclaims what he has or makes it smaller; and the person in the middle, being straightforward, to be truthful both in how he lives and in what he says, acknowledging what he has, neither more nor less. Each of these things can be done for some purpose or for none. And each person speaks and acts and lives in accordance with the sort of person he is, unless he is acting for some purpose. In itself, falsehood is base and blameworthy, and truth fine and praiseworthy. So too the truthful person, being in the middle, is praiseworthy, while both kinds of false person are blameworthy, but the boaster more so. Let us discuss each of them, beginning with the truthful person.[10] We are not talking about someone who is truthful in agreements, or in matters bearing on injustice or justice [1127b] (these would belong to another excellence), but about someone who, in cases where nothing of that kind is at stake, is truthful

10 "Self-deprecation" renders *eirōneia*, the root of "irony": understatement about oneself.

both in speech and in life because he has that sort of state. Such a person would seem to be decent. For a lover of truth, who is truthful even where nothing is at stake, will be all the more truthful where something is; he will avoid falsehood as shameful, since he avoided it even in itself. Such a person is praiseworthy. He leans toward understatement rather than the truth, since this seems in better taste, because exaggerations are tiresome. Someone who claims more than he has for no purpose seems to be of a base sort (otherwise he wouldn't enjoy lying), but he appears foolish rather than bad. If he does it for a purpose, then the one who does it for reputation or honor is, for a boaster, not very blameworthy, while the one who does it for money, or for things that bring money, is more disgraceful. (Someone is a boaster not by capacity but by decision; for it is in virtue of his state, and by being a certain sort of person, that he is a boaster.) In the same way, one liar enjoys the lie itself, while another wants reputation or gain. Those who boast for the sake of reputation, then, claim the sort of qualities that bring praise or congratulation, while those who boast for gain claim qualities that others can enjoy and whose absence can go unnoticed, such as being a skilled seer or doctor. That is why most people claim such things and boast about them: they have the features just mentioned. Self-deprecators, who understate, appear more refined in character, since they seem to speak not for gain but to avoid pomposity. These people especially disclaim things that bring distinction, as Socrates used to do. But those who disclaim small and obvious things are called humbugs and are more contemptible; and sometimes this is plainly a form of boastfulness, like the Spartan style of dress, since both excess and extreme deficiency are boastful. Those who use self-deprecation in moderation, and about things that are not too commonplace and obvious, appear refined. It is the boaster who appears opposed to the truthful person, since he is worse.[11]

11 Spartans affected a pointedly plain, austere style of dress.

WIT AND TACT

Aristotle treats wit as the mean in amusement between buffoonery and boorishness, then discusses shame.

Since life also includes rest, and rest includes spending time in amusement, it seems that here too there is a tasteful kind of social exchange: 1128a what one should say and how, and likewise what one should listen to. It will also make a difference what sort of company one is speaking or listening in. Clearly here too there is an excess and a deficiency relative to the mean. Those who go to excess in joking are thought to be buffoons and vulgar, hankering after a laugh at any cost, and aiming more at raising a laugh than at saying what is seemly and not hurting the person they are making fun of. Those who would never say anything funny themselves and are annoyed with those who do are thought to be boorish and stiff. Those who joke tastefully are called witty, as it were "quick-turning," since such movements are thought to belong to character; and just as bodies are judged by their movements, so are characters. But since opportunities for laughter are everywhere, and most people enjoy amusement and teasing more than they should, even buffoons are called witty, as though they were refined; but it is clear from what has been said that they differ, and not by a little. Tact also belongs to the middle state. It is characteristic of the tactful person to say and listen to the sort of things that suit a decent and free-spirited person; for there are things that it is fitting for such a person to say and hear by way of amusement, and the amusement of a free-spirited person differs from that of a slavish one, and that of an educated person from that of an uneducated one.[12] One can see this from the old comedies and the new ones: in the former, obscenity was what made things funny, in the latter it is rather innuendo; and these differ not a little in point of decorum. Should we define the person who jokes well, then, by

12 "Witty" renders *eutrapeloi*, which Aristotle links to *eutropoi*, "turning well" or nimble.

his saying what isn't unbecoming to a free-spirited person, or by his not causing pain to his listener, or even delighting him? Or is that, at any rate, indeterminate, since different things are hateful or pleasant to different people? He will also listen to the same sort of things, since the jokes a person puts up with hearing are the ones he seems to make himself. So he won't make every kind of joke; for a joke is a kind of abuse, and lawgivers forbid certain kinds of abuse—perhaps they should have forbidden certain kinds of joke too. The refined and free-spirited person, then, will conduct himself in this way, being a law to himself, as it were. Such is the person in the middle, whether he is called tactful or witty.[13] The buffoon, on the other hand, is a slave to the laugh, and spares neither himself nor anyone else if he can raise a laugh, saying things [1128b] none of which a refined person would say, and some of which he wouldn't even listen to. The boor is useless for such social exchanges, since he contributes nothing and objects to everything. Yet rest and amusement are thought to be necessary in life. The means we have described in life, then, are three, and they are all concerned with sharing in certain kinds of conversation and activity. They differ in that one is concerned with truth, the others with what is pleasant. Of those concerned with pleasure, one is found in amusement, the other in social exchanges in the rest of life.

It isn't appropriate to speak of shame as an excellence, since it seems more like a feeling than a state. At any rate, it is defined as a kind of fear of disrepute, and its effects resemble those of the fear of terrible things: people who are ashamed blush, while those who fear death turn pale. Both, then, appear to be in a way bodily, which is thought to be characteristic of a feeling rather than a state. The feeling is not fitting at every age, but only in youth. For we think young people should be prone to shame, because they live by feeling and so make many mistakes, but are held back by shame; and we praise young people who are prone to shame, but no one would praise an older person for being

13 Athenian "old" comedy (e.g. Aristophanes) was freely obscene; the comedy of Aristotle's own day was more restrained.

given to shame, since we think he shouldn't do anything that gives cause for shame. For shame is not characteristic of a decent person either, since it arises from bad actions (and such actions shouldn't be done at all; and whether some things are shameful in truth and others only by reputation makes no difference, since neither sort should be done, so one shouldn't have cause for shame). It belongs to a base person even to be the sort of person who does something shameful. And to be so disposed that one would be ashamed if one did something of the kind, and to think oneself decent on that account, is absurd. For shame concerns voluntary actions, and the decent person will never voluntarily do bad things. Shame might be something decent on a hypothesis: if he were to do such a thing, he would be ashamed. But this doesn't apply to the excellences. And if shamelessness—not being ashamed to do shameful things—is bad, it doesn't follow that it is decent to be ashamed when one does such things. Nor is self-control an excellence, but a kind of mixed state; we will discuss it later. Now let us speak about justice.

Book V

Justice

Aristotle distinguishes kinds of justice, including distributive and corrective justice, and discusses equity.

1129a With regard to justice and injustice, we must consider what sort of actions they are concerned with, what sort of mean justice is, and between what things the just is a mean. Let our inquiry follow the same method as our earlier discussions. We see that everyone means by justice the sort of state that makes people disposed to do what is just, and makes them act justly and wish for what is just; and in the same way by injustice the state that makes people act unjustly and wish for what is unjust. So let us too first lay these down as an outline. For what holds of sciences and capacities does not hold of states. A capacity or a science seems to be the same for opposites, but a state that is one of a pair of opposites does not produce the opposite results. For example, health doesn't give rise to the opposite of healthy actions, only to healthy ones; for we say someone walks healthily when he walks as a healthy person would. Often, then, a state is recognized from its opposite, and often states are recognized from what they are found in. For if good bodily condition is evident, poor condition also becomes evident; and good condition is recognized from what produces it, and what produces it from good condition. If good condition is firmness of flesh, then poor condition must be flabbiness of flesh, and what produces good condition must be what produces firmness in the flesh. And it follows for the most part that if one of a pair of opposites is said in more than one way, so is the other; for example, if

"just" is, so is "unjust." Justice and injustice seem to be said in more than one way, but because their different meanings are close together, the ambiguity goes unnoticed, and it isn't as obvious as it is where the meanings are far apart (for there the difference in form is great)—as, for example, the fact that *kleis* is used ambiguously both for the collarbone of animals and for what we lock doors with. Let us grasp, then, in how many ways someone is called unjust. The lawless person is thought to be unjust, and so is the grasping, unfair person; so clearly the just person will be both the law-abiding and the fair person. The just, then, is the lawful and the fair, and the unjust is the unlawful and the unfair.[1] 1129b Since the unjust person is grasping, he will be concerned with goods—not all goods, but those that good and bad fortune concern, which are always good without qualification, but not always good for a particular person. Human beings pray for these and pursue them; but they shouldn't. They should pray that what is good without qualification will also be good for them, and choose what is good for them. The unjust person doesn't always choose the larger share: in the case of things bad without qualification he chooses the smaller. But because the lesser evil too seems in a way to be good, and grasping is for the good, he seems to be grasping. He is unfair, since this includes both and is common to both. Since the lawless person was unjust and the law-abiding person just, clearly everything lawful is in a way just. For what is laid down by legislation is lawful, and we say that each of these things is just. The laws pronounce on everything, aiming at the common advantage of all, or of the best, or of those in power, whether on the basis of excellence or in some other such way. So in one way we call just whatever produces and preserves happiness and its parts for the political community. The law also commands us to do what a courageous person does—for example, not to desert our post, or run away, or throw down our arms; and what a moderate person does—for example, not to commit adultery or assault; and what a gentle person does—for example, not to strike or slander anyone; and

1 The Greek *kleis* means both "key" and "collarbone."

similarly with the other excellences and vices, commanding some things and forbidding others. A correctly framed law does this correctly, a hastily improvised one less well. This justice, then, is complete excellence, though not without qualification, but in relation to another. And for this reason justice is often thought to be the greatest of the excellences, and "neither the evening nor the morning star is so wonderful"; and we say in the proverb, "In justice all excellence is summed up." And it is complete excellence in the fullest sense, because it is the exercise of complete excellence.[2] It is complete because the person who has it can exercise his excellence toward another, and not only by himself; for many people can exercise excellence in their own affairs but are unable to in their dealings with another. 1130a And that is why the saying of Bias seems right, that "office will reveal the man," since one who holds office is by that very fact related to others and in a community. For this same reason justice alone of the excellences is thought to be another's good, because it is related to another: it does what benefits someone else, whether a ruler or a partner. The worst person, then, is the one who exercises his vice both toward himself and toward his friends; and the best is not the one who exercises his excellence toward himself, but the one who exercises it toward another, since that is a difficult task.[3] This justice, then, is not a part of excellence but the whole of excellence, and the injustice opposed to it is not a part of vice but the whole of vice. What the difference is between excellence and this justice is clear from what has been said: they are the same state, but what it is to be each is not the same. Insofar as it is related to another, it is justice; insofar as it is a certain kind of state without qualification, it is excellence.

2 The first quotation is thought to come from a lost play of Euripides; the proverb is a line of the poet Theognis.

3 Bias of Priene, sixth century BC, was counted among the Seven Sages.

PARTICULAR JUSTICE

Aristotle identifies a particular justice concerned with fair shares and divides it into kinds.

But what we are looking for is the justice that is a part of excellence—for there is such a thing, as we say—and likewise the injustice that is a part of vice. Here is a sign that it exists. Someone who acts in accordance with the other vices does wrong, but does not grasp for more than his share: for example, a man who throws away his shield out of cowardice, or speaks abusively out of bad temper, or fails to help a friend with money out of stinginess. But when someone does grasp for more, it is often in accordance with none of these vices—and certainly not all of them—and yet it is in accordance with some kind of wickedness (for we blame him), namely injustice. So there is another kind of injustice, a part of injustice as a whole, and something unjust that is a part of the whole unjust, the unjust that is contrary to law. Again, suppose one man commits adultery for profit and makes money by it, while another does so because of appetite, spending money and losing by it. The second would seem to be self-indulgent rather than grasping, the first unjust but not self-indulgent. Clearly, then, it is because of the profit. Again, all other wrongful acts are always traced back to some particular vice: if someone committed adultery, to self-indulgence; if he deserted his comrade in the battle line, to cowardice; if he struck someone, to anger. But if he made a profit, it is traced back to no vice other than injustice. So it is evident that besides injustice as a whole there is another, particular injustice, which shares its name, because its definition falls within the same genus: [1130b] both have their force in relation to another person. But the one is concerned with honor, or money, or safety—or whatever single name we might have that would cover all of these—and is motivated by the pleasure that comes from gain, while the other is concerned with everything that the excellent person is concerned with.

It is clear, then, that there is more than one kind of justice, and that there is one distinct from the justice that is the whole of excellence. We must now grasp what it is and what sort of thing it is. The unjust has been divided into the unlawful and the unequal, and the just into the lawful and the equal. The injustice described earlier corresponds to the unlawful. But the unequal and the unlawful are not the same; they differ as part from whole (everything unequal is unlawful, but not everything unlawful is unequal). So too the unjust and injustice in the present sense are not the same as in that sense, but differ from them, as parts from wholes. For this injustice is a part of injustice as a whole, and likewise this justice is a part of justice as a whole. So we must discuss particular justice and particular injustice, and in the same way the just and the unjust in this sense. Let us set aside, then, the justice and injustice that correspond to excellence as a whole—the one being the exercise of excellence as a whole toward another person, the other the exercise of vice as a whole. It is also evident how the just and the unjust that correspond to these are to be marked out. For, roughly speaking, most lawful acts are those prescribed on the basis of excellence as a whole: the law commands us to live in accordance with each excellence and forbids us to live in accordance with each vice. And what produces excellence as a whole are those lawful measures that have been enacted concerning education for life in the community. As for the education of the individual, which makes someone a good man without qualification, we must determine later whether it belongs to political science or to some other discipline; for perhaps being a good man is not the same as being a good citizen of every city. Of particular justice, and of what is just in its sense, one kind is found in distributions of honor or money or anything else that can be divided among those who share in the political community (for in these it is possible for one person to have a share unequal or equal to another's); 1131a another kind is corrective, in transactions. This second kind has two parts, since some transactions are voluntary and others involuntary.

The voluntary ones are such things as sale, purchase, lending at interest, giving security, lending for use, deposit, and hire (they are called voluntary because the origin of these transactions is voluntary). Of the involuntary ones, some are clandestine—theft, adultery, poisoning, procuring, enticing away slaves, assassination, false witness—and others are violent—assault, imprisonment, murder, robbery with violence, maiming, verbal abuse, and insulting treatment.

DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Aristotle explains that distributive justice assigns shares in proportion to merit.

Since the unjust person is unequal and the unjust is unequal, there is clearly also some midpoint of the unequal. This is the equal: for in any action where there is a more and a less, there is also an equal. If, then, the unjust is unequal, the just is equal—which everyone believes even without argument. And since the equal is a mean, the just would be a kind of mean. The equal involves at least two things. So the just must be both a mean and equal, and also relative to something and for certain people. As a mean, it is between certain things (namely, more and less); as equal, it involves two things; and as just, it is for certain people. The just, then, must involve at least four terms: the persons for whom it is just are two, and the things in which it consists—the goods in question—are two. And the equality will be the same for the persons as for the things: as the things stand to each other, so the persons stand. If the persons are not equal, they will not have equal shares; this is the source of quarrels and complaints—when equals have or are assigned unequal shares, or unequals equal ones. This is also clear from the principle of distribution according to worth. Everyone agrees that what is just in distributions must accord with worth of some kind, but not everyone means the same kind of worth: democrats mean free birth, oligarchs wealth, others good birth, and aristocrats excellence. The just, then, is something proportional. For pro-

portion is a property not only of numbers made up of units, but of number in general: proportion is an equality of ratios, and involves at least four terms. That discrete proportion involves four terms is clear. But so does continuous proportion, since it uses one term as two and states it twice: [1131b] for example, as line A is to line B, so B is to C. B has been stated twice, so if B is posited twice, the proportional terms will be four. The just, too, involves at least four terms, and the ratio is the same, since the persons and the things are divided in the same way. So as term A is to B, so C will be to D; and therefore, alternating, as A is to C, so B is to D. Hence the whole also stands to the whole in the same ratio. This is the pairing the distribution makes, and if the terms are combined in this way, it pairs them justly. The conjunction of term A with C and of B with D, then, is what is just in distribution. This just is a mean, and the unjust is what violates the proportion; for the proportional is a mean, and the just is proportional. Mathematicians call this kind of proportion geometrical, since in geometrical proportion it follows that the whole is to the whole as each term is to its counterpart. But this proportion is not continuous, since no single term numerically serves as both person and thing. This, then, is the just: the proportional. The unjust is what violates the proportion. So one share becomes too great and the other too small—which is exactly what happens in practice: the person who does wrong has too much of the good, and the person wronged too little. With what is bad it is the reverse: the lesser evil counts as a good compared with the greater evil, since the lesser evil is more choiceworthy than the greater, and what is choiceworthy is good, and what is more choiceworthy is a greater good. This, then, is one kind of the just.

CORRECTIVE JUSTICE

Aristotle explains that corrective justice restores equality between parties to a transaction.

The one remaining kind is the corrective, which arises in transactions, both voluntary and involuntary. This kind of just has a different form from the previous one. The just that distributes common goods always accords with the proportion we have described: even when the distribution is made from common funds, it will follow the same ratio as the contributions bear to one another; and the unjust that is opposed to this kind of just is what violates the proportion. The just in transactions, on the other hand, is a kind of equality, and the unjust a kind of inequality, [1132a] but not according to that proportion—rather according to arithmetical proportion. For it makes no difference whether a decent person has defrauded a bad one or a bad person a decent one, nor whether it was a decent or a bad person who committed adultery. The law looks only at the difference made by the harm, and treats the parties as equals, asking only whether one did wrong and the other was wronged, and whether one inflicted harm and the other suffered it. So the judge tries to equalize this unjust thing, since it is unequal. When one person is struck and the other strikes, or when one kills and the other dies, the suffering and the action have been divided into unequal parts; but the judge tries to equalize them by means of the penalty, taking away from the gain. For in such cases the term "gain" is used, speaking generally—even if it isn't the appropriate word in some cases, for instance for the person who struck the blow—and "loss" for the one who suffered. At any rate, once the suffering has been measured, one side is called loss and the other gain. So the equal is a mean between the more and the less, while gain and loss are more and less in opposite ways: more of the good and less of the bad is gain, and the opposite is loss. The mean between them, as we saw, is the equal, which we say is just. So the corrective just would be the

mean between loss and gain. That is why, when people are in dispute, they take refuge with a judge; and going to the judge is going to the just, since the judge means to be, as it were, justice ensouled. People seek a judge who is in the middle, and some call judges "mediators," on the thought that if they hit on the mean they will obtain what is just. The just, then, is a kind of mean, since the judge is too. The judge restores equality. It is as though a line had been cut into unequal parts: he takes away the amount by which the larger segment exceeds the half and adds it to the smaller segment. And when the whole has been divided into two halves, people say they "have what is their own," when they get what is equal. The equal is a mean between the greater and the lesser according to arithmetical proportion. This is also why it is called *dikaion* (just): because it is *dicha* (in two), as if one were to say *dichaion*; and the judge (*dikastēs*) is a *dichastēs*, a divider. For when something is taken from one of two equal quantities and added to the other, the other exceeds the first by twice that amount; if it had been taken from the one but not added to the other, the other would exceed it by that amount only. 1132b So the larger exceeds the mean by one such amount, and the mean exceeds the one from which something was taken by one such amount.[4] By this, then, we shall recognize what must be taken from the one who has more and what must be added to the one who has less: the amount by which the mean exceeds the lesser must be added to the one who has less, and the amount by which the mean is exceeded must be taken from the greatest. Let the lines AA, BB, and CC be equal to one another. From AA let AE be taken away, and to CC let CD be added, so that the whole line DCC exceeds EA by CD and CZ; therefore it exceeds BB by CD. This holds in the other crafts too: they would be destroyed if what the producer produced, in quantity and quality, were not matched by what the recipient received, of that amount and of that kind. These terms, "loss" and "gain," have come from voluntary exchange. Having more

4 Aristotle is playing on words: *dikaion* (just) is not actually derived from *dicha* (in two).

than one's own is called gaining, and having less than one started with is called losing—as in buying and selling, and in all other dealings in which the law has granted freedom. But when people end up with neither more nor less, but with just what they had, through the exchange itself, they say they have what is their own and neither lose nor gain. So the just is a mean between a kind of gain and a kind of loss in transactions that are not voluntary: it is having an equal amount both before and after.

RECIPROCITY AND MONEY

Aristotle discusses reciprocity in exchange and how money makes goods commensurable.

Some people think that reciprocity is simply what is just, as the Pythagoreans said; for they defined the just simply as suffering in return what one has done to another. But reciprocity fits neither distributive justice nor corrective justice—even though people want to read this into the justice of Rhadamanthys: "If a man should suffer what he did, straight justice would be done"—for in many cases the two conflict. For example, if an official strikes someone, he should not be struck in return; and if someone strikes an official, he should not only be struck but punished as well. Further, the voluntary and the involuntary make a great difference. But in communities of exchange this kind of justice does hold people together—reciprocity in accordance with proportion, not with equality. For it is by proportional reciprocal action that the city holds together.[5] People seek to return either harm for harm— 1133a otherwise it seems like slavery, if one is not to retaliate—or good for good; otherwise there is no exchange, and it is through exchange that they hold together. That is why people set up a shrine of the Graces in a prominent place, so that there may be repayment; for this is the special mark of grace: one should serve in return someone who has done one a favor, and in turn take the lead in doing a favor

5 Rhadamanthys was a mythical judge of the dead; the line is attributed to Hesiod.

oneself. Proportional exchange is brought about by cross-conjunction. Let A be a builder, B a shoemaker, C a house, and D a shoe. The builder must get from the shoemaker the shoemaker's product, and give him his own in return. If, then, there is first proportional equality, and then reciprocity takes place, the result we described will follow.[6] If not, the exchange is not equal and does not hold together; for nothing prevents the product of one from being worth more than that of the other, and so these must be equalized. This holds in the other crafts too: they would be destroyed if what the producer produced, in quantity and quality, were not matched by what the recipient received, of that amount and of that kind. For a community is not formed from two doctors, but from a doctor and a farmer, and in general from people who are different and not equal; but they must be equalized. That is why all things that are exchanged must somehow be comparable. It is for this that money has come in, and it becomes in a way a middle term, since it measures everything—and so measures excess and deficiency too—how many shoes are equal to a house or to a quantity of food. So as builder is to shoemaker, so must so many shoes be to a house or to food. For without this there will be no exchange and no community. And this will not happen unless the goods are somehow equal. So everything must be measured by some one thing, as was said before. In truth this is need, which holds everything together: if people needed nothing, or did not need things in a similar way, there would either be no exchange or not the same exchange. But money has become, by convention, a kind of stand-in for need. And that is why it has the name *nomisma*: because it exists not by nature but by law (*nomos*), and it is in our power to change it and make it useless. There will be reciprocity, then, when the goods have been equalized, so that as farmer is to shoemaker, so the shoemaker's product is to the farmer's. 1133b But we must not bring them into the form of a proportion once they have made the exchange (otherwise one

6 The Graces (*Charites*) were goddesses of charm and favor; the Greek word *charis* means both a favor and gratitude for it.

extreme will have both excesses), but while they still have their own goods. In this way they are equals and partners, because this equality can be established in their case. Let A be a farmer, C food, B a shoemaker, and D his product, equalized with C. If reciprocity were not possible in this way, there would be no community. That need holds things together as a single unit is shown by the fact that when people are not in need of each other—both of them, or one—they do not exchange—as when someone needs what one has oneself, wine for example, and people give leave for the export of grain. So this must be equalized. And for a future exchange—in case someone needs nothing now—money serves us as a kind of guarantor that the exchange will be there if he does need something; for someone who brings money must be able to get what he wants.[7] Money, it is true, is subject to the same thing: its value is not always equal. Still, it tends to be more stable. That is why everything should have a price set on it; for in this way there will always be exchange, and if there is exchange, community. Money, then, acting like a measure, makes things commensurable and equalizes them. For there would be no community without exchange, no exchange without equality, and no equality without commensurability. In truth it is impossible for things that differ so much to become commensurable, but with reference to need they can become so sufficiently. There must, then, be some one unit, fixed by agreement—which is why it is called *nomisma*. For this makes all things commensurable, since all things are measured by money. Let A be a house, B ten minas, C a bed.[8] A is half of B, if the house is worth five minas, or equal to that; and the bed, C, is a tenth of B. It is clear, then, how many beds are equal to a house: five. And it is clear that exchange took place in this way before there was money; for it makes no difference whether five beds are given for a house or the value of five beds.

We have said, then, what the unjust and the just are. With these distinctions drawn, it is clear that just action is a mean

7 The Greek text of the wine-and-grain example is corrupt; the translation is tentative.

between doing wrong and being wronged; for the one is having too much and the other having too little. Justice is a kind of mean, but not in the same way as the other excellences: rather, it is a mean because it is concerned with a mean, while injustice is concerned with the extremes. 1134a Justice is that in virtue of which the just person is said to do what is just by decision, and to distribute—whether between himself and another or between two others—not so as to give himself more of what is choiceworthy and his neighbor less (and the reverse with what is harmful), but so as to give what is proportionally equal; and likewise when distributing between two others. Injustice, conversely, is concerned with the unjust. The unjust is excess and deficiency of what is beneficial or harmful, contrary to proportion. That is why injustice is excess and deficiency: because it is concerned with excess and deficiency—in one's own case, excess of what is beneficial without qualification and deficiency of what is harmful; in the case of others, the result as a whole is similar, but the violation of proportion may go either way. Of the unjust act, the lesser part is being wronged, and the greater part is doing wrong. Let this be our account of justice and injustice and the nature of each, and likewise of the just and the unjust in general.

POLITICAL JUSTICE

Aristotle distinguishes political justice among free equals and divides it into natural and legal.

Since it is possible to do wrong without yet being unjust, what sort of wrongs must one commit to be already unjust with respect to each kind of injustice—a thief, say, or an adulterer, or a bandit? Or will it make no difference in this way? For a man might have sex with a woman knowing who she is, yet not with decision as the starting point, but because of feeling. He does wrong, then, but he is not unjust: he is not a thief, though he stole, nor an adulterer, though he committed adultery; and like-

8 The mina was a sum of money, equal to a hundred drachmas.

wise in the other cases. We have said before how reciprocity is related to the just. But we must not forget that what we are looking for is both the just without qualification and political justice. Political justice exists among people who share a life aimed at self-sufficiency, people who are free and equal, whether proportionally or numerically. So among those for whom this is not the case, there is no political justice in their relations with one another, but only justice of a sort, by resemblance. For there is justice among those whose relations are governed by law; and there is law among those between whom there is injustice, since a legal judgment is a discrimination of the just and the unjust. Where there is injustice there is also doing wrong (though where there is doing wrong there is not always injustice), and injustice is assigning oneself too much of what is good without qualification and too little of what is bad without qualification. That is why we do not allow a human being to rule, but reason, since a human being does this for himself 1134b and becomes a tyrant. The ruler is a guardian of the just, and if of the just, then of the equal too. Since the ruler seems to get nothing extra for himself, if he is just (for he does not assign himself more of what is good without qualification unless it is proportional to him; that is why he labors for another, and why people say justice is "another's good," as was said before), some reward must be given him, and this is honor and privilege. Those for whom such things are not enough become tyrants. The justice of a master and that of a father are not the same as these, though they are similar. For there is no injustice without qualification toward what is one's own; and a piece of property, or a child until it reaches a certain age and becomes independent, is as it were a part of oneself, and no one decides to harm himself. That is why there is no injustice toward oneself, and therefore nothing politically just or unjust either. For that, as we saw, is according to law, and exists among those who are naturally subject to law, and these, as we saw, are people who share equally in ruling and being ruled. That is why justice exists more toward a wife than

toward children and property; for this is household justice. But this too is different from political justice.[9]

Of political justice, part is natural and part is legal. The natural is what has the same force everywhere, and does not depend on whether people think it so or not. The legal is what originally makes no difference whether it is done this way or otherwise, but once people have laid it down, it does make a difference—for example, that a prisoner's ransom is a mina, or that a goat is to be sacrificed rather than two sheep; and further, the laws passed for particular cases, such as sacrificing to Brasidas, and provisions made by decree. Some people think all justice is of this kind, because what is by nature is unchangeable and has the same force everywhere—fire burns both here and in Persia—whereas they see just things changing.[10] This is not so, though it is so in a way. Among the gods, perhaps, it is not so at all; but among us there is something that is by nature, even though all of it is changeable. Nevertheless, some is by nature and some not by nature. Among things that can be otherwise, which kind is by nature, and which is not by nature but legal and conventional, given that both are equally changeable, is clear. And the same distinction will fit other cases too: by nature the right hand is stronger, and yet it is possible for everyone to become ambidextrous. The just things that rest on convention and expediency 1135a are like measures: measures of wine and grain are not equal everywhere, but larger where people buy and smaller where they sell. Likewise, the things that are just not by nature but by human arrangement are not the same everywhere, since constitutions are not the same either; yet only one constitution is everywhere by nature the best. Each of the things that are just and lawful is related to actions as universals are to particulars: the things done are many, but each of those is one, since it is universal. There is a difference between an unjust act and what is unjust, and between a just act and what is just.

9 The master's "property" here includes slaves.

10 Brasidas was a Spartan general killed at Amphipolis in 422 BC; the people of that city honored him with sacrifices as a hero.

Something is unjust by nature or by ordinance; and this same thing, once it has been done, is an unjust act, but before it is done it is not yet that—only something unjust. Likewise with a just act; though the general term is rather "just action" (*dikaiopragēma*), while *dikaiōma* means the correction of an unjust act. As for each of these, what kinds there are, how many, and what they are concerned with, we must examine later.

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY WRONGDOING

Aristotle examines when harmful acts count as unjust, and whether one can be wronged voluntarily.

Given that the just and unjust things are as we have described, a person does wrong or acts justly when he does them voluntarily. When he does them involuntarily, he neither does wrong nor acts justly, except incidentally; for he does things that happen to be just or unjust. An unjust act and a just action are marked off by the voluntary and the involuntary: when an act is voluntary it is blamed, and at the same time it is then an unjust act. So there will be something that is unjust but not yet an unjust act, unless voluntariness is also present. By voluntary I mean, as was also said before, whatever a person does among the things that are up to him, knowingly and not in ignorance of the person affected, the instrument, or the purpose—for example, whom he is striking, with what, and for what purpose—and each of these not incidentally, nor by force (as when someone takes his hand and strikes another with it, he does not do so voluntarily, since it was not up to him). It is possible for the person struck to be one's father, and for the striker to know that he is a human being, or one of those present, but not know that he is his father. Let the same distinction be drawn in the case of the purpose, and with regard to the action as a whole. What is done in ignorance, then, or not in ignorance but not up to the agent, or by force, is involuntary. For there are many natural processes, too, [1135b] that we do or undergo knowingly, none of which is either voluntary or involuntary—growing old, for example, or

dying. And with unjust and just acts alike there is also the incidental. Someone might return a deposit involuntarily and out of fear; he should not be said to do just things or to act justly, except incidentally. Likewise, someone who under compulsion and involuntarily fails to return a deposit should be said to do wrong and do unjust things only incidentally. Of voluntary actions, some we do by decision and others not by decision: by decision, those we have deliberated about beforehand; not by decision, those we have not deliberated about beforehand. There are, then, three kinds of harm that occur in dealings between people. Those done in ignorance are mistakes, when the person affected, the act, the instrument, or the purpose is not what the agent supposed. He thought he was not throwing at all, or not with this, or not at this person, or not for this purpose; but the result was not what he intended—for instance, he threw not to wound but only to prick—or it was not the person he thought, or not with the instrument he thought. When the harm occurs contrary to reasonable expectation, it is a misfortune. When it is not contrary to reasonable expectation, but occurs without vice, it is a mistake (for a person makes a mistake when the origin of the cause lies in himself, and suffers misfortune when it lies outside him). When someone acts knowingly but without prior deliberation, it is an unjust act—for instance, acts done through anger or other feelings that are necessary or natural to human beings. For in doing these harms and making these mistakes people do wrong, and the acts are unjust acts; yet the agents are not thereby unjust or wicked, since the harm is not due to vice. But when the act comes from decision, the agent is unjust and wicked. That is why acts done from anger are rightly judged not to be premeditated; for the one who starts it is not the person acting in anger but the one who made him angry. Further, the dispute is not about whether the thing happened but about whether it was just; for anger is a response to apparent injustice. It isn't like disputes over contracts, where the parties argue about whether the thing happened at all; there one of the two must be wicked, unless they act out of forgetfulness.

Here they agree about the facts and dispute which side is in the right (whereas someone who has plotted against another knows perfectly well what he is doing), so that one thinks he is being wronged and the other doesn't. [1136a] But if someone does harm by decision, he does wrong; and it is when he commits wrongs of this kind, which violate proportion or equality, that the wrongdoer is at last an unjust person. Similarly a person is just when he acts justly by decision; if he merely acts voluntarily, he only does just things. Of involuntary acts, some are forgivable and others are not. Errors people make not only in ignorance but because of ignorance are forgivable; those they make not because of ignorance, but in ignorance that stems from a feeling neither natural nor human, are not forgivable.

One might raise a difficulty about whether we have adequately defined being wronged and doing wrong. First, is it as Euripides says, putting it strangely: "I killed my mother—the tale is short. / Willing, and she willing? Or neither of us willing?" Is it truly possible to be wronged voluntarily, or is being wronged always involuntary, just as doing wrong is always voluntary? And is it always one way or always the other—as doing wrong is always voluntary—or is it sometimes voluntary and sometimes involuntary? The same question arises for being treated justly, since acting justly is always voluntary. So it would be reasonable for the two pairs to be opposed in the same way, and for being wronged and being treated justly alike to be either voluntary or involuntary. But it would seem odd, in the case of being treated justly too, if it were always voluntary; for some people are treated justly against their will.[11] Next, one might also raise this difficulty: is everyone who has suffered something unjust thereby wronged, or is it with suffering as it is with doing? For in both cases it is possible to have a share in just things incidentally, and clearly the same holds for unjust things. Doing unjust things is not the same as doing wrong, and suffering unjust things is not the same as being wronged; and likewise with acting justly and being treated justly. For it is impossible to

11 Probably spoken by Alcmaeon in Euripides' lost play about him.

be wronged unless someone does wrong, or to be treated justly unless someone acts justly. Now if doing wrong is simply harming someone voluntarily, and "voluntarily" means knowing whom one affects, with what, and how, and the uncontrolled person voluntarily harms himself, then he would be wronged voluntarily, and it would be possible to wrong oneself. This too is one of the open questions: [1136b] whether it is possible to wrong oneself. Again, through lack of self-control someone might voluntarily be harmed by another who acts voluntarily, so that it would be possible to be wronged voluntarily. Or is the definition incorrect, and must we add to "harming someone knowing whom, with what, and how" the words "against his wish"? Someone may, then, be harmed voluntarily and suffer unjust things, but no one is wronged voluntarily. For no one wishes it, not even the uncontrolled person; he acts against his wish. No one wishes for what he doesn't think worthwhile, and the uncontrolled person does what he doesn't think he ought to do. And someone who gives away what is his own—as Homer says Glaucus gave Diomedes "gold for bronze, a hundred oxen's worth for nine"—is not wronged. Giving is up to him, but being wronged is not up to him: there has to be someone who wrongs him. So it is clear that being wronged is not voluntary.[12]

Of the questions we set ourselves, two remain to be discussed: whether it is the one who has distributed more than someone deserves who does wrong, or the one who has it; and whether it is possible to wrong oneself. For if the first alternative is possible, and it is the distributor who does wrong and not the one who has more, then if someone knowingly and voluntarily distributes more to another than to himself, he wrongs himself. And this is what moderate people seem to do, since the decent person tends to take less than his share. Or is this too not so simple? For he may perhaps be getting more of some other good, such as reputation or what is fine without qualification. The difficulty is also solved by our definition of doing wrong: he

12 In the *Iliad* (Book 6) the warriors Glaucus and Diomedes exchange armor, and Glaucus gets much the worse of the bargain.

suffers nothing against his own wish, so he is not wronged, at least not on this account; if anything, he is only harmed. It is evident, too, that the distributor does wrong, but the one who has more does not always do so. For it is not the person who ends up with the unjust thing who does wrong, but the person who voluntarily does it; and that is the one in whom the action originates, which is the distributor, not the recipient. Again, since "doing" is said in many ways, and in one sense inanimate things kill, or a hand does, or a servant acting on orders, these do not do wrong, though they do unjust things. Again, if a judge gave his verdict in ignorance, he does not do wrong according to legal justice, nor is his verdict unjust—though in a way it is unjust, since legal justice is different from justice in the primary sense. But if he knowingly judged unjustly, [1137a] he too is getting more than his share, either of gratitude or of revenge. So the man who judges unjustly for these reasons has more, just as if he had taken a share of the proceeds of the wrong; for someone who awards the field on those terms gets not a field but money. People think that doing wrong is up to them, and so they think that being just is easy too. But it isn't. Sleeping with the neighbor's wife, hitting the man next to you, handing over the bribe—these are easy and up to us; but doing them from a certain state of character is neither easy nor up to us. Similarly, people think it takes no wisdom to know what is just and what is unjust, because it isn't hard to understand what the laws say (though these are not the just things, except incidentally). But how actions must be done and distributions made in order to be just—that is a bigger task than knowing what is healthy. Even there it is easy to know about honey, wine, hellebore, cautery and surgery; but knowing how to dispense them to produce health, and to whom, and when, is as big a task as being a doctor. For this very reason people think that doing wrong belongs no less to the just person, since the just person would be no less able, and in fact more able, to do each of these things: to sleep with a woman, to hit someone; and the brave person could throw away

his shield, turn, and run in any direction.[13] But being a coward or doing wrong is not doing these things, except incidentally; it is doing them from a certain state—just as practicing medicine and healing is not cutting or not cutting, giving drugs or not giving them, but doing so in a certain way. Just things exist among those who have a share in things good without qualification, and who can have too much or too little of them. For some beings can have no excess of these goods—the gods, perhaps; for others, the incurably bad, no portion of them is beneficial, but all of it does harm; and for others they are beneficial up to a point. That is why justice is something human.

EQUITY

Aristotle explains equity as a correction of law where its general rules fall short.

Next we should discuss equity and the equitable: how equity is related to justice, and the equitable to the just. For when we examine them, they appear neither simply the same nor different in kind. Sometimes we praise the equitable, and the man who is equitable, so much that we even carry the word over to other things 1137b when we praise them, using it in place of "good" and signaling by "more equitable" that something is better. At other times, when we follow the argument through, it seems odd if the equitable, being something apart from the just, is praiseworthy. For either the just is not excellent, or the equitable is not just, if it is something different; or, if both are excellent, they are the same.[14] These, roughly, are the considerations that create the difficulty about the equitable. Yet all of them are in a way correct, and none contradicts the others. The equitable, while better than one kind of just, is just; it is not better than the just by being something of a different kind. So the just and the equitable are the same, and while both are excellent, the equit-

13 Hellebore is a plant used in Greek medicine as a powerful purge.
14 The Greek word (*epieikeia*) also means decency or reasonableness in general; here Aristotle discusses the sense in which it corrects the rigidity of law.

able is superior. What creates the difficulty is that the equitable is just, but not just according to law; it is a correction of legal justice. The reason is that all law is universal, but about some things it is not possible to speak correctly in universal terms. So in cases where it is necessary to speak universally but not possible to do so correctly, the law takes what holds for the most part, not unaware of the error this involves. And it is no less correct for that. The error lies not in the law, nor in the lawmaker, but in the nature of the thing, since the material of practical matters is simply like that. So when the law speaks universally, and a case arises that falls outside the universal, then it is right—where the lawmaker has left a gap and erred by speaking without qualification—to correct the omission: to say what the lawmaker himself would have said had he been present, and would have written into law had he known. That is why the equitable is just, and better than one kind of just—not better than the just without qualification, but than the error that arises from its being stated without qualification. And this is the nature of the equitable: a correction of law where it falls short because of its universality. This is also the reason why not everything is governed by law: about some things it is impossible to lay down a law, so that a decree is needed. For when a thing is indefinite, the rule for it is indefinite too, like the lead rule used in Lesbian building: the rule shifts to fit the shape of the stone and does not stay fixed, and so the decree adapts to the facts. So it is clear what the equitable is, and that it is just and better than one kind of just. From this it is also evident who the equitable person is: someone who decides on and does such things, and [1138a] who does not insist on the strict letter of justice to the detriment of others but tends to take less, even though he has the law on his side, is equitable; and this state is equity, which is a kind of justice and not some different state.[15]

Whether or not it is possible to wrong oneself is evident from what has been said. One class of just things consists of those, in

15 Lesbian masonry used irregular, many-sided blocks; a flexible lead ruler could be bent to take the contour of each stone.

accordance with each excellence, that are prescribed by law; for example, the law does not command anyone to kill himself, and what it does not command, it forbids. Again, when someone voluntarily does harm contrary to the law, not in retaliation, he does wrong—and a voluntary agent is one who knows both whom he affects and with what. Now someone who cuts his own throat in anger does this voluntarily, contrary to correct reason, which the law does not permit; so he does wrong. But to whom? To the city, surely, not to himself? For he suffers voluntarily, and no one is wronged voluntarily. That is why the city also penalizes him, and a certain dishonor attaches to someone who has destroyed himself, as one who wrongs the city. Again, in the sense in which someone who does wrong is merely unjust, and not bad in every way, it is not possible to wrong oneself. (This sense is different from the other: the unjust person is in a way bad in the same manner as the coward, not as having badness as a whole, so it is not in respect of badness as a whole that he does wrong either.) For then the same thing would at the same time have been taken from and added to the same person, and this is impossible; the just and the unjust always require more than one person. Again, doing wrong is voluntary, by decision, and comes first; someone who does the same thing back because he has suffered it is not thought to do wrong. But someone who wrongs himself suffers and does the same things at the same time. Again, it would then be possible to be wronged voluntarily. Besides, no one does wrong without committing some particular kind of wrong; but no one commits adultery with his own wife, or breaks through his own wall, or steals his own property. In general, the question of wronging oneself is also resolved by the distinction we drew about being wronged voluntarily. It is evident, too, that both are bad, being wronged and doing wrong (for one is having less and the other having more than the mean, as with what is healthy in medicine and what makes for fitness in athletic training). Still, doing wrong is worse. Doing wrong involves badness and is blameworthy—badness that is either complete and unqualified or close to it (for

not every voluntary act involves injustice)—while being wronged involves no badness or injustice. In itself, then, being wronged is less bad, 1138b but nothing prevents it from being incidentally a greater evil. But the craft doesn't concern itself with that: it calls pleurisy a worse illness than a stumble, even though the stumble might sometimes turn out incidentally worse—if, say, a man stumbled, fell, and as a result was captured by the enemy or killed. By metaphor and resemblance there is a justice not between a person and himself but between certain parts of him—not every kind of justice, but the kind between master and slave, or within a household. For in these discussions the part of the soul that has reason is set apart from the non-rational part. It is with these parts in view that there seems to be such a thing as injustice toward oneself, because they can suffer something contrary to their own desires; so there is thought to be a kind of justice between them, as between ruler and ruled. Let this, then, be our account of justice and the other excellences, those of character.

Book VI

The intellectual excellences; practical wisdom
Aristotle examines the excellences of thought, especially practical wisdom and its relation to character.

Since we said earlier that one should choose the mean, not the excess or the deficiency, and that the mean is as correct reason says, let us analyze this. In all the states we have discussed, as in other matters too, there is a target which the person who has reason keeps his eye on as he tightens or relaxes; and there is a standard that marks out the means, which we say lie between excess and deficiency, being in accordance with correct reason. To put it like this is true, but not at all clear. In other pursuits too, those governed by scientific knowledge, it is true to say that one should exert oneself or take it easy neither more nor less than one should, but to the intermediate degree and as correct reason says. But someone who had only this would be none the wiser—about what treatments to apply to the body, for example, if he were told "whatever medicine prescribes, and as the person who has it prescribes." So with the states of the soul too, it is not enough for this to have been said truly; we must also define what correct reason is, and what its standard is.

THE PARTS OF THE SOUL THAT HAVE REASON

Aristotle divides the rational soul into scientific and calculative parts, each aiming at truth.

When we divided the excellences of the soul, [1139a] we said that some are excellences of character and others of thought. We

have gone through the excellences of character; let us discuss the rest as follows, first saying something about the soul. It was said before that the soul has two parts, the part that has reason and the non-rational part. Now we must divide the part that has reason in the same way. Let us take it that there are two parts that have reason: one by which we contemplate the kinds of things whose principles cannot be otherwise, and one by which we contemplate things that can. For where objects differ in kind, the parts of the soul naturally suited to each also differ in kind—if, that is, they come to know their objects through a certain likeness and kinship with them. Let us call one of these the scientific part and the other the calculative part; for deliberating and calculating are the same, and no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise. So the calculative part is one part of the part that has reason. We must grasp, then, what the best state of each of these is; for that is the excellence of each, and the excellence is relative to its proper function. There are three things in the soul that govern action and truth: perception, intellect, desire. Of these, perception is not the origin of any action; this is clear from the fact that beasts have perception but have no share in action. What affirmation and denial are in thought, pursuit and avoidance are in desire. So, since excellence of character is a state that issues in decisions, and decision is deliberative desire, the reasoning must be true and the desire correct if the decision is to be excellent, and the desire must pursue what the reasoning asserts. This, then, is practical thought and practical truth. For thought that is contemplative, and neither practical nor productive, doing well and badly consist in truth and falsehood (for that is the function of everything that thinks); but for what is practical and thinks, the good state is truth in agreement with correct desire. The origin of action—its source of motion, not its end—is decision; and the origin of decision is desire and reasoning directed toward some end. That is why decision requires intellect and thought, and also a state of character; for acting well and its opposite cannot exist in action without thought and character. Thought by itself moves nothing; only

thought that aims at something and is practical does. [1139b] This kind also governs productive thought, since everyone who makes something makes it for the sake of something, and what is made is not an end without qualification (it is an end relative to something, and belongs to someone), whereas what is done is; for acting well is the end, and desire aims at that. So decision is either desiring intellect or thinking desire, and an origin of this kind is a human being. Nothing that has already happened is an object of decision; no one decides to have sacked Troy. For no one deliberates about the past, but about what will be and can be, and what has happened cannot not have happened. So Agathon is right: "Of this alone even a god is deprived: / to make undone whatever has been done." The function of both thinking parts, then, is truth. So the states in which each part will best attain truth are the excellences of both.[1]

SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND CRAFT

Aristotle defines scientific knowledge as demonstration about the necessary and craft as reasoned making.

Let us, then, start again from the beginning and discuss these once more. Let us say that the things by which the soul attains truth in affirming or denying are five in number: craft, scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, wisdom, intellect; for in supposition and opinion one can be mistaken. What scientific knowledge is becomes evident from the following, if we are to speak precisely and not be led by mere resemblances. We all suppose that what we know scientifically cannot be otherwise; whereas with things that can be otherwise, once they are out of our view, we can't tell whether they are the case or not. So what is scientifically known exists of necessity. So it is eternal; for things that exist of necessity without qualification are all eternal, and eternal things neither come into being nor pass away. Again, all scientific knowledge seems to be teachable, and what is scien-

1 Agathon was an Athenian tragic poet of the late fifth century BC; his plays survive only in fragments.

tifically known learnable. But all teaching starts from what is already known, as we say in the *Analytics* too; some teaching proceeds by induction, some by deduction.[2] Induction supplies starting points, including the universal, while deduction proceeds from universals. So there are principles from which deduction proceeds, and of which there is no deduction; they come, then, by induction. Scientific knowledge is a state that demonstrates, together with the further qualifications we add in the *Analytics*. For a person has scientific knowledge when he is convinced in a certain way and the principles are known to him; if he does not know them better than the conclusion, he will have scientific knowledge only incidentally. Let this be our account of scientific knowledge.

1140a What can be otherwise includes both what is made and what is done; making and doing are different (on this we can rely on our more popular discussions too). So the state involving reason that is concerned with doing is different from the state involving reason that is concerned with making. Hence neither includes the other: doing is not making, nor is making doing. Now building is a craft, and is precisely a certain state involving reason concerned with making; and there is no craft that is not a state involving reason concerned with making, nor any such state that is not a craft. So craft would be the same as a state involving true reason concerned with making. All craft is concerned with bringing something into being, that is, with contriving and considering how something may come to be among the things that can either be or not be, and whose origin is in the maker, not in the thing made. For there is no craft of things that are or come to be of necessity, or of things that are by nature, since these have their origin in themselves. And since making and doing are different, craft must be concerned with making, not doing. In a way, chance and craft are concerned with the same things, as Agathon too says: "Craft loves chance, and chance loves craft." Craft, then, as we have said, is a state involving true reason concerned with making; and its opposite,

2 The *Analytics* are Aristotle's treatises on logic, deduction and demonstration.

lack of craft, is a state involving false reason concerned with making, in the sphere of what can be otherwise.

PRACTICAL WISDOM

Aristotle defines practical wisdom as a true reasoned state concerned with action about human goods.

As for practical wisdom, we may grasp it by considering whom we call practically wise. It seems to be characteristic of the practically wise person to be able to deliberate well about what is good and beneficial for himself—not in some particular respect, such as what makes for health or strength, but what makes for living well as a whole. A sign of this is that we also call people practically wise in some particular respect when they calculate well toward some worthwhile end in a matter where there is no craft. So in general the practically wise person would be the one who is good at deliberating. But no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise, or about things he cannot do. So if scientific knowledge involves demonstration, and there is no demonstration of things whose principles can be otherwise (since all of them can also be otherwise), [1140b] and it is not possible to deliberate about things that are of necessity, then practical wisdom would be neither scientific knowledge nor craft: not scientific knowledge, because what is done can be otherwise, and not craft, because doing and making are different in kind. It remains, then, that it is a true state involving reason, concerned with action about what is good and bad for a human being. For making has an end other than itself, but doing would not; acting well is itself the end. That is why we think Pericles and people like him are practically wise: they can see what is good for themselves and for human beings generally; and we think that people who can manage households and cities are like this.[3] This is also why we call moderation by its name, as "preserving practical wisdom." What it preserves is a supposition of this kind. For pleasure and pain do not destroy or distort every

3 Pericles was the leading Athenian statesman of the mid-fifth century BC.

supposition—that a triangle does or doesn't have angles equal to two right angles, for example—but only suppositions about action. The principles of actions are what the actions are done for; but to someone corrupted by pleasure or pain, the principle does not appear straightaway, nor does it appear that he should choose and do everything for its sake and because of it; for vice destroys the principle. So practical wisdom must be a true state involving reason, concerned with action about human goods. Moreover, there is such a thing as excellence in a craft, but not in practical wisdom; and in a craft someone who errs voluntarily is preferable, but with practical wisdom he is worse, as with the excellences too.[4] Clearly, then, it is an excellence and not a craft. And since there are two parts of the soul that have reason, it would be the excellence of one of them, the part that forms opinions; for opinion is concerned with what can be otherwise, and so is practical wisdom. But it is not merely a state involving reason either. A sign of this is that such a state can be forgotten, but practical wisdom cannot.

INTELLECT AND WISDOM

Aristotle explains intellect as grasping first principles and wisdom as the highest knowledge, and compares practical wisdom.

Scientific knowledge is supposition about universals and things that are of necessity, and there are principles of what is demonstrated and of all scientific knowledge (since scientific knowledge involves reasoning). So the principle of what is scientifically known cannot be the object of scientific knowledge, or of craft, or of practical wisdom. For what is scientifically known is demonstrable, 1141a while craft and practical wisdom are concerned with what can be otherwise. Nor is wisdom of these principles, since it is characteristic of the wise person to have demonstrations about some things. So if the things by which we attain truth and are never deceived, about what cannot or even

4 The pun is on the Greek words: *sōphrosynē* (moderation) as *sōzousa tēn phronēsin* ("preserving practical wisdom").

about what can be otherwise, are scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, wisdom and intellect, and it cannot be any of the three (by the three I mean practical wisdom, scientific knowledge and wisdom), it remains that intellect is of the principles.

In the crafts, we attribute wisdom to those who are most exact in their craft; we call Phidias a wise sculptor in stone, for example, and Polyclitus a wise maker of statues, and here we mean nothing by wisdom except excellence in a craft. But we think some people are wise in general, not in some particular field or wise in anything else, as Homer says in the *Margites*: "Him the gods made neither a digger nor a plowman, / nor wise in anything else." So it is clear that wisdom would be the most exact of the kinds of scientific knowledge. The wise person, then, must not only know what follows from the principles but also attain truth about the principles themselves. So wisdom would be intellect together with scientific knowledge: scientific knowledge of the most honorable things, with a head on it, as it were.[5] For it is odd if anyone thinks political expertise or practical wisdom is the most excellent kind of knowledge, unless a human being is the best thing in the cosmos. Now if what is healthy or good is different for human beings and for fish, but what is white or straight is always the same, then everyone would say that what is wise is the same, but what is practically wise differs. For people call a being practically wise if it looks well after its own particular concerns, and they will entrust such matters to it. That is why they even say that some animals are practically wise—those that evidently have a capacity for foresight about their own life. It is also evident that wisdom and political expertise would not be the same. For if people are going to call knowledge of what is beneficial to themselves wisdom, there will be many wisdoms. There is not one wisdom concerned with the good of all animals, but a different one for each —unless there is also one medicine for all beings. And if the point is that a human being is the best of the animals, that

5 Phidias and Polyclitus were the most celebrated sculptors of the fifth century BC; the *Margites*, a comic poem about a fool, was ascribed in antiquity to Homer.

makes no difference; for there are other things far more divine in nature than a human being— [1141b] most evidently, the bodies of which the cosmos is composed. From what has been said, then, it is clear that wisdom is scientific knowledge together with intellect, of the things most honorable by nature. That is why people say that Anaxagoras, Thales and men like them are wise but not practically wise, when they see them ignorant of what is to their own advantage; and they say these men know things that are remarkable, wonderful, difficult and superhuman, but useless, because it is not human goods they are seeking. Practical wisdom, by contrast, is concerned with human affairs and with what can be deliberated about. For we say that this above all is the function of the practically wise person, to deliberate well; and no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise, or about things that do not lead to some end, an end that is a good achievable in action. The person who is good at deliberating without qualification is the one who, by calculation, aims at the best of the goods achievable in action for a human being. Nor is practical wisdom concerned only with universals; it must also recognize particulars, since it is practical, and action is concerned with particulars.[6] That is why some people who lack knowledge are more effective in action than others who have it; and in other fields too, those with experience are. If someone knew that light meats are easily digested and healthy, but did not know which meats are light, he will not produce health; the person who knows that poultry is light and healthy is more likely to. Practical wisdom is concerned with action, so one needs both kinds of knowledge—or this kind more. But here too there would be a master form of it, one that directs the rest.

Political expertise and practical wisdom are the same state, but what it is to be each of them is not the same. Of the practical wisdom concerned with the city, the directing, master part is legislative; the part concerned with particulars has the common

6 Thales (sixth century BC) and Anaxagoras (fifth century BC) were early natural philosophers who studied the heavens and the nature of things.

name, "political." This part deals with action and deliberation, since a decree is something to be acted on, as the last step. That is why only these people are said to "take part in politics": they alone act, the way manual craftsmen do. Practical wisdom, too, is thought to be above all the kind concerned with oneself as an individual, and this kind has the common name, "practical wisdom." Of the others, one is household management, another legislation, another political expertise; and of this last, one part is deliberative and the other judicial. Knowing what is good for oneself would, then, be one kind of knowledge; but it differs a great deal from the others. 1142a The person who knows about his own affairs and spends his time on them is thought to be practically wise, while politicians are thought to be busybodies. Hence Euripides: "How could I be wise, when I might have lived free of affairs, counted as one among the many in the army, with an equal share? ... For those who stand out and do something more ..." For people seek their own good, and think that this is what they ought to do. It is from this opinion, then, that the idea has come that such people are the practically wise. Yet perhaps one's own good cannot exist without household management, or without a political order. Further, how one ought to manage one's own affairs is unclear and needs examining. A sign of what has been said is that the young become good at geometry and mathematics, and wise in such matters, but a young person does not seem to become practically wise.[7] The reason is that practical wisdom is also concerned with particulars, and these become familiar through experience; but a young person is not experienced, since it takes a long stretch of time to produce experience. One might also consider this question: why can a child become a mathematician, but not wise, or a natural scientist? Is it because the objects of mathematics exist through abstraction, while the first principles of the other subjects come from experience? And the young don't really believe the latter but merely repeat them, whereas what mathematical objects are is not unclear to them? Further, error in deliberation may con-

7 The quotation breaks off in the text.

cern either the universal or the particular: one may go wrong either about the claim that all heavy water is bad, or about the claim that this water is heavy. That practical wisdom is not scientific knowledge is evident; for it is concerned with the last thing, as has been said, since what is to be done is of this kind. So it is opposed to intellect. For intellect is concerned with the first terms, of which there is no account, while practical wisdom is concerned with the last thing, of which there is no scientific knowledge but perception—not perception of the objects special to each sense, but the kind by which we perceive that the last figure in mathematics is a triangle; for there too one will come to a stop. But this is perception rather than practical wisdom, though a different kind of perception from the other.

GOOD DELIBERATION, COMPREHENSION AND JUDGEMENT

Aristotle examines good deliberation, comprehension, judgment and intellect as parts of practical thought.

Inquiring and deliberating are different; deliberating is a particular kind of inquiring. We must also grasp what good deliberation is—whether it is some kind of scientific knowledge, or opinion, or good guessing, or something of another kind. Well, it is not scientific knowledge: people do not inquire about what they know, [1142b] whereas good deliberation is a kind of deliberation, and someone deliberating is inquiring and calculating. Nor, again, is it good guessing: good guessing works without reasoning, and quickly, whereas people deliberate for a long time, and they say one should carry out quickly what one has deliberated on, but deliberate slowly. Further, quickness of mind is different from good deliberation; quickness of mind is a kind of good guessing. Nor, then, is good deliberation any kind of opinion. But since someone who deliberates badly goes wrong, while someone who deliberates well deliberates correctly, it is clear that good deliberation is a kind of correctness—though not of scientific knowledge, nor of opinion. Scientific knowledge has no correctness (since it has no error either), and the correctness

of opinion is truth; and besides, whatever opinion is about has already been settled. Yet good deliberation does not come about without reasoning either. What remains, then, is that it is correctness of thinking; for thinking is not yet an assertion. Opinion is not inquiry but already a kind of assertion, whereas the person deliberating, whether he deliberates well or badly, is inquiring into something and calculating. But good deliberation is a kind of correctness of deliberation; so we must first inquire what deliberation is and what it is about. Since correctness has more than one sense, it is clear that good deliberation is not every kind of it. For the uncontrolled person and the bad person will attain by calculation what he sets himself to do, and so he will have deliberated correctly, yet will have got hold of a great evil. But having deliberated well is thought to be something good; for good deliberation is the kind of correctness of deliberation that attains a good. Yet it is possible to attain even this by a false syllogism—to hit on what one ought to do, but not by the right means, the middle term being false. So this is not yet good deliberation either, the kind by which one attains what one should, but not by the means one should. Further, one person may reach the result after deliberating for a long time, another quickly. So that is not yet good deliberation either; rather, good deliberation is correctness with respect to what is beneficial—about what one should, in the way one should, and when. Further, one can have deliberated well either without qualification or in relation to some particular end. Good deliberation without qualification is the kind that succeeds in relation to the end without qualification; a particular kind is one that succeeds in relation to some particular end. If, then, having deliberated well is characteristic of the practically wise, good deliberation would be correctness with respect to what is advantageous in relation to the end, of which practical wisdom is the true grasp.

Comprehension, too, and good comprehension, [1143a] in virtue of which we call people comprehending and good at comprehending, are neither the same as scientific knowledge or opinion in general (otherwise everyone would be comprehending),

nor any one of the particular sciences, as medicine is about what is healthy, or geometry about magnitudes. For comprehension is neither about things that always exist and are unchanging, nor about just anything that comes to be, but about things one might be puzzled about and deliberate on. So it is concerned with the same things as practical wisdom, but comprehension and practical wisdom are not the same. Practical wisdom gives commands, since its end is what one should or should not do; comprehension only judges. (Comprehension is the same as good comprehension, and people who comprehend the same as those who comprehend well.) Comprehension is neither having practical wisdom nor acquiring it. Rather, just as learning is called comprehending when one uses scientific knowledge, so comprehending lies in using opinion to judge, when someone else is speaking, about the things practical wisdom is concerned with—and to judge them finely, since "well" is the same as "finely." And this is where the name "comprehension," in virtue of which people are good at comprehending, came from: from comprehension in learning. For we often call learning "comprehending."[8]

What is called judgement, in virtue of which we say people are sympathetic and "have judgement," is the correct discernment of what is decent. A sign of this: we say the decent person is above all sympathetic, and that it is decent to be sympathetic about certain things. And sympathy is judgement that correctly discerns what is decent; and correct judgement is judgement of what is true.[9]

All these states tend, reasonably enough, toward the same thing. For when we speak of judgement, comprehension, practical wisdom and intellect, we attribute them to the same people, saying that they have judgement and, by now, intellect, and are practically wise and comprehending. For all these capa-

8 The Greek verb *sunienai*, "to comprehend," is also used of following and taking in what one is taught.

9 *Gnōmē* is "judgement"; *sungnōmē*, literally "judging-with," is the ordinary word for sympathy, pardon or forgiveness.

cities are concerned with ultimate things, that is, with particulars. It is in being able to judge about the things the practically wise person is concerned with that someone is comprehending and of good judgement, or sympathetic; for what is decent is common to all good people in their dealings with others. And all things to be done are particulars and ultimate things: the practically wise person must know them, and comprehension and judgement are concerned with things to be done, and these are ultimate. Intellect, too, is concerned with ultimate things, in both directions. For both the first terms and the ultimate things [1143b] are grasped by intellect and not by reasoning. In demonstrations, intellect grasps the unchanging first terms; in practical matters, it grasps the ultimate thing, the one that can be otherwise, and the second premise. For these are the starting points of that for the sake of which we act, since universals are reached from particulars. Of these, then, one must have perception, and this perception is intellect. That is why these states are thought to be natural, and why, while no one is thought to be wise by nature, people are thought to have judgement, comprehension and intellect by nature. A sign of this is that we think they go with the stages of life, and that a particular age has intellect and judgement, as though nature were the cause. That is why intellect is both beginning and end; for demonstrations start from these things and are about them. So one should pay attention to the undemonstrated sayings and opinions of experienced and older people, or of the practically wise, no less than to demonstrations; for because experience has given them an eye, they see correctly. We have said, then, what practical wisdom and wisdom are, what each of them is concerned with, and that each is the excellence of a different part of the soul.

WHAT WISDOM AND PRACTICAL WISDOM ARE FOR

Aristotle asks what use wisdom and practical wisdom are, and ties practical wisdom to excellence of character.

But someone might raise a puzzle about what use they are. Wisdom will contemplate none of the things from which a human being becomes happy, since it is not concerned with any coming-to-be. Practical wisdom does have this concern, but what do we need it for? Practical wisdom is what is concerned with things just and fine and good for a human being, and these are what a good man does; but we are no more able to do them for knowing them, if the excellences are states—just as we are not with things that are healthy or fit, in the sense of things said to be so not because they produce health but because they result from the state. We are no more able to act for having the craft of medicine or of physical training. If instead we are to call a person practically wise not for the sake of this but for the sake of becoming good, practical wisdom would be of no use to those who are already excellent. Nor, further, to those who do not have it; for it will make no difference whether they have it themselves or obey others who do, and it would be enough for us to do as we do with health: we want to be healthy, and yet we don't learn medicine. Besides, it would seem odd if practical wisdom, though inferior to wisdom, were to have more authority than it; for what produces something rules and gives orders about it. We must discuss these questions; so far we have only raised puzzles about them. [1144a] First, then, let us say that they must be choiceworthy in themselves, since each is the excellence of one of the two parts, even if neither of them produces anything. Next, they do produce something—not as medicine produces health, but as health does: this is how wisdom produces happiness. For since it is a part of excellence as a whole, by being possessed and by being active it makes a person happy. Further, the function is completed in accordance with practical wisdom and excellence of character: excellence makes the goal correct, and practical

wisdom makes correct what leads to it. The fourth part of the soul, the nutritive, has no excellence of this kind, since it is not up to it to act or not act. As for the claim that practical wisdom makes us no more able to do fine and just things, we must start a little further back, taking this as our starting point. Just as we say that some people who do just things are not yet just—for example, those who do what the laws prescribe either unwillingly, or through ignorance, or for some other reason and not for the sake of the acts themselves (even though they do what they should, and all that the excellent person ought to do)—so, it seems, there is a certain condition one must be in when doing each thing in order to be good: I mean, doing it from decision and for the sake of the things done themselves. Excellence makes the decision correct; but doing whatever is naturally done for the sake of that decision belongs not to excellence but to another capacity. We must pause on these matters and speak about them more clearly. There is a capacity people call cleverness. It is the ability to do the things that contribute to a goal one has set, and to attain it. If the goal is fine, cleverness is praiseworthy; if it is bad, it is unscrupulousness. That is why we call both the practically wise and the unscrupulous clever. Practical wisdom is not this capacity, but it does not exist without it. And this eye of the soul does not acquire its state without excellence, as has been said and is clear. For practical syllogisms have a starting point: "since the end, the best thing, is such-and-such"—whatever it may be (let it be anything at all, for the sake of argument). And this is not apparent except to the good person; for vice distorts us and makes us deceived about the starting points of action. So it is evident that one cannot be practically wise without being good.

1144b We must, then, examine excellence again too. For excellence stands in a closely similar relation: as practical wisdom is to cleverness—not the same, but similar—so natural excellence is to excellence in the full sense. Everyone thinks each type of character belongs to us somehow by nature; we are just, moderate, brave and so on, right from birth. But still we look for some-

thing else, what is good in the full sense, and for such qualities to belong to us in another way. For children and animals also have the natural states, but without intellect they are evidently harmful. This much, at least, seems observable: just as a strong body moving about without sight stumbles heavily because it has no sight, so it is here too. But if someone acquires intellect, it makes a difference in his actions; and his state, while similar, will then be excellence in the full sense. So just as in the part that forms opinions there are two kinds, cleverness and practical wisdom, so in the part concerned with character there are two, natural excellence and excellence in the full sense; and of these, excellence in the full sense does not come about without practical wisdom. That is why some say all the excellences are forms of practical wisdom, and why Socrates was partly right in his inquiry and partly wrong: he was wrong in thinking that all the excellences are forms of practical wisdom, but right in saying that they do not exist without it. A sign of this: even now, when people define excellence, everyone, after naming the state and what it concerns, adds "in accordance with correct reason"; and reason is correct when it accords with practical wisdom. So everyone seems somehow to divine that excellence is this sort of state, the one in accordance with practical wisdom. But we must go a little further. Excellence is not merely the state in accordance with correct reason, but the state that involves correct reason; and correct reason about such matters is practical wisdom. So Socrates thought the excellences were forms of reason (for he thought they were all forms of scientific knowledge), whereas we think they involve reason. It is clear, then, from what has been said, that it is not possible to be good in the full sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without excellence of character. And in this way we could also answer the argument by which someone might contend that the excellences exist separately from one another, on the grounds that the same person is not best endowed by nature for all of them, so that he will already have acquired one but not yet another. That is possible with the natural excellences, [1145a] but not with

those in virtue of which someone is called good without qualification; for when practical wisdom, which is one, is present, all of them will be present. It is clear, too, that even if practical wisdom were not concerned with action, we would need it because it is the excellence of that part of the soul; and that decision will not be correct without practical wisdom, nor without excellence. For the one makes us achieve the end, the other the things that lead to the end. Yet it does not have authority over wisdom, or over the better part, any more than medicine has authority over health. It does not use health, but sees to it that health comes about; so it gives orders for the sake of health, not to it. Further, saying that it did would be like saying that political expertise rules the gods, because it gives orders about everything in the city.

Book VII

Lack of self-control; pleasure
Aristotle examines lack of self-control, how it differs from vice, and whether pleasure is good.

After this we must make a fresh start and say that there are three kinds of things to be avoided in matters of character: vice, lack of self-control, and brutishness. The opposites of two of these are clear: we call one excellence and the other self-control. As the opposite of brutishness it would be most fitting to name the excellence that is beyond us, a heroic and godlike excellence —as Homer has Priam say of Hector that he was exceedingly good: "he did not seem the son of a mortal man, but of a god." So if, as people say, humans become gods through an excess of excellence, the state opposed to brutishness would clearly be something like this. For just as a beast has neither vice nor excellence, neither does a god: the god's state is something more to be honored than excellence, and the beast's is some different kind of thing from vice. Since it is rare for a man to be godlike— as the Spartans usually put it: when they greatly admire someone, they call him "a godly man"—so the brutish person is also rare among human beings. It is found most among non-Greeks, and some cases also arise from disease or disability; and we also use the word as a reproach for those who surpass other people in vice. But we must make some mention of this sort of condition later; vice has been discussed before. We must now discuss lack of self-control, softness and luxury, and also self-control and endurance. [1145b] For we should not suppose that each

of these pairs concerns the same states as excellence and wickedness, nor that it is a different kind.[1]

PUZZLES ABOUT SELF-CONTROL

Aristotle sets out common opinions about self-control and the puzzles they raise.

As in other cases, we must set out the appearances and first work through the puzzles, and in this way show, ideally, all the reputable opinions about these feelings, or if not, most of them and the most authoritative. For if the difficulties are resolved and the reputable opinions are left standing, the matter will have been adequately shown.

Self-control and endurance are thought to be among excellent and praiseworthy things, and lack of self-control and softness among bad and blameworthy ones. The self-controlled person is thought to be the same as one who sticks to his calculation, and the uncontrolled person the same as one who abandons it. The uncontrolled person knows that what he does is bad, but does it because of feeling; the self-controlled person knows that his appetites are bad, and because of reason does not follow them. The moderate person is said to be self-controlled and enduring; but some think anyone who is like that is moderate in every case, and others do not. Some call the self-indulgent person uncontrolled and the uncontrolled person self-indulgent, lumping them together, while others say they are different. As for the practically wise person, sometimes people say he cannot be uncontrolled, and sometimes that some people who are practically wise and clever are uncontrolled. Further, people are called uncontrolled with respect to anger, honor and gain. These, then, are the things that are said.

One might be puzzled about how someone can act without self-control while judging correctly. Some say it is impossible if he has knowledge; for it would be terrible, as Socrates thought, if knowledge were present in someone and something else over-

1 The Spartans say *seios*, their dialect form of *theios*, "divine."

powered it and dragged it around like a slave. Socrates, in fact, fought against the view entirely, on the grounds that there is no such thing as lack of self-control: no one, he held, acts contrary to what is best while judging it to be best, but only through ignorance. Now this argument plainly conflicts with the appearances, and we need to inquire about the feeling: if it comes about through ignorance, what is the manner of the ignorance? For it is evident that the person who acts without self-control does not think he should before he gets into the state of feeling. There are some who grant part of this but not all. They agree that nothing is stronger than knowledge, but they do not agree that no one acts contrary to what seemed better; and so they say that when the uncontrolled person is overpowered by pleasures, he has not knowledge but opinion. But if it is opinion and not knowledge, and the conviction [1146a] that resists is not strong but mild, as in people who are in two minds, we sympathize with someone who does not stick to such opinions against strong appetites. But we do not sympathize with wickedness, or with anything else that is blameworthy. Is it, then, practical wisdom that resists? For that is the strongest thing. But that is absurd: the same person will be at once practically wise and uncontrolled, and no one at all would say that it is characteristic of the practically wise person willingly to do the worst things. Besides, it has been shown earlier that the practically wise person is someone who acts (for he is concerned with ultimate things) and has the other excellences. Further, if being self-controlled involves having strong and bad appetites, the moderate person will not be self-controlled, nor the self-controlled person moderate; for it is not characteristic of the moderate person to have excessive appetites, or bad ones. Yet the self-controlled person must have them. For if the appetites are good, the state that stops one from following them is bad, so that not all self-control is excellent; and if they are weak and not bad, there is nothing impressive in resisting them, nor anything great if they are bad but weak. Further, if self-control makes one stick to every opinion, it is bad—if, for instance, it makes one stick even to a false

one. And if lack of self-control makes one abandon every opinion, there will be an excellent kind of lack of self-control, like Neoptolemus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*: he is praiseworthy for not sticking to what Odysseus persuaded him to do, because lying pains him. Further, the sophistical argument, though false, creates a puzzle. Because sophists want to refute people by reaching paradoxical conclusions, so as to be thought clever when they succeed, the resulting syllogism becomes a puzzle. For thought is tied up: it does not want to stay put, since it dislikes the conclusion, but it cannot move forward, since it cannot undo the argument.[2] So from a certain argument it follows that foolishness combined with lack of self-control is excellence. For because of his lack of self-control a person does the opposite of what he judges; but he judges that good things are bad and that he ought not to do them; so he will do the good things and not the bad. Further, the person who does and pursues pleasant things because he is convinced he should, and decides to, would seem better than one who does so not because of calculation but because of lack of self-control; for he is easier to cure, since he might be persuaded otherwise. But the uncontrolled person falls under the proverb in which we say, "When water chokes you, what should you drink after it?" For if he had been persuaded of what he does, 1146b he would have stopped once persuaded otherwise; as it is, though persuaded of one thing, he does another all the same. Further, if lack of self-control and self-control concern everything, who is the person who is uncontrolled without qualification? No one has every kind of lack of self-control, yet we say some people are uncontrolled without qualification.

These, then, are roughly the puzzles that arise. Some of these we must remove and others leave standing; for the resolution of a puzzle is a discovery.

2 In Sophocles' play, Odysseus persuades the young Neoptolemus to deceive Philoctetes; Neoptolemus later refuses to keep up the lie.

HOW SOMEONE WHO KNOWS CAN LACK SELF-CONTROL

Aristotle explains how someone can know what is right yet act against it.

First, then, we must consider whether uncontrolled people act knowingly or not, and in what way knowingly; next, what sort of things we should take the uncontrolled and the self-controlled person to be concerned with—I mean, whether with every pleasure and pain, or with certain specific ones—and whether the self-controlled and the enduring person are the same or different; and similarly with the other questions akin to this inquiry. The starting point of the investigation is whether the self-controlled and the uncontrolled person differ by what they are concerned with or by how they are disposed—I mean, whether the uncontrolled person is uncontrolled solely by being concerned with these particular things, or not that but by how he is, or not that either but from both; and next, whether lack of self-control and self-control concern everything or not. The person who is uncontrolled without qualification is not concerned with everything, but with the same things as the self-indulgent person; nor is he uncontrolled simply by being related to these things (for then it would be the same as self-indulgence), but by being related to them in a particular way. The self-indulgent person is led on by decision, thinking he should always pursue the pleasure at hand; the uncontrolled person does not think so, but pursues it anyway. As for the suggestion that it is true opinion and not knowledge that people act against when they lack self-control, this makes no difference to the argument. For some people who hold opinions are in no doubt, but think they know exactly. So if it is because their belief is mild that people with opinion, more than people with knowledge, will act against their judgement, knowledge will not differ from opinion; for some people are no less convinced of what they believe than others are of what they know—as Heraclitus shows. But since we speak of knowing in two ways (both the person who has know-

ledge but is not using it and the person who is using it are said to know), there will be a difference between doing what one should not while having the knowledge but not contemplating it, and doing so while having it and contemplating it. The latter seems terrible, but not if one is not contemplating it. 1147a Further, since there are two kinds of premise, nothing prevents someone who has both from acting against his knowledge, if he is using the universal premise but not the particular one; for what is done is particular. The universal, too, differs: one universal applies to the agent himself, the other to the thing. For example, "dry food is good for every human being" and "I am a human being," or "this sort of food is dry"; but as to whether *this* is this sort, either he does not have this knowledge or it is not active. So there will be an enormous difference between these ways of knowing, so that knowing in one way seems not at all strange, but knowing in the other seems astonishing. Further, human beings can have knowledge in yet another way than those just mentioned. For within having but not using, we see a difference in the state, so that one both has it in a way and does not have it—as with someone asleep, or mad, or drunk. But this is just the condition of people in the grip of feelings. Fits of anger, sexual appetites and some other such things plainly alter even the body, and in some people they even cause madness. Clearly, then, we should say that uncontrolled people are in a similar condition to these. Saying the words that come from knowledge is no sign of anything: people in these states recite proofs and verses of Empedocles, and those who have just begun learning string the words together but do not yet know them; for the knowledge must grow into them, and that takes time. So we should suppose that people acting without self-control say the words the way actors do. Further, one might also look at the cause in the following way, in terms of natural science.[3] One opinion is universal, and the other concerns particulars, which are already governed by perception. When a single one comes from the two, the soul must in one case affirm the

3 Empedocles of Acragas (fifth century BC), a philosopher who wrote in verse.

conclusion, but in matters of production it must act at once. For example, if one ought to taste everything sweet, and this, as one of the particulars, is sweet, then someone who is able and not prevented must at the same time also do this. So when the universal opinion is present forbidding us to taste, and there is also the other one, that everything sweet is pleasant and this is sweet (and this one is active), and appetite happens to be present, then the one opinion tells us to avoid this, but appetite leads us on; for it can move each of the bodily parts. 1147b So it turns out that one acts without self-control under the influence, in a way, of reason and opinion—an opinion that is contrary, not in itself but incidentally (for it is the appetite that is contrary, not the opinion), to correct reason. That is also why animals are not uncontrolled: they have no universal judgement, only imagination and memory of particulars. As for how the ignorance is dissolved and the uncontrolled person regains his knowledge, the account is the same as for the drunk and the sleeper and is not peculiar to this condition; we must learn it from the natural scientists. Now since the last premise is a belief about something perceptible, and is what governs our actions, the person in the grip of the feeling either doesn't have it, or has it only in a sense in which having it isn't knowing but merely saying the words, as a drunk recites Empedocles. And because the last term is not universal, and doesn't seem to be an object of scientific knowledge in the way the universal is, what Socrates was looking for also seems to turn out to be the case. For the feeling doesn't arise when what seems to be knowledge in the full sense is present, nor is it that knowledge that gets dragged around by the feeling, but the perceptual kind. So much, then, for the questions whether the uncontrolled person acts knowing or not knowing, and in what sense someone who knows can lack self-control.

WHAT SELF-CONTROL IS CONCERNED WITH

Aristotle argues that self-control in the strict sense concerns bodily pleasures, others only by extension.

Next we must discuss whether anyone is uncontrolled without qualification, or everyone who is so is uncontrolled in some particular respect; and if there is such a person, what sorts of things he is uncontrolled about. That the self-controlled and the enduring, and the uncontrolled and the soft, are concerned with pleasures and pains is clear. Some of the things that produce pleasure are necessary, while others are choiceworthy in themselves but admit of excess. The necessary ones are the bodily ones—I mean things like those to do with food and sexual need, the sort of bodily things we took to be the sphere of self-indulgence and moderation. The others are not necessary but are choiceworthy in themselves—I mean, for example, victory, honor, wealth, and other good and pleasant things of that kind. Now those who go to excess with regard to these latter, against the correct reason that is in them, we don't call uncontrolled without qualification. We add a qualification—uncontrolled about money, or gain, or honor, or anger—and don't call them simply uncontrolled, since they are different and are so called by resemblance. Compare Anthropos, the Olympic victor: 1148a the general account of "human being" differed only slightly from the account peculiar to him, but it was different all the same.[4] Here is a sign of this: lack of self-control is blamed not merely as an error but as a kind of vice, either without qualification or in some particular respect, whereas none of these others is. Among those concerned with bodily enjoyments, the sphere in which we call people moderate or self-indulgent, the one who pursues excesses of pleasant things—and avoids excesses of painful ones, hunger and thirst and heat and cold and everything to do with touch and taste—not by decision but con-

4 Anthropos ("Human Being") was the name of a boxer who won at Olympia in 456 BC.

trary to his decision and his thinking, is called uncontrolled. He is called so not with an addition, "about this," as we say "about anger," but simply without qualification. Another sign: people are also called "soft" with respect to these pleasures, but not with respect to any of the others. That is why we group the uncontrolled person with the self-indulgent, and the self-controlled with the moderate, but none of those others: because they are concerned in a way with the same pleasures and pains. But though they are concerned with the same things, they are not concerned with them in the same way: the one kind decide on them, the other kind don't. So we would sooner call someone self-indulgent who pursues excesses and avoids moderate pains while feeling no appetite, or only a mild one, than someone who does so because his appetite is intense. For what would the former do if he also came to have a youthful appetite, and violent pain at the lack of necessities? Some appetites and pleasures are for things that are fine and excellent in kind (for some pleasant things are choiceworthy by nature); others are for their opposites; and others for things in between, as we distinguished earlier—money, for example, and gain, victory, and honor. With regard to all of these, both the fine kind and the intermediate, people are blamed not for being affected by them, having an appetite for them, and loving them, but for doing so in a certain way, and to excess. (So those who, against reason, are overcome by or pursue something that is by nature fine and good are not blamed—those, for example, who care more than they should about honor, or about their children and parents. These too are goods, and those who care about them are praised. Yet there is an excess even here, if someone were to fight even against the gods, like Niobe, or were to be like Satyrus, [1148b] nicknamed "the father-lover," about his father: he was thought to be quite foolish.) There is no wickedness, then, concerned with these things, for the reason stated: each of them is by nature choiceworthy for its own sake, though excesses of them are bad and to be

avoided.[5] Likewise there is no lack of self-control about them either; for lack of self-control is not only to be avoided but also blameworthy. But because the feeling is similar, people apply the term "lack of self-control" with a qualification in each case, as they speak of a bad doctor or a bad actor, whom they would not call bad without qualification. So just as we don't in these cases, because each of these is not a vice but only similar to one by analogy, clearly in the other case too we should suppose that the only lack of self-control and self-control are those concerned with the same things as moderation and self-indulgence, while we speak of them in connection with anger by resemblance. That is why we say, adding a qualification, "uncontrolled about anger," as we do "about honor" and "about gain."

BRUTISH AND DISEASED STATES

Aristotle describes brutish and diseased pleasures and says lack of self-control about them is so only by extension.

Some things are pleasant by nature—some of these without qualification, others relative to kinds both of animals and of human beings—while other things are not pleasant by nature but become so, some through deformities, some through habits, and some through depraved natures. With regard to each of these too one can observe corresponding states. I mean the brutish ones: for example, the woman who, they say, rips open pregnant women and devours the babies; or the sort of things that some of the people who have turned savage around the Black Sea are said to enjoy, some eating raw meat, others human flesh, and others lending one another their children for feasts; or what is told of Phalaris.[6] These states are brutish. Others arise through disease (and in some cases through madness, like the man who sacrificed his mother and ate her, or the one who ate

5 Niobe boasted that she had more children than the goddess Leto, whose children Apollo and Artemis then killed hers.

6 Phalaris, tyrant of Acragas in Sicily in the sixth century BC, was proverbial for cruelty; he was said to roast his victims alive in a bronze bull.

his fellow slave's liver). Others are diseased conditions or come from habit, such as pulling out one's hair and biting one's nails, or even eating coal and earth, and in addition sex between males. For these come about in some people by nature, in others from habit, as with those who have been abused since childhood. Now nobody would call uncontrolled those for whom nature is the cause, any more than we would call women uncontrolled because they take the passive rather than the active role in sex; and the same goes for those who are in a diseased condition through habit. Having any of these, then, [1149a] lies outside the limits of vice, as brutishness does too. And when the person who has them masters them or is mastered by them, this is not lack of self-control without qualification but lack of self-control by resemblance—just as someone in this condition with regard to anger should be called uncontrolled in respect of that feeling, but not simply uncontrolled. For every excessive state, whether of folly, cowardice, self-indulgence, or bad temper, is either brutish or diseased. Someone who is by nature the sort to fear everything, even the squeak of a mouse, is cowardly with a brutish cowardice, whereas the man who was afraid of the weasel was so through disease. And among the foolish, those who are by nature unreasoning and live by perception alone are brutish, like some races of distant foreigners, while those who are so through diseases, such as epilepsy, or through madness, are diseased. It is possible to have one of these sometimes without being mastered by it—I mean, for example, if Phalaris had restrained himself when he had an appetite to eat a child, or for some bizarre sexual pleasure—and it is also possible to be mastered, not merely to have it. So just as with wickedness, the kind on a human scale is called wickedness without qualification, while the other kind is called wickedness with an addition —brutish or diseased—and not without qualification, in the same way it is clear that lack of self-control too is sometimes brutish and sometimes diseased, and only the kind that corresponds to human self-indulgence is lack of self-control without qualification.

It is clear, then, that lack of self-control and self-control are concerned only with the same things as self-indulgence and moderation, and that concerning other things there is another kind of lack of self-control, so called by metaphor and not without qualification.

ANGER AND APPETITE

Aristotle argues that lack of control over anger is less shameful than over appetite.

Let us now observe that lack of self-control about anger is also less shameful than lack of self-control about appetites. For anger seems to hear reason to some extent, but to mishear it, like hasty servants who dash off before they've heard everything that's said and then get the order wrong, or like dogs that bark at a mere knock before checking whether it's a friend. In the same way anger, because of the heat and haste of its nature, hears, but doesn't hear the instruction, and rushes off to take revenge. For reason or appearance has indicated that there has been an insult or a slight, and anger, as though it had reasoned that one must go to war against anything like that, immediately flares up. Appetite, on the other hand, rushes off to enjoy something if reason or perception merely says it is pleasant. [1149b] So anger follows reason in a way, but appetite does not. So lack of self-control about appetite is more shameful. For the person who is uncontrolled about anger is in a way overcome by reason, whereas the other is overcome by appetite and not by reason. Again, we are more ready to forgive people for following natural desires, since we are more forgiving even of appetites when they are the sort common to everyone, and to the extent that they are common. And anger and bad temper are more natural than the appetites for excess and for what is not necessary. Take the man who defended himself for beating his father by saying, "He beat his own father too, and his father beat his"; and pointing to his little boy, he said, "And he'll beat me when he grows up: it runs in our family." Or the man being dragged along by his son who

told him to stop at the front door, since he himself had dragged his own father only that far. Again, those who are more given to scheming are more unjust. Now the angry person is not given to scheming, and neither is anger: it is open. But appetite is like what they say of Aphrodite, "guile-weaving, Cyprus-born," and what Homer says of her embroidered girdle: "beguiling talk, which steals the wits even of the very shrewd." So if this lack of self-control is more unjust and more shameful than the one concerned with anger, it is lack of self-control without qualification, and in a way a vice. Again, no one commits outrage while feeling pain; but everyone who acts in anger acts while feeling pain, whereas the one who commits outrage does so with pleasure. So if the acts that it is most just to be angry at are more unjust, then lack of self-control due to appetite is more unjust too; for there is no outrage in anger. It is clear, then, that lack of self-control about appetites is more shameful than lack of self-control about anger, and that self-control and lack of self-control are concerned with bodily appetites and pleasures. But we must grasp the differences among these very appetites and pleasures. For as was said at the beginning, some are human and natural, both in kind and in magnitude; others are brutish; and others are due to deformities and diseases. Of these, moderation and self-indulgence are concerned only with the first. That is why we don't call animals moderate or self-indulgent, except by metaphor, and only if one kind of animal differs from another as a whole in wantonness, destructiveness, and voracity. For they have neither decision nor reasoning; they have departed from nature, like madmen among human beings. 1150a Bestiality is a lesser thing than vice, though more frightening; for the better part has not been corrupted, as it is in a human being—the animal simply doesn't have it. So it is like comparing something inanimate with something animate and asking which is worse: the badness of something that has no originating principle is always less harmful, and intellect is an originating principle. So it is similar to comparing injustice with an unjust human being: in a way

each is worse. For a bad human being could do ten thousand times as much harm as a beast.

With regard to the pleasures and pains, and the appetites and aversions, that come through touch and taste—the sphere in which self-indulgence and moderation were marked off earlier—it is possible to be in such a state as to be overcome even by those that most people master, and it is also possible to master even those by which most people are overcome. Of these, the one who is like this about pleasures is uncontrolled or self-controlled, and the one who is like this about pains is soft or enduring. The state of most people lies in between, even if they lean more toward the worse states. Some pleasures are necessary and others are not, and the necessary ones are so up to a point, while their excesses are not, and neither are their deficiencies; and the same holds for appetites and pains. So the person who pursues the excesses of pleasant things, or pursues them to excess, and does so by decision, for their own sake and not at all for some further result, is self-indulgent. Such a person is bound to have no regrets, and so is incurable, since someone without regret is incurable. The person who falls short is his opposite, and the one in the middle is moderate. The same holds for the person who avoids bodily pains not because he is overcome but by decision. Of those who don't act by decision, one is led on by pleasure, the other by the wish to avoid the pain that comes from appetite; so they differ from each other. Everyone would think a person worse if he did something shameful while feeling no appetite, or only a mild one, than if he did it with intense appetite; and worse if he struck someone without being angry than if he did it in anger. For what would he have done in the grip of feeling? That is why the self-indulgent person is worse than the uncontrolled one. Of the types just mentioned, then, the one is more a form of softness, while the other is the self-indulgent person. The self-controlled person is opposed to the uncontrolled, and the enduring to the soft. For endurance consists in holding out, while self-control consists in mastering, and holding out is different from mastering, just as not being beaten

is different from winning. That is why self-control is also more choiceworthy than endurance. [1150b] The person who falls short with regard to what most people resist and are able to withstand is soft and pampered—for being pampered is a kind of softness. He lets his cloak trail so as not to suffer the effort of lifting it, and though he imitates an invalid, he doesn't think himself miserable, even though he resembles someone miserable. It is similar with self-control and lack of self-control. For it's not surprising if someone is overcome by strong and excessive pleasures or pains; it is forgivable if he puts up resistance, like Philoctetes in Theodectes' play when bitten by the viper, or Carcinus' Cercyon in the *Alope*, or like people trying to hold back their laughter who burst out in a guffaw, as happened to Xenophantus. What is surprising is if someone is overcome by pleasures and pains that most people can hold out against, and is unable to resist them—when this is not due to the nature of his stock, or to disease, as softness runs in the family among the Scythian kings, or as the female differs from the male. The person fond of amusement also seems to be self-indulgent, but he is really soft. For amusement is a relaxation, since it is a rest, and the person fond of amusement is one of those who go to excess in this. Of lack of self-control, one form is impetuosity, the other weakness.[7] Some people deliberate but then, because of their feeling, don't stick to what they deliberated; others are led by their feeling because they haven't deliberated. For some people—just as those who tickle first don't get tickled—if they perceive and see it coming in advance, and rouse themselves and their reasoning beforehand, are not overcome by the feeling, whether it's something pleasant or something painful. It is especially the quick-tempered and the melancholic who are uncontrolled with the impetuous kind of lack of self-control: the former because of

7 Theodectes and Carcinus were tragic poets of the fourth century BC; in these lost plays Philoctetes cries out in the agony of his snakebite, and Cercyon breaks down over his daughter Alope's disgrace.

their haste, the latter because of their intensity, don't wait for reason, since they tend to follow appearances.[8]

WHY LACK OF SELF-CONTROL IS NOT VICE

Aristotle argues that lack of self-control differs from vice because it acts against one's decision.

The self-indulgent person, as was said, is not given to regret, since he abides by his decision; but every uncontrolled person is given to regret. So the situation is not as we posed it in raising the puzzle: rather, the one is incurable and the other curable. For wickedness resembles diseases like dropsy and consumption, while lack of self-control is like epilepsy: the one is a continuous badness, the other not continuous. And in general lack of self-control and vice are different in kind: vice goes unnoticed, while lack of self-control does not. [1151a] Among these types themselves, those who get carried away are better than those who have reason but don't stick to it; for the latter are overcome by a lesser feeling, and not without prior deliberation, as the others are. For the uncontrolled person is like people who get drunk quickly, and on little wine, less than most people need. It is evident, then, that lack of self-control is not a vice (though perhaps it is in a way). For the one is contrary to decision, the other in accordance with decision. Still, they are alike in their actions. As Demodocus said against the Milesians, "The Milesians aren't stupid, but they act just like the stupid"; so too the uncontrolled aren't unjust, but they will do wrong.[9] The one is the sort of person to pursue bodily pleasures that are excessive and contrary to correct reason without being convinced he should; the other is convinced he should because he is the sort of person to pursue them. So the former is easily persuaded to change, while the latter is not. For excellence preserves the first principle and wickedness destroys it; and in

8 In Greek medicine the "melancholic" were those with an excess of black bile, thought to make people excitable and prone to intense impulses.

9 Demodocus of Leros was a sixth-century BC poet known for barbed epigrams.

actions, that for the sake of which we act is the first principle, as the hypotheses are in mathematics. Neither there nor here does argument teach the first principles; it is excellence, either natural or habituated, that teaches right belief about the first principle. Such a person, then, is moderate, and his opposite is self-indulgent. But there is someone who, through feeling, gets carried away contrary to correct reason: feeling masters him so far that he doesn't act in accordance with correct reason, but not so far as to make him the sort of person who is convinced that he ought to pursue such pleasures without restraint. This is the uncontrolled person. He is better than the self-indulgent one, and not bad without qualification, since the best thing in him, the first principle, is preserved. Opposed to him is another person, who abides by it and is not carried away, at least not through feeling. It is evident from this, then, that the one state is excellent and the other bad.

Is the self-controlled person, then, the one who abides by any reason and any decision whatever, or the one who abides by the correct one? And is the uncontrolled person the one who fails to abide by any decision and any reason whatever, or the one who fails to abide by reason that isn't false and by the correct decision, as was asked earlier in raising the puzzle? Or is it any whatever incidentally, but in itself the true reason and the correct decision that the one abides by and the other doesn't? For if someone chooses or pursues one thing for the sake of another, [1151b] he pursues and chooses the second in itself, and the first incidentally. And by "without qualification" we mean "in itself." So in a sense it is any belief whatever that the one abides by and the other abandons, but without qualification it is the true one. There are some people who are prone to abide by their beliefs, whom people call stubborn: they are hard to persuade and not easily persuaded to change. They have something similar to the self-controlled person, as the prodigal has to the generous and the rash to the confident, but they differ in many respects. For it is feeling and appetite that the self-controlled person doesn't change for, since, when the occasion arises, he will be easily

persuaded; whereas it is reason that these people don't change for, since they do take on appetites, and many of them are led by pleasures. The stubborn include the opinionated, the ignorant, and the boorish. The opinionated are so because of pleasure and pain: they enjoy winning if they aren't persuaded to change, and are pained if their views are annulled, like decrees. So they resemble the uncontrolled person more than the self-controlled. There are some who don't abide by their beliefs, but not through lack of self-control—for example, Neoptolemus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. It was, admittedly, because of pleasure that he didn't abide by his belief, but a fine pleasure: telling the truth was fine in his eyes, and he had been persuaded by Odysseus to lie. For not everyone who does something because of pleasure is self-indulgent, or bad, or uncontrolled; only the one who does it because of a shameful pleasure.

Since there is also the sort of person who enjoys bodily things less than he should, and so fails to abide by reason, the self-controlled person is intermediate between him and the uncontrolled person. For the uncontrolled person fails to abide by reason because of something too much, and this person because of something too little; while the self-controlled person abides by it and doesn't change for either reason. If self-control is something excellent, both the states opposed to it must be bad, as they also appear to be. But because the second is evident in few people and on few occasions, just as moderation seems to be opposed only to self-indulgence, so self-control seems to be opposed only to lack of self-control. Since many things are spoken of by resemblance, the "self-control" of the moderate person has also come to be spoken of by resemblance. For both the self-controlled person and the moderate one are the sort to do nothing contrary to reason because of bodily pleasures; 1152a but the self-controlled person has bad appetites and the moderate one doesn't, and the moderate person is the sort not to feel pleasure contrary to reason, while the self-controlled one is the sort to feel it but not be led by it. The uncontrolled and the self-indulgent person are also alike: they are different, but both pur-

sue bodily pleasures—the self-indulgent person thinking he should, the uncontrolled one not thinking so.

Nor can the same person be at once practically wise and uncontrolled; for it has been shown that someone practically wise is at the same time excellent in character. Besides, one is practically wise not only by knowing but by acting on what one knows, and the uncontrolled person doesn't act on it. (Nothing prevents a clever person, however, from being uncontrolled. That is why some people sometimes seem to be practically wise but uncontrolled: because cleverness differs from practical wisdom in the way described in our earlier discussion, and the two are close as regards reason but differ as regards decision.) Nor, then, is the uncontrolled person like someone who knows and is contemplating, but like someone asleep or drunk. He acts voluntarily (for in a way he knows both what he is doing and for the sake of what), but he is not wicked, since his decision is decent; so he is half-wicked. And he isn't unjust, since he isn't a schemer: one kind of uncontrolled person doesn't abide by what he has deliberated, while the melancholic kind doesn't deliberate at all. The uncontrolled person, then, is like a city that passes all the right decrees and has excellent laws but makes no use of them, as Anaxandrides joked: "The city willed it, the one that cares nothing for its laws." The wicked person, by contrast, is like a city that does use its laws, but uses bad ones. Lack of self-control and self-control concern what goes beyond the state of most people: the self-controlled person abides by his reasoning more, and the uncontrolled person less, than most people are capable of.[10] Of the kinds of lack of self-control, the kind the melancholic have is more easily cured than that of people who deliberate but don't abide by it; and those who are uncontrolled through habituation are more easily cured than those who are so by nature, since habit is easier to change than nature. Habit, too, is hard to change precisely because it resembles nature, as Evenus also says: "I say that habit is long practice, my friend, and that in the end it becomes nature for human beings." We

10 Anaxandrides was a comic poet of the fourth century BC.

have now said what self-control, lack of self-control, endurance, and softness are, and how these states are related to one another.[11]

PLEASURE

Aristotle answers arguments that pleasure is not good and argues that some pleasure may be the chief good.

1152b It belongs to the person who studies political philosophy to examine pleasure and pain; for he is the master-builder of the end by looking to which we call each thing bad or good without qualification. Besides, examining them is one of our necessary tasks. For we laid it down that excellence and vice of character are concerned with pains and pleasures, and most people say that happiness involves pleasure—which is also why they have derived the word for "blessed" from "enjoying." Now some people think that no pleasure is a good, either in itself or incidentally, since the good and pleasure are not the same thing. Others think that some pleasures are good but most are bad. And there is a third view besides these: that even if all pleasures are good, still the best thing cannot be pleasure.[12] It is held not to be a good at all, then, because every pleasure is a perceptible process of coming to be toward a natural state, and no process of coming to be is of the same kind as its end, as no building process is of the same kind as a house. Again, the moderate person avoids pleasures. Again, the practically wise person pursues freedom from pain, not what is pleasant. Again, pleasures hinder thinking, and the more one enjoys them, the more they hinder it—sexual pleasure, for example, since no one could think anything while engaged in it. Again, there is no craft of pleasure; yet every good is the product of a craft. Again, children and animals pursue pleasures. That not all pleasures are excellent is argued from the fact that some are shameful and

11 Evenus of Paros was a sophist and poet of the fifth century BC.
12 Aristotle alludes to a popular derivation of makarios, "blessed," from chairein, "to enjoy."

objects of reproach, and that some are harmful, since some pleasant things cause disease. That pleasure is not the best thing is argued from the fact that it is not an end but a process of coming to be. These, roughly, are the things people say.

But that these considerations don't show that pleasure is not a good, or not the best thing, is clear from the following. First, since the good is spoken of in two ways (one thing is good without qualification, another good for someone), natures and states will follow suit, and so therefore will movements and processes of coming to be. And of those that seem bad, some will be bad without qualification but not bad for a particular person, rather choiceworthy for him; some will not be choiceworthy even for him, except at certain times and for a short while, and not without qualification; and others are not even pleasures but only appear to be—those that involve pain and are for the sake of a cure, like the pleasures of sick people. Again, since one aspect of the good is activity and another is state, the processes that restore us to our natural state are pleasant only incidentally. The activity in the appetites is the activity of the part of our state and nature that remains intact—since there are also pleasures without pain and appetite, [1153a] such as the activities of contemplating, when one's nature is not deficient in anything. A sign of this is that people don't enjoy the same pleasant thing while their nature is being replenished as when it is settled: when it is settled they enjoy things pleasant without qualification, but while it is being replenished they enjoy even the opposites—sharp and bitter things, none of which is pleasant either by nature or without qualification. So these are not pleasures without qualification either; for as pleasant things differ from one another, so do the pleasures that come from them. Again, it isn't necessary that something else be better than pleasure, in the way some say the end is better than the process of coming to be. For pleasures are not processes, and not all of them even involve a process; they are activities, and an end. They arise not when we are coming to be something but when we are using something; and not all of them have some end distinct from

themselves, only those of people being brought to the completion of their nature. That is why it isn't right to say that pleasure is a perceptible process of coming to be; rather, it should be called an activity of the natural state, and instead of "perceptible," "unimpeded." Some people think it is a process of coming to be because it is good in the strict sense; for they think activity is a process of coming to be, but it is something different. To say pleasures are bad because some pleasant things cause disease is like saying healthy things are bad because some healthy things are bad for making money. Both are bad in this respect, but they are not bad on that account—after all, even contemplating is sometimes harmful to health. Neither practical wisdom nor any other state is hindered by the pleasure that comes from it; only by alien pleasures. For the pleasures of contemplating and learning will make one contemplate and learn all the more. That no pleasure is the product of a craft is quite reasonable: there is no craft of any other activity either, only of the capacity for it—though the perfumer's craft and the cook's do seem to be crafts of pleasure. As for the arguments that the moderate person avoids pleasure, that the practically wise person pursues the painless life, and that children and animals pursue pleasure—they are all answered by the same point. For since we have said in what sense pleasures are good without qualification, and in what sense not all of them are good, it is pleasures of this latter sort that beasts and children pursue, and it is freedom from the pain of these that the practically wise person pursues: the pleasures that involve appetite and pain, that is, the bodily ones (for these are of that kind), and the excesses of these, in virtue of which the self-indulgent person is self-indulgent. That is why the moderate person avoids these; for the moderate person has pleasures too.

[1153b] Again, it is agreed that pain is bad and to be avoided. Some pain is bad without qualification; some is bad by being in some way an impediment. But the contrary of what is to be avoided, insofar as it is to be avoided and bad, is good. So pleasure must be some kind of good. For the way Speusippus tried to

resolve this does not work—that pleasure is contrary both to pain and to the good, as the greater is contrary both to the smaller and to the equal. For he would not say that pleasure is essentially something bad. And nothing prevents the chief good from being some pleasure, even if some pleasures are bad, just as it might be some kind of scientific knowledge even though some kinds are bad. Perhaps it is even necessary. If each state has its unimpeded activities, then whether happiness is the activity of all of them or of some one of them, that activity, if it is unimpeded, must be the most choiceworthy thing; and this is pleasure. So the chief good would be some pleasure, even though most pleasures may well be bad without qualification. And this is why everyone thinks the happy life is pleasant and weaves pleasure into happiness—reasonably enough. For no activity is complete when it is impeded, and happiness is something complete. That is why the happy person needs, in addition, the goods of the body, external goods and fortune, so as not to be impeded in these respects. Those who say that someone being broken on the wheel, or someone who falls into great misfortunes, is happy provided he is good are talking nonsense, whether they mean to or not. And because happiness needs fortune in addition, some people think good fortune is the same as happiness. But it isn't, since good fortune itself, when excessive, is an impediment—and then perhaps it is no longer right to call it good fortune, since its limit is defined by its relation to happiness. And the fact that all creatures, beasts and humans alike, pursue pleasure is some sign that it is in a way the chief good: "No report is ever wholly lost that many peoples..." But since neither the same nature nor the same state is best for all, or seems so, they do not all pursue the same pleasure either—though they all pursue pleasure. Perhaps, too, they pursue not the pleasure they think they do, or would say they do, but the same one; for all things by nature have something divine in them. But the bodily pleasures have taken over the inheritance of the name, because we most often steer our course toward them and everyone shares in them. So because these are the

only ones people know, they think these are the only ones there are. [1154a] It is also clear that if pleasure is not a good and an activity, the happy person will not live pleasantly. For why would he need pleasure, if it is not a good and he can live painfully as well? For pain is neither bad nor good if pleasure is not; so why would he avoid it? Nor will the excellent person's life be any pleasanter, unless his activities are too.

About the bodily pleasures, though, we must examine the view of those who say that some pleasures—the fine ones, for instance—are highly choiceworthy, but not the bodily ones and those the self-indulgent person is concerned with. Why, then, are the contrary pains bad? For the contrary of a bad thing is good. Or are the necessary pleasures good in the sense that what is not bad is good too? Or are they good up to a point? For with states and processes that admit of no excess of the better, there is no excess of the pleasure either; with those that do admit of it, there is excess of the pleasure too. Now there is such a thing as excess of bodily goods, and the bad person is bad by pursuing the excess, not the necessary pleasures. For everyone enjoys fine food, wine and sex in some way, but not everyone as they should. With pain it is the other way round: the bad person avoids not the excessive pain but pain altogether. For the pain contrary to the excess exists only for the one who pursues the excess.

We must state not only the truth, however, but also the cause of the error; for this contributes to conviction. When a reasonable explanation appears of why something appears true that is not true, it makes us more convinced of the truth. So we must say why the bodily pleasures appear more choiceworthy. First, then, it is because they drive out pain; and because of the excesses of pain, people pursue excessive pleasure, and bodily pleasure in general, as a cure. And these cures are intense—which is why they are pursued—because they appear alongside their contrary. Pleasure is thought not to be a worthwhile thing for these two reasons, as has been said: some pleasures are actions of a bad nature (either bad from birth, as a beast's is, or

through habit, as with bad people); others are cures, because they belong to something in need, and being in a good condition is better than coming into it; [1154b] and these cures arise while we are being brought to completion, so they are worthwhile only incidentally. Further, bodily pleasures are pursued because they are intense, by those who cannot enjoy other pleasures; at any rate, such people contrive thirsts of a sort for themselves. When these are harmless, this is beyond reproach; when harmful, it is bad. For they have nothing else to enjoy, and for many people the neutral state is painful because of their nature. For an animal is always under strain, as the natural scientists also testify when they say that seeing and hearing are painful; but by now we are used to it, as they say. Similarly, in youth people are in a condition like that of the drunk because they are growing, and youth is pleasant. People of a melancholic nature, on the other hand, are always in need of a cure; for their body is continually being stung because of its mixture, and they are always in a state of intense desire. And pleasure drives out pain—both the pleasure contrary to it and any chance pleasure, if it is strong. That is why they become self-indulgent and bad. But pleasures without pains do not admit of excess; these are pleasures in things pleasant by nature, not incidentally. By things incidentally pleasant I mean those that cure; for it is because the cure comes about through the action of the part that remains healthy that the cure seems pleasant. Things pleasant by nature are those that produce action of a given nature. Nor is the same thing always pleasant, because our nature is not simple: there is something else in us as well, insofar as we are perishable. So if one element is active, this is contrary to the nature of the other, and when they balance, what is done seems neither painful nor pleasant. For if anyone's nature were simple, the same action would always be the most pleasant. That is why the god always enjoys a single, simple pleasure; for there is an activity not only of motion but also of motionlessness, and pleasure is found more in rest than in motion. But "change in all things is sweet," as the poet says, because of a kind of badness. For just as the bad

person is the one prone to change, so too is the nature that needs change; for it is neither simple nor decent.

So much, then, for self-control and lack of self-control, and for pleasure and pain: what each is, and how some of them are good and others bad. It remains for us to speak about friendship as well.[13]

13 The Greek *philia* covers more than English "friendship": it includes family affection, partnerships and civic ties.

Book VIII

Friendship
Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of friendship and discusses friendship between unequals and within communities.

1155a After this it would be fitting to discuss friendship. For it is a kind of excellence, or involves excellence, and besides, it is most necessary for life. No one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all the other goods. For the rich and those who hold offices and positions of power seem to need friends most of all. For what is the use of such prosperity if it is stripped of the chance to do good, which is exercised most, and is most praiseworthy, toward friends? Or how could it be guarded and preserved without friends? The greater it is, the more precarious. And in poverty and the other misfortunes, people think friends are their only refuge. Friends help the young avoid error; they help the old by caring for them and making up for the actions they are too weak to perform; and they help those in their prime toward fine actions—"when two go together"—for they are more able both to think and to act. It seems to be present by nature in a parent toward its offspring and in offspring toward the parent, not only among human beings but also among birds and most animals; and in members of the same kind toward one another, especially among human beings—which is why we praise those who love their fellow human beings. Even on one's travels one can see how every human being is akin and dear to every other. Friendship also seems to hold cities together, and lawgivers seem to care more about it than about justice. For concord seems to be something like friendship, and this is what they aim

at most, while civil strife, which is enmity, is what they most try to drive out. When people are friends they have no need of justice, but when they are just they need friendship as well; and the most just thing of all seems to be something friendly. It is not only necessary but also fine. We praise those who love their friends, and having many friends seems to be one of the fine things. And further, people think that the same men are good men and friends.

There is a good deal of dispute about it. Some take it to be a kind of likeness and say that those who are alike are friends—hence the sayings "like to like," "jackdaw to jackdaw," and so on. Others, on the contrary, say that all such people are "potters" to one another. 1155b On these very questions some inquire at a higher level and in terms of nature: Euripides says that "the parched earth longs for rain, and the majestic heaven, filled with rain, longs to fall to earth"; Heraclitus, that what opposes is beneficial, that the finest harmony comes from things that differ, and that everything comes about through strife; and others, Empedocles among them, take the opposite view, that like aims at like.[1] Let us set aside the puzzles that belong to the study of nature, since they are not proper to the present inquiry, and examine those that are human and bear on character and feelings. For instance: does friendship arise among all people, or is it impossible for bad people to be friends? And is there one kind of friendship or more than one? Those who think there is only one, because it admits of more and less, have relied on an insufficient sign; for things that differ in kind also admit of more and less. But we have spoken about these matters earlier.

WHAT IS LOVABLE

Aristotle says friendship requires mutual goodwill toward what is good, pleasant or useful.

Perhaps these questions will become clear once we have identified what is lovable. For it seems that not everything is loved,

but only what is lovable, and that this is what is good, pleasant or useful. And the useful would seem to be that through which some good or pleasure comes about, so that the good and the pleasant would be lovable as ends. Do people love the good, then, or what is good for themselves? For these sometimes diverge. And likewise with the pleasant. It seems that each person loves what is good for himself, and that while the good is lovable without qualification, what is lovable for each is what is good for each. And each loves not what is good for him but what appears so. But this will make no difference: the lovable will be what appears lovable. There are three things, then, for which people love. The love of inanimate things is not called friendship, since there is no return of love, nor any wishing of good to the thing. (It would presumably be ridiculous to wish good things to wine; if anything, one wishes it to keep, so as to have it oneself.) But to a friend, people say, one must wish good things for his own sake. Those who wish good things in this way they call well-disposed, if the same wish does not come from the other person too; for goodwill, they say, is friendship when it is reciprocated. Or must we add "when it does not go unnoticed"? For many people are well-disposed toward those they have never seen but suppose to be decent or useful; 1156a and one of those might feel the same toward him. These people, then, are evidently well-disposed to one another; but how could anyone call them friends when they are unaware of how they are disposed toward each other? So friends must bear each other goodwill and wish each other good things, without its going unnoticed, for one of the reasons mentioned.

THREE KINDS OF FRIENDSHIP

Aristotle distinguishes friendships of utility, pleasure and character, and calls the last complete.

These reasons differ in kind, and so, then, do the forms of love and the friendships. There are, then, three kinds of friendship,

equal in number to the lovable things; for with each of them there is a return of love that does not go unnoticed, and those who love each other wish good things to each other in the respect in which they love. Those who love each other for utility do not love each other for themselves, but insofar as they get some good from each other. Similarly with those who love for pleasure: they are fond of witty people not for being people of a certain character, but because they are pleasant to themselves. So those who love for utility are fond of the other because of what is good for themselves, and those who love for pleasure because of what is pleasant to themselves—not insofar as the one they love is who he is, but insofar as he is useful or pleasant. These friendships, then, are incidental; for the one loved is not loved insofar as he is the very person he is, but insofar as he provides, in the one case some good, in the other pleasure. So such friendships are easily dissolved, when the parties do not stay as they were; for if they are no longer pleasant or useful, the others stop loving them. And the useful does not last but is different at different times. So when the reason they were friends has gone, the friendship dissolves too, since the friendship was directed at those things. This kind of friendship seems to arise especially among the old (for people of that age pursue not the pleasant but the beneficial), and among those in their prime or young who pursue their own advantage. Such people do not much live together, either; for sometimes they are not even pleasant to each other. Nor do they need that sort of company unless they are beneficial to each other; for they are pleasant only so far as they have hopes of some good. Friendship between host and guest is also placed among these. The friendship of the young seems to be for pleasure; for they live by feeling and pursue above all what is pleasant to themselves and what is at hand. And as their age changes, what they find pleasant changes too. That is why they become friends quickly and quickly stop; for the friendship shifts along with what is pleas-

1 "Potters" alludes to the proverb "potter resents potter": people in the same line of work are rivals.

ant, [1156b] and such pleasure changes quickly. The young are also prone to erotic love; for erotic love mostly goes by feeling and is for pleasure. That is why they fall in love and quickly stop, often changing within the same day.[2] But these people do want to spend their days together and live together; for this is how they get what their friendship is about.

Complete friendship is the friendship of good people who are alike in excellence. For these wish good things to each other alike insofar as they are good, and they are good in themselves. And those who wish good things to their friends for the friends' sake are friends most of all, since they are so disposed because of who their friends are, and not incidentally. So their friendship lasts as long as they are good, and excellence is a lasting thing. Each of them is good without qualification and good for his friend; for the good are both good without qualification and beneficial to each other. And they are pleasant in the same way; for the good are pleasant both without qualification and to each other. For each person takes pleasure in actions that are his own and in actions like them, and the actions of the good are the same or similar. Such friendship is, reasonably enough, lasting; for it combines in itself all the things that friends should have. For every friendship is for the sake of good or of pleasure, either without qualification or for the one who loves, and it rests on some likeness. In this friendship all the things mentioned belong to the friends in themselves; for in this friendship they are alike in the other respects as well, and what is good without qualification is also pleasant without qualification, and these are the most lovable things. So loving and friendship are found most, and at their best, among such people. Such friendships are likely to be rare, since such people are few. Further, friendship of this kind needs time and familiarity. As the proverb says, people cannot know each other until they have eaten the proverbial salt together; nor can they accept each other or be friends until each has shown himself lovable to the other and has won

2 Guest-friendship was a formal, often hereditary, bond of hospitality between people of different cities.

his trust.[3] Those who are quick to treat each other in friendly ways want to be friends, but they are not, unless they are also lovable and know it. For the wish for friendship arises quickly, but friendship does not.

This friendship, then, is complete both in duration and in the other respects; and in every respect each gets from the other the same or similar things, which is what should hold between friends. 1157a Friendship for pleasure bears a resemblance to it, since the good are pleasant to each other too. So does friendship for utility, since the good are also useful to each other. And among these, too, friendships last best when the parties get the same thing from each other—pleasure, for instance—and not only that, but from the same source, as happens between witty people, and not as between a lover and his beloved. For these two do not take pleasure in the same things: the lover takes pleasure in seeing his beloved, the beloved in being courted by the lover. And when the bloom of youth fades, the friendship sometimes fades too (for the one no longer finds the sight pleasant, and the other no longer gets the attention). But many, on the other hand, remain friends, if through familiarity they have come to love each other's characters, being alike in character. Those who exchange not pleasure but utility in their love affairs are both less truly friends and less lasting. And those who are friends for utility part as soon as the advantage does; for they were friends not of each other but of the profit. For pleasure and for utility, then, even bad people can be friends with each other, and decent people with bad ones, and someone who is neither with anyone at all; but clearly only good people can be friends for each other's own sake. For bad people take no delight in each other unless some benefit comes of it. And only the friendship of the good is proof against slander; for it is not easy to believe anyone about someone one has tested oneself over a long time. Among the good there is trust, and the assurance that neither would ever wrong the other, and all the other things expected in

3 To eat a quantity of salt together was to share many meals, and so to spend a long time in each other's company.

true friendship. In the other kinds, nothing prevents such things from happening. For people call friends even those who are friends for utility, as cities do (alliances between cities seem to be formed for the sake of advantage), and those who are fond of each other for pleasure, as children are. So perhaps we too should call such people friends, but say that there are several kinds of friendship: primarily and in the strict sense, the friendship of good people insofar as they are good, and the others by resemblance to it. For people are friends insofar as there is something good and something similar between them; and the pleasant is a good to those who love pleasure. But these two kinds do not combine very well, nor do the same people become friends for utility and for pleasure; for things that are incidental are not often coupled.

1157b With friendship divided into these kinds, bad people will be friends for pleasure or for utility, being alike in that respect, while good people will be friends for each other's own sake, since they are friends insofar as they are good. These, then, are friends without qualification; the others are friends incidentally and by resembling these.

Just as with the excellences some people are called good in virtue of a state and others in virtue of an activity, so it is with friendship too. Those who live together enjoy each other and provide each other with good things; those who are asleep or separated by distance are not active as friends, but are so disposed that they would be. For distance does not dissolve friendship without qualification, only its activity. But if the absence is long, it seems to make people forget the friendship too—hence the saying, "Many a friendship has lack of talk undone." Neither old people nor sour people seem inclined to friendship; for there is little pleasure in them, and no one can spend his days with someone painful or unpleasant, since nature seems above all to avoid what is painful and to aim at what is pleasant. Those who accept each other but do not live together seem more like well-wishers than friends. For nothing is so characteristic of friends as living together. Those in need long for benefit, but

even the blessed want company for their days, since a solitary life suits them least of all. And people cannot spend their time together unless they are pleasant and enjoy the same things, as seems to be the case in the friendship of companions.

Friendship in the fullest sense, then, is the friendship of the good, as has been said many times. For what is good or pleasant without qualification seems to be lovable and choiceworthy, and for each person what is such for him; and the good person is lovable and choiceworthy to the good person on both counts. Loving seems like a feeling, friendship like a state. For loving is directed no less toward inanimate things, but loving in return involves decision, and decision comes from a state. And people wish good things to those they love for their sake, not from feeling but from a state. And in loving their friend they love what is good for themselves; for when a good person becomes a friend, he becomes a good for the one whose friend he is. So each both loves what is good for himself and makes an equal return in wishing good and in pleasantness; for friendship, as the saying goes, is equality, [1158a] and these things belong most of all to the friendship of the good.

Among sour and elderly people friendship arises less, insofar as they are more ill-tempered and take less pleasure in company; for these things seem to be the most friendly and the most productive of friendship. That is why the young become friends quickly but the old do not; for people do not become friends with those they do not enjoy. And the same goes for sour people. Such people are well-disposed to each other—they wish each other good things and come to help in times of need—but they are hardly friends, because they do not spend their days together or enjoy each other, which seem to be the things most characteristic of friendship. It is not possible to be a friend to many in the complete kind of friendship, just as it is not possible to be in love with many at once (for love is like an excess, and that sort of thing is naturally directed toward one person). And it is not easy for many people to please the same person intensely at the same time—nor, perhaps, for many to be good.

One must also gain experience of the other and become familiar, which is very hard. But for utility and pleasure it is possible to please many; for there are many such people, and the services take little time. Of these two, the friendship for pleasure is more like friendship, when both get the same things from each other and enjoy each other or the same things, as in the friendships of the young; for there is more generosity of spirit in these. Friendship for utility is for traders. And the blessed have no need of useful friends, but they do need pleasant ones. For they want to live with someone, and while they can bear what is painful for a short time, no one could endure it continuously—not even the good itself, if it were painful to him. That is why they look for friends who are pleasant. Perhaps they should also look for friends who, besides being pleasant, are good, and good for them as well; for in that way they will have everything that friends should have. People in positions of power appear to keep their friends in separate groups: some are useful to them and others pleasant, but hardly the same ones for both. For they do not look for pleasant friends who have excellence, nor for useful ones who serve fine ends; rather, when they aim at pleasure they look for witty people, and otherwise for people clever at carrying out orders, and these qualities hardly ever occur in the same person. We have said that the excellent person is both pleasant and useful; but such a person does not become the friend of someone who surpasses him, unless the other is surpassed by him in excellence. Otherwise, being surpassed, he does not achieve equality by proportion. But such people are not often found.

1158b The friendships mentioned so far, then, involve equality: both parties get the same things from each other and wish the same things for each other, or else they exchange one thing for another, such as pleasure for benefit. That these are friendships to a lesser degree and last less has been said. And it is by likeness and unlikeness to the same thing that they seem both to be and not to be friendships. They seem to be friendships by their likeness to friendship based on excellence (one has the pleasant,

the other the useful, and these belong to that friendship too); but because that friendship is proof against slander and lasting, while these change quickly and differ from it in many other respects, they do not seem to be friendships, owing to their unlikeness to it.

FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN UNEQUALS

Aristotle discusses friendships between unequals, such as parents and children, balanced by proportion.

There is another kind of friendship, based on superiority, such as that of a father toward a son, and in general of an older person toward a younger one, of a husband toward a wife, and of any ruler toward the ruled. These also differ from one another. The friendship of parents toward children is not the same as that of rulers toward the ruled, nor even that of father toward son the same as that of son toward father, nor that of husband toward wife the same as that of wife toward husband. For each of these has a different excellence and function, and different reasons for loving; so the forms of love and the friendships are different too. Each, then, does not get the same things from the other, nor should he look for them. But when children render to parents what is owed to those who gave them life, and parents render to sons what is owed to children, the friendship of such people will be lasting and decent. In all friendships based on superiority, the love too must be proportional: the better person should be loved more than he loves, and so should the more beneficial one, and likewise with each of the others. For when love accords with merit, then there is in a way equality, which is thought to be characteristic of friendship.

But equality does not seem to work in the same way in matters of justice as in friendship. In matters of justice, what is equal is primarily what accords with merit, and secondarily what accords with quantity; in friendship, it is primarily what accords with quantity, and secondarily what accords with merit. This becomes clear when a great gap arises in excellence or vice,

in wealth, or in anything else: then people are no longer friends, and do not even expect to be. This is most evident in the case of the gods, since they surpass us most in all good things. 1159a It is clear with kings too: those far beneath them do not expect to be their friends, nor do people of no worth expect to be friends with the best or wisest. In such cases there is no precise definition of how far people can still be friends. Much can be taken away and the friendship still remain; but when one party is far removed, as the god is, it no longer does. Hence the puzzle whether friends may not wish their friends the greatest of goods —to be gods, for instance. For then they will no longer be friends to them, and so not goods to them either, since friends are goods. If, then, it was rightly said that a friend wishes good things to his friend for that friend's sake, the friend would have to remain whatever sort of being he is. So it is to him as a human being that he will wish the greatest goods. But perhaps not all of them; for each person wishes good things most of all to himself.

Most people, out of love of honor, seem to wish to be loved rather than to love. That is why most people are fond of flatterers: a flatterer is a friend in an inferior position, or pretends to be one, and to love more than he is loved. And being loved seems close to being honored, which is exactly what most people aim at. But they seem to choose honor not for its own sake but incidentally. Most people enjoy being honored by those in positions of power because of what they hope for: they think they'll get from them whatever they may need, and so they enjoy the honor as a sign of good treatment to come. Those who desire honor from decent people who know them are aiming to confirm their own opinion of themselves. So they enjoy it because they are confident that they are good, trusting the judgment of those who say so. But people enjoy being loved for its own sake. So it would seem that being loved is better than being honored, and that friendship is choiceworthy for its own sake. Yet friendship seems to lie in loving rather than in being loved. A sign of this is the delight mothers take in loving. Some mothers give their children to others to raise, and they love them,

knowing who they are, but don't seek to be loved in return if both aren't possible. It seems enough for them to see their children doing well, and they love them even if the children, not knowing them, give them nothing of what is due to a mother. Since friendship lies more in loving, and people who love their friends are praised, loving seems to be the excellence of friends. So those in whom this happens according to worth [1159b] are lasting friends, and theirs is a lasting friendship. This is also the way in which unequals can most of all be friends, since in this way they would be made equal. Equality and likeness are friendship, and above all the likeness of those who are alike in excellence. Being steady in themselves, they also remain steady toward each other. They neither ask for base things nor render base services, but, so to speak, even prevent them; for it is characteristic of good people neither to go wrong themselves nor to let their friends do so. Wicked people, by contrast, have no constancy, since they don't even remain like themselves; they become friends for a short time, enjoying each other's wickedness. Useful and pleasant friends last longer—as long, that is, as they supply each other with pleasures or benefits. Friendship based on usefulness seems most of all to arise from opposites, as between a poor person and a rich one, or an ignorant person and one who knows: whatever someone happens to lack, he aims at, and gives something else in exchange. One might drag the lover and the beloved in here too, and the beautiful and the ugly. That is why lovers sometimes appear ridiculous, when they expect to be loved as they love. If they are equally lovable, perhaps they are entitled to expect it; but if they have nothing of the kind, it's ridiculous. Perhaps, though, opposite does not aim at opposite for its own sake but incidentally, and the desire is really for the mean, since that is what is good. For the dry, for example, the good is not to become wet but to arrive at the mean, and similarly for the hot and everything else. But let's set these questions aside, since they are rather foreign to our subject.

FRIENDSHIP, JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY

Aristotle links friendship and justice to the communities in which people live together.

It seems, as was said at the beginning, that friendship and justice are concerned with the same things and found between the same people. In every community there seems to be some form of justice, and friendship too. At any rate, people address their fellow voyagers and fellow soldiers as friends, and likewise those in other communities. However far their community extends, so far does their friendship, since so far too does what is just between them. And the proverb "friends' things are common" is right, since friendship lies in community. Brothers and comrades have everything in common, while others hold certain defined things in common, some more and some less; for friendships too are some more so and some less. What is just differs too. 1160a It isn't the same for parents toward children as for brothers toward each other, nor for comrades as for fellow citizens, and similarly with the other friendships. So the wrongs done to each of these are different as well, and they become graver the closer the friendship. It is more terrible, for example, to defraud a comrade of money than a fellow citizen, to fail to help a brother than a stranger, and to strike one's father than anyone else. It is natural for what is just to increase along with friendship, since they are found between the same people and extend equally far. All communities seem to be parts of the political community. People band together for some advantage, to provide something they need for life; and the political community too seems both to have come together at the beginning and to persist for the sake of advantage. This is what lawgivers aim at, and they call just what is to the common advantage. The other communities aim at advantage in part: sailors at what concerns the voyage, with a view to making money or something of the sort; fellow soldiers at what concerns war, whether they are after money or victory or a city; and similarly fellow tribesmen

and fellow demesmen. Some communities seem to arise for the sake of pleasure—those of religious guilds and dining clubs, which exist for the sake of sacrifice and companionship.[4] But all these seem to fall under the political community, since the political community aims not at the advantage of the moment but at what concerns the whole of life—people making sacrifices and holding gatherings around them, paying honors to the gods and providing themselves with relaxation and pleasure. For the ancient sacrifices and gatherings appear to have taken place after the harvest, as a kind of offering of first fruits, since that was the season when people had the most leisure. All communities, then, appear to be parts of the political community, and the particular kinds of friendship will correspond to the particular kinds of community.

CONSTITUTIONS AND HOUSEHOLDS

Aristotle compares constitutions and their corruptions with relations within the household.

There are three kinds of constitution, and an equal number of deviations—corruptions, as it were, of these. The constitutions are kingship and aristocracy, and a third based on property assessments, which it seems fitting to call timocratic, though most people usually call it simply "polity." Of these the best is kingship and the worst timocracy. The deviation from kingship is tyranny. 1160b Both are monarchies, but they differ enormously: the tyrant looks to his own advantage, the king to that of his subjects. For no one is a king who is not self-sufficient and superior in all good things, and such a person needs nothing further; so he would not look to what benefits himself but to what benefits his subjects. A king who wasn't like that would be a king chosen by lot, so to speak. Tyranny is the opposite of this, since the tyr-

4 Tribes and demes were civic subdivisions of Athens; religious guilds and dining clubs were private associations whose members met for worship and shared meals.

ant pursues his own good.[5] And it is more evident in the case of tyranny that it is the worst, since the opposite of the best is the worst. Kingship changes into tyranny, since tyranny is the degenerate form of monarchy, and a bad king becomes a tyrant. Aristocracy changes into oligarchy through the vice of the rulers, who distribute what belongs to the city contrary to worth —all or most of the good things to themselves, and offices always to the same people—setting the highest value on being rich. So the rulers are few, and bad, instead of the most decent. Timocracy changes into democracy, since these border on each other: timocracy too aims to be rule by the many, and all who meet the property assessment are equal. Democracy is the least bad, since it deviates only slightly from the form of polity. These, then, are the ways in which constitutions most often change, since in these ways the change is smallest and easiest. One can find likenesses of these, patterns as it were, in households too. The community of a father with his sons has the shape of kingship, since the father cares for his children. That is why Homer calls Zeus "father": kingship aims to be paternal rule. Among the Persians, however, a father's rule is tyrannical, since they treat their sons as slaves. The rule of a master over slaves is tyrannical too, since it is the master's advantage that is achieved in it. This latter seems to be correct, but the Persian kind mistaken, since different people call for different kinds of rule. The community of husband and wife seems aristocratic: the man rules according to worth, and in the matters in which a man should, and whatever suits a woman he hands over to her. When the man controls everything, he changes it into an oligarchy, since he does so contrary to worth and not insofar as he is better. 1161a Sometimes wives rule because they are heiresses; then rule doesn't go by excellence but by wealth and power, just as in oligarchies. The community of brothers is like timocracy, since they are equal except insofar as they differ in age; that is why, if they differ greatly in age, the friendship is no longer

5 "Polity" translates *politeia*, the Greek word for "constitution" in general, which was also used as the name of this particular form.

brotherly. Democracy is found most of all in households without a master (for there everyone is on an equal footing), and in those where the ruler is weak and everyone may do as he likes.[6]

In each of the constitutions friendship appears to the same extent as justice does. A king's friendship toward his subjects lies in a superiority of benefaction. He does good to his subjects, if, being good, he takes care of them so that they do well, as a shepherd does his sheep; which is why Homer called Agamemnon "shepherd of the people." A father's friendship is of this kind too, but differs in the size of the benefits, since the father is responsible for the child's existence, which is thought the greatest benefit, and for its nurture and education. These things are attributed to ancestors as well. And by nature a father rules his sons, ancestors their descendants, and a king his subjects. These friendships involve superiority, which is also why parents are honored. What is just in these relationships, then, is not the same on both sides but according to worth; for so is the friendship. The friendship of husband toward wife is the same as in an aristocracy. It goes by excellence: more good goes to the better, and to each what suits them; and so it is with what is just as well. The friendship of brothers is like that of comrades, since they are equal and of an age, and such people are for the most part alike in feelings and character. The friendship in a timocracy resembles this, since the citizens aim to be equal and decent; so they rule in turn and on equal terms, and so too with their friendship. In the deviations, just as there is little justice, so there is little friendship, and least of all in the worst: in a tyranny there is no friendship, or little. For where ruler and ruled have nothing in common, there is no friendship either, since there is no justice—as between a craftsman and his tool, the soul and the body, a master and his slave. 1161b All of these are benefited by those who use them, but there is no friendship toward inanimate things, nor justice. Nor is there toward a horse or an ox, nor toward a slave insofar as he is a slave. For

6 An heiress (*epiklēros*) was a daughter with no brothers, through whom the family estate passed to her husband and children.

there is nothing in common: a slave is a living tool, and a tool a lifeless slave. Insofar as he is a slave, then, there is no friendship with him, but there is insofar as he is a human being. For there seems to be some justice between every human being and anyone able to share in law and agreement, and so friendship too, to the extent that he is a human being. So in tyrannies friendship and justice extend only a little way, but in democracies further, since people who are equal have much in common.

FRIENDSHIP AMONG KIN

Aristotle describes friendship among parents, children, siblings, and husband and wife.

All friendship, then, involves community, as has been said. But one might set apart the friendship of kin and that of comrades. The friendships of fellow citizens, fellow tribesmen, fellow voyagers and the like seem more like friendships of community, since they appear to rest on a sort of agreement. Among these one might also place the friendship between host and guest. The friendship of kin, too, seems to take many forms, but all of them depend on the paternal kind. Parents love their children as something of themselves, and children love their parents as something they come from. Parents know their offspring better than children know that they come from their parents; and the source is more closely attached to what it generated than the thing produced is to what made it. For what comes from something belongs to its source—a tooth, say, or a hair, or anything else, to the one who has it—whereas the source doesn't belong to what comes from it at all, or less so. The length of time matters too: parents love their children as soon as they are born, but children love their parents only as time goes on, once they have gained understanding or perception. From this it is also clear why mothers love more. Parents, then, love their children as themselves (for what comes from them is a sort of other self, by being separated), children love their parents as having sprung from them, and brothers love each other by having sprung from

the same parents; for their sameness in relation to the parents makes them the same as each other. That's why people speak of "the same blood," "the same root," and so on. They are, then, in a way the same thing, even in separate beings. Being brought up together and being of an age also count for a great deal in friendship: "like age delights in like," and people used to each other become comrades. That is why brotherly friendship resembles the friendship of comrades. 1162a Cousins and other relatives are bound together because of this, since they come from the same forebears. And they become closer or more distant according as the founder of the family is nearer or further off. The friendship of children toward parents, like that of human beings toward gods, is friendship toward something good and superior; for they have conferred the greatest benefits. They are responsible for their children's existence and nurture, and, once they are born, for their education. This kind of friendship also has more pleasure and usefulness than friendship with outsiders, to the degree that they share more of their life. Friendship between brothers has the same features as friendship between comrades, and more so when they are decent, and generally when they are alike—to the degree that they are closer and have loved each other from birth, and to the degree that those born of the same parents, brought up together and educated alike, are more similar in character. And in their case the test of time is longest and most reliable. Among other relatives, the elements of friendship are in proportion. Between husband and wife friendship seems to exist by nature. For a human being is by nature more inclined to live in pairs than in cities, in that the household is prior to the city and more necessary, and producing children is something shared more widely with the animals. In the other animals the community goes only this far, but human beings live together not only for the sake of producing children but also for the needs of life. For the tasks are divided from the start, and those of the man and the woman are different; so they supply each other's needs, putting what is their own into the common stock. For these reasons both usefulness and pleasure seem to be

found in this friendship. It could also be based on excellence, if they are decent, since each has an excellence, and they would delight in that. Children seem to be a bond, which is why childless couples separate more quickly: children are a good common to both, and what is common holds people together. The question of how a man should live with his wife, and generally a friend with a friend, seems to be no different from the question of how it is just for them to live. For what is just does not seem to be the same toward a friend as toward a stranger, a comrade, or a schoolfellow.

COMPLAINTS BETWEEN FRIENDS

Aristotle explains why complaints arise in friendships of utility and how benefits should be repaid.

There are three kinds of friendship, as was said at the beginning, and in each kind some are friends on equal terms and others on terms of superiority. For two equally good people become friends, but so do a better and a worse; [1162b] and likewise with pleasant friends, and with friends for usefulness, who may be equal in the benefits they give or differ. Those who are equal must maintain equality by loving equally and in everything else, while those who are unequal must render what is proportionate to the superiority. Complaints and reproaches arise in friendship based on usefulness, either only or most of all, and understandably so. For those who are friends because of excellence are eager to do each other good, since this is characteristic of excellence and of friendship; and when they are competing in this, there are no complaints or quarrels. No one is annoyed with someone who loves him and does him good; if he is gracious, he retaliates by doing good in return. And the one who outdoes the other, since he is getting what he aims at, would not complain against his friend, since each desires the good. Nor are complaints very common in friendships based on pleasure, since both get what they desire at once, if they enjoy spending time together; and someone who complained that another didn't

please him would look ridiculous, since he is free not to spend his days with him. But friendship based on usefulness is full of complaints. Since they deal with each other for the sake of benefit, they always want more, think they have less than is due, and blame the other because they don't get as much as they need and deserve; while those doing the good can't supply as much as the recipients need. It seems that, just as what is just is of two kinds, unwritten and legal, so friendship based on usefulness is of two kinds, one based on character and the other legal. So complaints arise most of all when people do not conclude the relationship in the same spirit in which they entered into it. The legal kind is on stated terms. One version is purely commercial, hand to hand; the other is more generous, allowing time, but still with an agreement about what is given for what. In this kind the debt is clear and not in dispute, but the delay has something friendly about it. That is why in some places there are no lawsuits over such things, and people think that those who have made a deal on trust must be content with it. The kind based on character is not on stated terms: one gives a gift, or whatever else it may be, as to a friend. But one expects to get back as much or more, as if one had not given but lent; and if one does not end the relationship on the terms on which one entered it, one will complain. This happens because all people, or most, wish for what is fine but decide on what is beneficial; and it is fine to do good without aiming to be repaid, 1163a but beneficial to receive benefits. So one should, if able, repay the value of what one has received, and do so willingly (for one should not make a man one's friend against his will). One should settle up as though one had made a mistake at the start and been benefited by someone one should not have been—not by a friend, nor by someone doing it for its own sake—and so one should settle just as though one had been benefited on stated terms. And one would agree to repay if able; if one were unable, not even the giver would have expected it. So one should repay if possible. At the start one should consider by whom one is being benefited, and on what terms, so as to accept on those terms or not. It is

disputed whether one should measure by the benefit to the recipient and make the return on that basis, or by the benefaction of the giver. Recipients say that what they got from their benefactors was a small thing to them and could have been had from others, belittling it. The givers, on the contrary, say it was the greatest of the things they had, that it couldn't have been had from others, and that it was given in danger or in some such need. Since the friendship is based on usefulness, isn't the recipient's benefit the measure? He is the one in need, and the other supplies him expecting to receive an equal return. So the help has been as great as the benefit he received, and he should repay as much as he gained, or even more, since that is finer. In friendships based on excellence there are no complaints, and the giver's decision seems to be the measure, since what is decisive in excellence and character lies in decision.

People also fall out in friendships based on superiority, since each thinks he deserves more, and when this happens the friendship dissolves. The better person thinks he ought to have more, since more should be allotted to the good; and so does the more useful person, since, they say, someone useless shouldn't get an equal share: it becomes a public service and not a friendship if what comes from the friendship doesn't match the worth of what each does. For they think that, just as in a financial partnership those who contribute more take more, so it should be in friendship too. But the needy and inferior person thinks the opposite: it is the part of a good friend to help those in need. What's the use, they say, of being friends with an excellent or powerful person if you're going to get nothing out of it? 1163b It seems, then, that each is right in what he claims, and that each should be given more from the friendship—but not more of the same thing: the superior should get more honor, and the needy more gain. For honor is the prize of excellence and beneficence, while gain is the help that meets need. This seems to be how things are in constitutions too. Someone who provides nothing good to the community is not honored, since what is common is given to the one who benefits the community, and honor is

something common. One cannot make money from the common funds and be honored at the same time. For no one puts up with having less in everything; so to the person who loses out in money they allot honor, and to the one who wants gifts, money. For what accords with worth equalizes and preserves the friendship, as has been said. This is how one should deal with unequals too: someone who is benefited in money or in excellence should repay with honor, repaying what he can. For friendship seeks what is possible, not what accords with worth, since that isn't possible in every case—as with the honors paid to the gods and to parents. No one could ever repay what they deserve, but someone who serves them as far as he can is thought to be decent. That is why it would seem that a son may not disown his father, though a father may disown his son. One who owes must repay, and a son has done nothing worthy of what he has received, so he is always in debt. But those to whom something is owed are free to release the debtor, and so a father is too. At the same time, perhaps no one would ever part from his son unless the son were exceedingly wicked; for, apart from natural friendship, it is only human not to spurn the help a son would give. But for the son, if he is wicked, helping his father is something to be avoided, or at least not something to be eager about. For most people wish to receive benefits but avoid conferring them as unprofitable. So much, then, for these matters.

Book IX

Friendship, continued
Aristotle discusses obligations between friends, self-love, and why the happy person needs friends.

In all friendships between partners of unlike kinds, it is proportion that equalizes and preserves the friendship, as has been said. In the political kind, for example, the shoemaker gets a return for his shoes according to worth, and so do the weaver and the rest. 1164a Here, then, a common measure has been provided, namely money, and everything is referred to it and measured by it. But in love affairs the lover sometimes complains that his surpassing love is not returned, though he may, as it happens, have nothing lovable about him; while the beloved often complains that the lover, who once promised everything, now delivers nothing. Such things happen when the lover loves the beloved for pleasure and the beloved loves the lover for usefulness, and they don't both have what is wanted. For since the friendship was based on these things, it dissolves when the things for which they loved each other no longer come about. They didn't love each other but what each had, which was not lasting; so these friendships are not lasting either. But friendship of character, being based on the people themselves, endures, as has been said. People also quarrel when they get something different and not what they desire; for not getting what one aims at is like getting nothing. Take the man who made promises to a lyre singer: the better he sang, the more he would get. In the morning, when the singer asked him to keep his promises, he said he had repaid pleasure with pleasure. If

this is what each of them had wanted, it would have been fine. But if one wants enjoyment and the other gain, and one has it and the other doesn't, their association will not be on a good footing; for what a person needs is what he sets his mind on, and it is for that that he will give what he gives. But whose place is it to fix the value—the one who gives first, or the one who receives first? The one who gives first seems to leave it to the other. This is what they say Protagoras used to do: whenever he taught anything, he would tell the learner to assess how much he thought his knowledge was worth, and he took that much. In such cases some people are content with "a wage for a friend." But those who take the money in advance and then, because of their extravagant promises, do none of what they said they would, understandably face complaints, since they don't fulfill what they agreed to.[1] Perhaps the sophists are forced to do this because no one would give money for what they know. These people, then, understandably face complaints, since they don't do what they took the fee for. But where there is no prior agreement about the service, those who give first for the other's own sake are beyond complaint, as has been said (for friendship based on excellence is like that), [1164b] and the return should be made according to the giver's decision (for decision is what belongs to a friend and to excellence). It seems that it is this way too with those who have shared in philosophy together. Its worth is not measured in money, and no honor could balance it; but perhaps it is enough, as with the gods and with parents, to give what one can.[2] But if the gift was not of this kind but was made with a return in view, the best thing, perhaps, is for the repayment to be one that both think accords with worth. If that doesn't happen, it would seem not only necessary but also just for the one who received first to fix it. For if the giver gets back as much as the other was benefited, or as much as he would

1 Protagoras was a leading sophist of the fifth century BC. The quoted phrase begins a proverbial line: "let the wage stated to a friend be sure."
2 The sophists were paid teachers of the fifth and fourth centuries BC who claimed to teach success in public life.

have paid for the pleasure, he will have the value due from him. This is evidently what happens in buying and selling too. And in some places there are laws that there be no lawsuits over voluntary contracts, on the grounds that one should settle with the person one trusted in the same spirit in which one entered into dealings with him. For it is thought more just for the person who was trusted to fix the value than for the one who trusted him. For in most cases those who have a thing and those who want to get it do not value it equally, since what is one's own, and what one gives, always seems worth a great deal to each person. Nevertheless the return is made at whatever amount the recipients fix. But perhaps one should value a thing not at what it seems worth once one has it, but at what one valued it at before having it.

CONFLICTING OBLIGATIONS

Aristotle weighs conflicting obligations to parents, friends and benefactors, and when to end a friendship.

Questions like these also raise difficulties: whether one should give one's father everything and obey him in everything, or whether one should trust a doctor when ill, and elect a skilled soldier as general; and similarly whether one should serve a friend rather than an excellent person, and repay a benefactor's kindness rather than make a gift to a comrade, if one can't do both. Isn't it true that it's not easy to determine all such things precisely? For they involve many differences of every kind—in how great or small the matter is, and in what is fine and what is necessary. But it is clear enough that one shouldn't give everything to the same person; and that, for the most part, one should return benefits rather than do favors for comrades, just as one should repay a loan to one's creditor rather than give the money to a comrade. But perhaps not even this holds always. For example, should someone who has been ransomed from bandits ransom his ransomer in turn, whoever he may be—or repay him if he asks for it, even though he hasn't been captured

— [1165a] or should he ransom his own father? For it would seem that one should ransom one's father even before oneself. As has been said, then, in general one should repay the debt; but if giving instead outweighs it in fineness or necessity, one should lean toward that. For sometimes it isn't even fair to return the original favor, when one person benefited another knowing him to be excellent, while the return would go to someone the other thinks is wicked. Sometimes one shouldn't even lend in return to someone who has lent to one: he lent to a decent person expecting to get it back, while the other has no hope of getting it back from a scoundrel. If that is really how things are, then the claim is not equal; and if it isn't so but they think it is, they would not seem to be acting strangely. As has often been said, then, accounts of feelings and actions have just as much definiteness as the things they are about. That we should not render the same things to everyone, nor everything to our father—just as we don't sacrifice everything to Zeus—is clear enough. And since different things are due to parents, brothers, companions and benefactors, we should render to each what is proper and fitting for them. This is in fact what people seem to do. They invite their relatives to weddings, since these share the family and so the actions that concern it; and it is relatives above all, people think, who should attend funerals, for the same reason. It would seem that we should above all provide for our parents' sustenance, since we owe it to them, and that it is finer to provide in this way for those who are the causes of our existence than for ourselves. And we should give honor to parents as to gods—but not every kind of honor. Not the same honor to father and mother, nor again the honor due to a wise man or to a general, but to a father the honor proper to a father, and likewise to a mother the honor proper to a mother. To every older person, too, we should give the honor due to their age, by standing up for them, offering them a place at table, and the like. To companions and brothers, on the other hand, we owe frankness and a sharing of everything. And to relatives, fellow tribesmen, fellow citizens and all the rest we should always try to render what

is proper, and to compare what belongs to each according to closeness of relation and excellence or usefulness. Comparing people of the same kind is easier; comparing those who differ is more laborious. Still, that is no reason to give up; we must draw the distinctions as far as it is possible to do so.

There is also a puzzle about whether friendships should be dissolved [1165b] or not, in the case of friends who do not stay as they were. Or is there nothing strange in breaking off with those who were friends because of usefulness or pleasure, once these are no longer there? It was these things they were friends of, and when they have gone it is reasonable that the love should go too. But someone might complain if the other, who liked him for usefulness or pleasure, pretended to like him for his character. For, as we said at the beginning, most disagreements between friends arise when they are not friends in the way they think they are. So when someone has deceived himself and supposed he was loved for his character, though the other did nothing of the kind to suggest it, he would have himself to blame; but when he has been deceived by the other's pretense, it is just to complain against the deceiver—more so than against counterfeiters of coinage, inasmuch as the wrongdoing concerns something more precious. But if one accepts another as good, and he turns bad and is seen to be so, should one still love him? Or is that impossible, if not everything is lovable but only the good? What is bad is not lovable, and ought not to be; for one should not be a lover of the bad, nor become like someone base—and it has been said that like is friend to like. Should one then break off at once? Or not in every case, but only with those who are incurable in their wickedness? Those who can be set right should be helped with their character even more than with their property, inasmuch as this is better and more proper to friendship. Yet the person who breaks off would not seem to be doing anything strange, since it was not to someone like this that he was a friend; so when his friend has changed and he cannot restore him, he withdraws. But if one stayed the same while the other became better and far surpassed him in excellence, should the

latter still treat him as a friend? Or is that not possible? This becomes clearest when the gap is large, as in friendships from childhood. If one stayed a child in his thinking while the other became a man of the very best kind, how could they be friends, when they neither approve of the same things nor take pleasure and pain in the same things? They will not even have these in common regarding each other, and without them, as we saw, they cannot be friends, since they cannot share a life. But this has been discussed. Should one, then, behave toward him no differently than if he had never been a friend at all? Or should one keep in mind the intimacy there once was, and, just as we think we should do favors for friends rather than for strangers, so too render something to former friends because of the friendship that existed before—provided the break did not come about through an excess of wickedness?

FRIENDSHIP AND ONE'S RELATION TO ONESELF

Aristotle argues that the marks of friendship derive from the good person's relation to himself.

1166a The features of friendship toward our neighbors, and those by which friendships are defined, seem to have come from the features of a person's relation to himself. People take a friend to be someone who wishes and does good things, or apparent goods, for the other's sake; or someone who wishes his friend to exist and live for the friend's own sake—which is how mothers feel toward their children, and how friends feel who have had a falling-out. Others take a friend to be someone who spends time with the other and chooses the same things, or who shares his friend's pains and joys—and this too happens most of all with mothers. And it is by one of these features that people define friendship as well. Each of these holds of the decent person in relation to himself (and of everyone else insofar as they suppose themselves to be decent; for, as has been said, excellence and the excellent person seem to be the measure in each case). He is of one mind with himself, and desires the same things with his

whole soul. He wishes for himself what is good and what appears so, and does it (for it belongs to the good person to work hard at the good), and does it for his own sake—that is, for the sake of the thinking part of him, which is what each person seems to be. He also wishes himself to live and be preserved, and above all the part with which he thinks. For existence is good for the excellent person, and each person wishes good things for himself; but no one would choose to have everything on condition of becoming someone else, so that it is that new being that has it (after all, the god possesses the good even now); he wants it while remaining whatever he is. And it would seem that the thinking part is what each person is, or is most of all. Such a person also wishes to spend time with himself, since he does so with pleasure: his memories of what he has done are delightful, and his hopes for the future are good, and such things are pleasant. His mind is also well stocked with objects of contemplation. He shares his own pains and pleasures more than anyone, since it is always the same thing that is painful or pleasant to him, not one thing at one time and another at another; he has, so to speak, nothing to regret. Since each of these, then, holds of the decent person in relation to himself, and he is related to his friend as he is to himself (for the friend is another self), friendship too seems to be one of these things, and those who have them seem to be friends. Whether there is or is not friendship toward oneself may be set aside for the present. Judging from what has been said, it would seem to be friendship insofar as a person is two or more parts, [1166b] and because the extreme of friendship resembles one's friendship toward oneself. But the features we have described seem to belong to most people too, base though they are. Is it, then, insofar as they are pleased with themselves and suppose themselves to be decent that they share in them? Certainly none of those who are utterly base and who commit impious deeds has them, or even seems to. But they hardly belong even to the base: such people are at odds with themselves, and have appetites for some things while wishing for others, like the uncontrolled, who

choose pleasant things that are harmful instead of what seems to them to be good. Others again, through cowardice and laziness, shrink from doing what they think best for themselves. And those who have done many terrible deeds and are hated for their wickedness even flee from life and do away with themselves. Wicked people seek others to spend their days with, and flee from themselves; for when they are by themselves they recall many disagreeable things and anticipate others like them, but in others' company they forget. Having nothing lovable about them, they feel nothing friendly toward themselves. Nor, then, do such people share their own joys or pains. Their soul is at war with itself: one part, because of its wickedness, is pained at holding back from certain things, while another part is pleased, and one pulls this way and the other that, as if tearing the person apart. And even if it is not possible to be pained and pleased at the same time, still after a little while he is pained that he was pleased, and wishes these things had never been pleasant to him; for base people are full of regret. So the base person does not appear to be disposed in a friendly way even toward himself, because he has nothing lovable about him. If being in this condition is utterly wretched, we should strain every nerve to flee wickedness and try to be decent; for in that way one would be both friendly toward oneself and a friend to another.

GOODWILL AND CONCORD

Aristotle distinguishes goodwill and concord from friendship and asks why benefactors love those they help.

Goodwill resembles friendship, but it is not friendship; for goodwill arises even toward people we do not know, and without their being aware of it, but friendship does not. This has been said before as well. But neither is it affection. It has no intensity or longing, which go along with affection; and affection comes with familiarity, whereas goodwill can arise all of a sudden, as happens, for example, with competitors in the games. [1167a] Spec-

tators come to feel goodwill toward them and share their wishes, but would do nothing to help them; as we said, they feel goodwill suddenly and have only a superficial fondness. Goodwill, then, seems to be the beginning of friendship, just as the pleasure of the eye is the beginning of erotic love. No one falls in love without first being pleased by the other's looks; yet someone who delights in another's appearance is not thereby in love, but only when he also longs for the other when absent and desires his presence. In the same way, people cannot be friends without first having come to feel goodwill, yet those who feel goodwill do not for that reason love; for they only wish good things for those they feel goodwill toward, but would do nothing to help them, and would not go to any trouble on their behalf. So one might say, by a figure of speech, that goodwill is idle friendship, and that when it lasts over time and reaches familiarity it becomes friendship—not the kind based on usefulness or on pleasure, since goodwill does not arise on those grounds either. The person who has received a benefit renders goodwill in return for what he has received, and so is doing what is just. But someone who wishes another to prosper because he hopes to do well through him seems to have goodwill not toward that person but rather toward himself, just as he is not a friend either if he courts him for some use. In general, goodwill arises because of excellence and a certain decency, when someone seems to another to be fine or brave or something of the sort, as we said in the case of competitors.

Concord, too, appears to be a feature of friendship. That is why it is not mere agreement in opinion, since that could exist even among people who do not know one another. Nor do people say that those who agree about just anything are in concord—about the heavenly bodies, for instance (being in concord about these has nothing to do with friendship). Rather, they say that cities are in concord when they agree about what is advantageous, decide on the same things, and carry out what they have resolved in common. So concord concerns matters of action, and among these, matters of some magnitude which both

parties, or all, can have: for example, cities are in concord when everyone resolves that offices should be elective, or that they should ally with the Spartans, or that Pittacus should rule, at the time when he himself was willing to.[3] But when each of two parties wants the thing for himself, like the pair in the *Phoenician Women*, they fall into strife. For concord is not each having the same thing in mind, whatever it may be, but having it in mind for the same person—as when both the common people [1167b] and the decent want the best people to rule; for in this way everyone gets what they are aiming at. Concord, then, appears to be political friendship, as it is in fact called; for it concerns what is advantageous and what bears on life. Concord of this kind exists among decent people. They are in concord both with themselves and with one another, since they stand on the same ground, so to speak (for the wishes of such people stay fixed, and do not ebb and flow like the currents of a tidal strait), and they wish for what is just and advantageous, and aim at these in common as well.[4] Base people, however, cannot be in concord except to a small extent, just as they cannot be friends either, since they aim at getting more than their share of benefits and fall short in labors and public services. And each, wishing these things for himself, scrutinizes his neighbor and gets in his way; for if people do not watch over the common good, it is ruined. So the result is that they fall into strife, compelling one another to do what is just but unwilling to do it themselves.

Benefactors seem to love those they have benefited more than those who have been treated well love those who treated them well, and this is investigated as though it were contrary to reason. Most people think the reason is that the one party is in debt and the other is owed. So just as with loans, where debtors wish their creditors did not exist, while lenders even take care for their debtors' safety, so too, it is thought, benefactors wish

3 Pittacus was elected sole ruler of Mytilene, on Lesbos, in the early sixth century BC, and later laid down his power voluntarily.

4 In Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, the brothers Eteocles and Polynices fight to the death over the throne of Thebes.

those they have benefited to exist so that they will receive gratitude in return, while the beneficiaries are not concerned to repay. Epicharmus might perhaps say that those who say this are watching from a bad seat; but it seems true to human nature, since most people are forgetful, and aim to be treated well rather than to treat others well.[5] But the cause would seem to lie more in the nature of things, and the case of lenders is not even similar. With them there is no affection, only a wish that the debtors survive so as to be repaid; whereas those who have done good love and cherish those who have received it, even if they are of no use to them and never could be later on. This is what happens with craftsmen too: every craftsman loves his own work more than he would be loved by the work if it came to life. 1168a This happens most of all, perhaps, with poets, who love their own poems excessively, cherishing them like children. The benefactors' case seems to be like this: the person who has been treated well is their work, and so they love it more than the work loves the one who made it. The cause of this is that existence is choiceworthy and lovable to everyone, and we exist by activity (that is, by living and acting), and the maker of a work exists, in a way, by his activity. So he loves his work, because he loves existence too. And this is natural: what he is in capacity, the work displays in activity. At the same time, for the benefactor there is something fine in his action, so that he delights in the person in whom it lies; whereas for the one who has been treated well there is nothing fine in the one who acted, but at most something advantageous, and this is less pleasant and less lovable. What is pleasant is the activity of the present, the hope of the future, and the memory of the past; but most pleasant is what goes with activity, and it is likewise most lovable. For the one who has done good, his work remains (since what is fine is long-lasting), whereas for the one who received it, the usefulness passes away. Again, the memory of fine things is pleasant, while that of useful things is not very pleasant, or less so; with expectation it seems to be the other way round. Also, loving is

5 Epicharmus was a Sicilian comic poet of the early fifth century BC.

like acting, and being loved is like being acted upon; and loving and the features of friendship belong to those who take the leading part in the action. Again, everyone cherishes more what they have achieved with toil—as those who have made their money love it more than those who inherited it. And being treated well seems to involve no toil, while doing good is laborious. It is for these reasons, too, that mothers love their children more than fathers do: giving birth is more toilsome, and they know better that the children are their own. This would seem to be characteristic of benefactors as well.

SELF-LOVE

Aristotle distinguishes base self-love from the good person's love of what is fine.

There is also a puzzle about whether one should love oneself most, or someone else. People criticize those who cherish themselves most, and call them "self-lovers" as a term of reproach. And the base person seems to do everything for his own sake, and the more so the worse he is—so people complain of him, for instance, that he does nothing except with himself in view—while the decent person acts because of the fine, and the better he is, the more he acts because of the fine, and for his friend's sake, setting his own interest aside. But the facts are at odds with these arguments, and not without reason. 1168b For people say one should love most the one who is most a friend, and the one most a friend is the person who wishes good things for someone for that person's sake, even if no one will know. But these features belong most of all to a person in relation to himself, and so do all the other features by which a friend is defined; for it has been said that all the features of friendship extend from oneself to others as well. All the proverbs agree too, such as "one soul," "friends' things are shared," "friendship is equality," and "the knee is closer than the shin." All these would apply most of all to a person in relation to himself, since he is most a friend to himself; and so he should love himself most. It is reas-

onable, then, to be puzzled about which side to follow, since both carry some conviction. Perhaps, then, we should separate such arguments and determine how far and in what way each side is right. If we grasp how each side uses "self-love," it may perhaps become clear. Those who make it a term of reproach call "self-lovers" those who allot themselves the larger share of money, honors and bodily pleasures. These are what most people reach for, and they are keen about them as the best things, which is also why they are fought over. Those who grasp for more than their share of these things gratify their appetites and, in general, their feelings and the non-rational part of the soul. And most people are like this; that is why the term has come to be used as it is, from the prevailing kind, which is base. So those who are self-lovers in this way are justly reproached. That it is those who allot such things to themselves whom most people usually call self-lovers is clear enough. For if someone were always keen that he himself, above all others, should do what is just, or moderate, or anything else in accordance with the excellences, and in general were always securing the fine for himself, no one would call him a self-lover or blame him. Yet such a person would seem to be more of a self-lover. At any rate, he allots himself the finest things and the greatest goods, and gratifies the most authoritative part of himself, and obeys it in everything. And just as a city, or any other organized whole, seems to be most of all its most authoritative part, so too does a human being; and so the person who cherishes this part and gratifies it is most of all a self-lover. Again, people are called self-controlled or uncontrolled according to whether or not their intellect is in control, on the assumption that this is what each person is; 1169a and it is the things done with reason that people seem most of all to have done themselves, and voluntarily. That this, then, is what each person is, or is most of all, is clear enough, and also that the decent person cherishes it most. That is why he would be a self-lover most of all—though of a different kind from the one reproached, and differing from it as much as living by reason differs from living by feeling, and as

much as desiring the fine differs from desiring what seems advantageous. Now, everyone welcomes and praises those who are exceptionally keen on fine actions; and if everyone were competing for the fine and straining to do the finest things, the community would have everything it ought to have, and each individual would have the greatest of goods, since excellence is a good of this kind. So the good person ought to be a self-lover, since he will both benefit himself by doing fine things and help others; but the wicked person ought not to be, since he will harm both himself and those around him by following base feelings. For the wicked person, what he ought to do and what he does are at odds; but the decent person does what he ought to do. For every intellect chooses what is best for itself, and the decent person obeys his intellect. It is also true of the excellent person that he does many things for the sake of his friends and his country, even dying for them if need be. He will give up money and honors and, in general, the goods people fight over, securing the fine for himself. He would choose intense pleasure for a short time over mild pleasure for a long time, a year of living finely over many years of living any old way, and one fine and great action over many small ones. This is presumably what happens with those who die for others: they choose a great and fine thing for themselves. He would also give up money so that his friends may get more; for his friend gets the money, but he gets the fine, and so he allots himself the greater good. It is the same with honors and offices: he will give all these up to his friend, since this is fine and praiseworthy for him. It is reasonable, then, that he is thought excellent, since he chooses the fine above everything. It is even possible for him to give up actions to his friend, and it may be finer to be the cause of his friend's acting than to act himself. In everything praiseworthy, then, the excellent person evidently allots himself the greater share of the fine. [1169b] In this way, then, one ought to be a self-lover, as has been said; but in the way most people are, one should not.

DOES THE HAPPY PERSON NEED FRIENDS?

Aristotle argues that even the happy, self-sufficient person needs good friends.

There is also dispute about the happy person: will he need friends or not? People say that those who are blessed and self-sufficient have no need of friends, since they already have the good things. Being self-sufficient, then, they need nothing further, whereas a friend, being another self, provides what one cannot provide by oneself. Hence the line, "When heaven grants us good, what need of friends?" But it seems strange, when we assign all good things to the happy person, not to give him friends, which are thought to be the greatest of external goods. And if it belongs to a friend to do good rather than to receive it, and if doing good belongs to the good person and to excellence, and it is finer to do good to friends than to strangers, then the excellent person will need people to benefit. That is why people also ask whether friends are needed more in good fortune or in bad, on the grounds that the unfortunate person needs people to benefit him, and the fortunate need people they can benefit. Perhaps it is also strange to make the blessed person solitary. No one would choose to have all good things on condition of having them all by himself, since a human being is a political creature, whose nature is to live with others. This holds of the happy person too, since he has the things that are good by nature; and clearly it is better to spend one's days with friends and decent people than with strangers and whoever happens along. So the happy person needs friends. What, then, do those who hold the first view mean, and in what way are they right? Is it that most people think friends are those who are useful? The blessed person will have no need of friends like that, since he already has good things; nor of friends for pleasure, or only a little (for his life is pleasant and needs no imported pleasure). And because he does not need friends of these kinds, he is thought not to need friends at all. But this is perhaps not true. For it was said at

the beginning that happiness is a kind of activity, and an activity clearly comes into being; it does not belong to one like a possession. Now suppose that being happy lies in living and being active; that the activity of the good person is excellent and pleasant in itself, as was said at the beginning; that what is one's own is also among pleasant things; that we are better able to contemplate our neighbors than ourselves, and their actions than our own; and that the actions of excellent people who are their friends are pleasant to good people 1170a (since these actions have both of the features that are pleasant by nature). Then the blessed person will need friends of this kind, since he decides to contemplate actions that are decent and his own, and such are the actions of a good person who is his friend. People also think the happy person must live pleasantly. Now for a solitary person life is hard, since it is not easy to be continuously active by oneself, but easier with others and in relation to others. So his activity, which is pleasant in itself, will be more continuous, as it should be for the blessed person. For the excellent person, insofar as he is excellent, delights in actions in accordance with excellence and is disgusted by those that come from vice, just as a musician takes pleasure in beautiful melodies and is pained by bad ones. Living with good people would also provide a kind of training in excellence, as Theognis says. And if we look at the matter more from the standpoint of nature, it seems that an excellent friend is by nature choiceworthy for an excellent person. For it has been said that what is good by nature is good and pleasant in itself for the excellent person. People define life, for animals, by the capacity for perception, and for human beings by the capacity for perception or thought. But a capacity is referred to its activity, and what is decisive lies in the activity; so living seems to be, in the full sense, perceiving or thinking. And life is among the things that are good and pleasant in themselves, since it is determinate, and the determinate belongs to the nature of the good; and what is good by nature is good for the decent person too—which is why life seems to be pleasant for everyone. But we must not take a wicked and corrupted life,

or one spent in pain; for such a life is indeterminate, as are its attributes. This will be clearer in what follows, when we discuss pain. Suppose, then, that life itself is good and pleasant (and it seems to be, also from the fact that everyone desires it, and the decent and blessed most of all, since for them life is most choiceworthy and their existence most blessed). Suppose that one who sees perceives that he sees, one who hears that he hears, one who walks that he walks, and similarly in the other cases there is something that perceives that we are active, so that if we perceive, we perceive that we perceive, and if we think, we perceive that we think; and that perceiving that we perceive or think is perceiving that we exist (for existing, we said, is perceiving or thinking). [1170b] Suppose that perceiving that one is alive is one of the things pleasant in themselves (for life is good by nature, and perceiving the good present in oneself is pleasant); that living is choiceworthy, and most of all for the good, because existing is good and pleasant for them (for they are pleased by their awareness of what is good in itself); and that the excellent person is related to his friend as he is to himself (for the friend is another self). Then just as one's own existence is choiceworthy for each person, so too is one's friend's existence, or nearly so. Existence, we said, is choiceworthy because of one's perceiving that one is good, and such perception is pleasant in itself. So one must also share in perceiving that one's friend exists, and this would come about in living together and sharing talk and thought; for this is what living together would seem to mean in the case of human beings, and not, as with cattle, grazing in the same place. If, then, for the blessed person existence is choiceworthy in itself, being good and pleasant by nature, and his friend's existence is close to his own, then the friend too would be among the things choiceworthy. And what is choiceworthy for him he must have, or else he will be lacking in this respect. So whoever is to be happy will need excellent friends.

HOW MANY FRIENDS

Aristotle argues that one can have only a few friends of the best kind.

Should we, then, make as many friends as possible? Or, just as with hospitality it seems aptly said, "neither a host to many guests nor a host to none," will it be fitting in friendship too to be neither friendless nor, again, to have an excessive number of friends? With friends for use, the saying would seem entirely fitting, since returning services to many people is laborious, and a life is not enough for doing it. So more of them than suffice for one's own life are superfluous and a hindrance to living finely; there is no need for them. And of friends for pleasure, too, a few are enough, like seasoning in food. But as for excellent friends, should one have as many as possible in number, or is there some measure for a number of friends too, as there is for a city? For ten people would not make a city, and with a hundred thousand it is no longer a city. But the right quantity is perhaps not some single number, but anything between certain limits. 1171a So for friends too there is a limited number, and it is perhaps the largest number with whom one could live together (for living together seemed to be most characteristic of friendship). That it is not possible to live with many people and divide oneself among them is clear enough. Moreover, they too must be friends with one another, if they are all to spend their days together; and this is hard to achieve among many. It also becomes difficult to share intimately in the joys and griefs of many, since one is likely to find oneself rejoicing with one person and grieving with another at the same time. Perhaps, then, it is good not to seek to have as many friends as possible, but as many as are enough for living together; for it would seem impossible even to be a close friend to many. That is why one can't be in love with several people either: love tends to be a kind of excess of friendship, and that is felt toward one person; so intense friendship, too, is felt toward only a few. This seems to be borne out in practice as well. People don't have many friends in the way of com-

radely friendship, and the celebrated friendships are said to be between two people. Those who have many friends and are on intimate terms with everyone seem to be friends to no one, except in the way fellow citizens are—people call them people-pleasers. In the civic way, then, one can be a friend to many without being a people-pleaser, while being genuinely decent; but friendship on account of excellence, and for the friends' own sake, one can't have with many. One should be content to find even a few such people.

FRIENDS IN GOOD AND BAD FORTUNE

Aristotle asks whether friends are needed more in good fortune or bad, and praises living together.

Do we need friends more in good fortune or in bad? They are sought in both. Those in misfortune need help, and the fortunate need people to share their lives with and to do good to, since they want to do good. Friends are more necessary in misfortune, which is why it's useful friends that are needed there; but it is finer to have them in good fortune, which is why people then look for decent friends, since it is more choiceworthy to do good to them and to spend time with them. For the very presence of friends is pleasant, in good fortune and in bad alike. People in pain are relieved when their friends share their pain. So one might even raise the puzzle whether friends take a share of it, as if it were a weight, or whether that isn't so, but rather their presence, being pleasant, and the thought that they share the pain make the pain less. Whether it's for these reasons or some other that people are relieved, let's set aside; at any rate, what we described does seem to happen. But the presence of friends seems to be a mixed thing. The very sight of one's friends is pleasant, [1171b] especially for someone in misfortune, and it gives some help against grief (for a friend is a comfort, both by being seen and by what he says, if he is tactful, since he knows one's character and what gives one pleasure and pain). Yet to perceive him pained at one's own misfortunes is painful,

since everyone avoids being a cause of pain to his friends. That is why those of a manly nature take care not to make their friends share their pain. Unless he is exceptionally insensitive to pain, such a man can't bear the pain it causes them, and in general he doesn't admit others to lament with him, since he isn't given to lamenting himself. Women, though, and men of that sort enjoy people who groan along with them, and love them as friends who share their pain. But clearly in everything one should imitate the better person. The presence of friends in good fortune, on the other hand, brings both pleasant time together and the thought that they are pleased at one's own goods. So it would seem that one should invite friends eagerly to share one's good fortune (for it is fine to be ready to do good), but hesitate to invite them to share one's misfortunes, since one should give others a share of one's troubles as little as possible—hence the line "It's enough that I am unfortunate." One should call on them above all when they will be of great help to one at little trouble to themselves. Conversely, it is perhaps fitting to go to friends in misfortune uninvited and eagerly (for it belongs to a friend to do good, especially to those in need who haven't asked for it; this is finer and more pleasant for both), but when they are in good fortune, to go eagerly to help them (since friends are needed for this too), yet to be slow to go in order to be well treated oneself, since it isn't fine to be eager to receive benefits. Still, one should perhaps beware of seeming disagreeable by rebuffing them, since this sometimes happens. The presence of friends, then, appears choiceworthy in all circumstances.

Well then: just as for lovers seeing the beloved is what they cherish most, and they prefer this sense to the others because love exists and comes to be above all through it, isn't living together likewise the most choiceworthy thing for friends? For friendship is a partnership, and as one is toward oneself, so one is toward one's friend. In one's own case the perception that one exists is choiceworthy, and so it is in the case of one's friend; and this perception becomes active in living together, [1172a] so it's

reasonable that friends aim at this. And whatever existence means for each sort of person, or whatever it is for the sake of which they choose to live, that is what they want to spend their time doing with their friends. That is why some drink together, others play dice together, others exercise together and hunt together, or do philosophy together—each kind spending their days together in whatever they love most in life. Since they want to live together with their friends, they do and share in the things in which they think living together consists. So the friendship of base people turns out to be bad (for, being unstable, they share in base pursuits, and they become bad by growing like each other), while the friendship of decent people is decent, and grows with their association. They seem to become better, too, by being active together and correcting each other, since each takes the imprint of what he approves of in the other—hence "From the good, good things." So much for friendship. The next thing would be to discuss pleasure.

Book X

Pleasure, and the happiest life
Aristotle explains what pleasure is and argues that the happiest life is one of contemplation.

After this, presumably, the next thing is to discuss pleasure. For pleasure seems to be more closely bound up with our kind than anything else, which is why people educate the young by steering them with pleasure and pain. For excellence of character, too, it seems to matter most to enjoy what one should and to hate what one should. These things extend through the whole of life, and carry weight and power for excellence and the happy life, since people decide on what is pleasant and avoid what is painful. And it would seem that such matters should least of all be passed over, especially since they are much disputed. Some say that pleasure is the good; others, on the contrary, that it is altogether bad. Some of the latter are perhaps convinced that this is really so; others think it better for our lives to present pleasure as a bad thing even if it isn't, since most people incline toward it and are slaves to their pleasures, so one must pull them in the opposite direction, and in that way they will arrive at the mean. But perhaps this isn't well said. Arguments about feelings and actions are less credible than facts; so when they clash with what is perceived, they are scorned and discredit the truth along with themselves. [1172b] If someone who condemns pleasure is once seen going after it, he seems to be leaning toward it because all pleasure is of that sort—for making distinctions is not something most people do. True arguments, then, seem to be most useful not only for knowledge but also for life.

Since they harmonize with the facts, they are believed, and so they encourage those who understand them to live by them. But enough of such matters; let's go through what has been said about pleasure.

ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST PLEASURE

Aristotle reviews Eudoxus' view that pleasure is the good and objections to it.

Eudoxus thought that pleasure is the good because he saw all creatures, rational and non-rational, aiming at it. In everything, he held, what is choiceworthy is what is good, and what is most choiceworthy is best; so the fact that all things are drawn to the same thing indicated that this is the best for all (since each thing finds what is good for itself, as it does its food), and what is good for all, and what all aim at, is the good. His arguments were believed more because of the excellence of his character than for their own sake. He seemed exceptionally moderate, so he seemed to be saying these things not as a lover of pleasure but because that was really how things were. He thought it was no less evident from the opposite. Pain in itself is to be avoided by all, and so, similarly, its opposite is choiceworthy. And what is most choiceworthy is what we choose not because of something else or for the sake of something else; and pleasure is admittedly of this kind, since nobody asks anyone why he is enjoying himself, on the assumption that pleasure is choiceworthy in itself. Added to any good whatever—to acting justly or moderately, for instance—it makes it more choiceworthy, and good is increased by good. This argument, at any rate, seems to show that pleasure is one of the goods, and no more so than any other, since every good is more choiceworthy together with another good than on its own. It is by just such an argument that Plato, too, refutes the claim that pleasure is the good: the pleasant life is more choiceworthy with practical wisdom than without it, and if the mixture is better, pleasure is not the good, since the good does not become more choiceworthy by having anything added

to it. And clearly nothing else would be the good either if it becomes more choiceworthy when combined with any of the things good in themselves. What is there, then, of this kind, that we too can share in? For that is what we are looking for. Those who object that what all things aim at is not good may be talking nonsense. 1173a What everyone believes, we say is so; and someone who does away with this conviction will hardly say anything more convincing. If it were only mindless creatures that desired pleasures, there would be something in what they say; but if intelligent ones do too, how could it make sense?[1] Perhaps even in base creatures there is some natural good, stronger than they are in themselves, which aims at their proper good. Nor does the argument about the opposite seem to be correct. They say that if pain is bad, it doesn't follow that pleasure is good, since bad is opposed to bad as well, and both to what is neither. In saying this they aren't wrong, but it isn't true of the things in question. If both were bad, both would have to be avoided, and if both were neither, neither would have to be avoided, or both alike; but in fact people plainly avoid the one as bad and choose the other as good. It is in this way, then, that they are opposed.

Nor, again, if pleasure is not a quality, does it follow that it is not a good either; for the activities of excellence aren't qualities either, nor is happiness. They also say that the good is determinate, while pleasure is indeterminate because it admits of more and less. Now if they judge this from being pleased, the same will hold of justice and the other excellences, with respect to which people are plainly said to be more or less of a given character, and to act more or less in accordance with the excellences: people are more just and more courageous, and it is possible to act justly and moderately more or less. But if they judge by the pleasures themselves, perhaps they aren't stating the cause, if some pleasures are unmixed and others mixed. And what prevents pleasure from being like health, which is determinate and yet admits of more and less? The same proportion is

1 Plato argues this in his dialogue *Philebus*.

not present in everyone, nor is there always one and the same proportion in the same person; it can be loosened and still persist up to a point, and it differs by more and less. Pleasure too, then, can be of this kind. Again, they posit that the good is complete, while motions and comings-to-be are incomplete, and they try to show that pleasure is a motion and a coming-to-be. But they don't seem to be right; it doesn't even seem to be a motion. Speed and slowness seem proper to every motion—if not in itself, as with the motion of the cosmos, then relative to something else; but neither of these belongs to pleasure. One can become pleased quickly, as one can become angry quickly, 1173b but one can't be pleased quickly, not even relative to someone else, whereas one can walk, grow and do all such things quickly. One can change into pleasure quickly or slowly, then, but one can't be active in accordance with it—I mean, be pleased—quickly. And how could it be a coming-to-be? Not just anything, it seems, comes to be from just anything; rather, a thing dissolves into what it comes to be from; and pain would be the destruction of that of which pleasure is the coming-to-be. They also say that pain is a lack of the natural state, and pleasure a replenishment. But these are bodily feelings. If pleasure is a replenishment of the natural state, then what the replenishment occurs in would also be what feels the pleasure—the body, then; but that doesn't seem so. So replenishment is not pleasure, though someone might feel pleasure while a replenishment is taking place, and pain while being cut. This view seems to have arisen from the pains and pleasures connected with food: having been in want and felt pain beforehand, people are pleased by the replenishment. But this doesn't happen with all pleasures. The pleasures of mathematics involve no prior pain, nor, among the pleasures of the senses, do those of smell, nor many sounds and sights, nor memories and hopes. What, then, will these be comings-to-be of? There has been no lack of anything for there to be a replenishment of. To those who cite the disgraceful pleasures, one might reply that these are not pleasant. If they are pleasant to people in a bad condition, we shouldn't

think they are also pleasant, except to these people—just as we don't think that what is healthy or sweet or bitter to the sick is so, or that what appears white to people with eye disease is white. Or one might put it this way: pleasures are choiceworthy, but not from these sources—just as being rich is choiceworthy, but not for someone who gets it by betrayal, and being healthy, but not for someone who gets it by eating just anything. Or else pleasures differ in kind. Those from fine things are different from those from shameful ones, and one can't feel the pleasure of the just person without being just, or that of the musical person without being musical, and so on in other cases. The fact that a friend is different from a flatterer also seems to make it plain that pleasure is not a good, or that pleasures differ in kind. The one seems to associate with us with a view to the good, the other with a view to pleasure; and the one is reproached, while people praise the other as associating with a view to other things. [1174a] Again, no one would choose to live with a child's mind all his life, taking the greatest possible pleasure in the things children enjoy, or to enjoy doing something utterly shameful, even if he were never going to suffer pain for it. And there are many things we would care about even if they brought no pleasure, such as seeing, remembering, knowing, and having the excellences. If pleasures necessarily follow on these, it makes no difference, since we would choose them even if no pleasure came from them. That pleasure is not the good, then, and that not every pleasure is choiceworthy, seems to be clear; and also that some pleasures are choiceworthy in themselves, differing from the others in kind or in their sources. So much for what is said about pleasure and pain.

WHAT PLEASURE IS

Aristotle argues that pleasure is complete at every moment, like seeing, and is not a process.

What pleasure is, or what sort of thing it is, will become clearer if we take the matter up again from the beginning. Seeing seems

to be complete at any moment, since it lacks nothing that, coming to be later, will complete its form. Pleasure too seems to be like this. It is a kind of whole, and at no moment could one find a pleasure whose form will be completed if it goes on for a longer time. That is why it isn't a motion either. Every motion takes time and is directed at some end—building, for instance—and is complete when it has made what it aims at: either in the whole time, then, or at that final moment. But in their parts and their stretches of time all motions are incomplete, and different in kind from the whole and from one another. The fitting together of stones is different from the fluting of a column, and both from the making of the temple. The making of the temple is complete (it lacks nothing for what was proposed), whereas that of the foundation and of the triglyph is incomplete, since each is the making of a part. They differ in kind, then, and you can't find a motion complete in form at any given time, but, if at all, only in the whole time. It's the same with walking and the rest. For if locomotion is motion from somewhere to somewhere, it too has different kinds—flying, walking, jumping and the like.[2] And not only in that way, but within walking itself. The from-where and to-where is not the same for the whole racecourse and for a part of it, or for one part and another; nor is traversing this line the same as traversing that one. 1174b For one traverses not only a line but a line in a place, and this one is in a different place from that one. Motion has been discussed precisely elsewhere; but it seems that it is not complete at every time, but that most motions are incomplete and differ in kind, if the from-where and to-where determines the kind. The form of pleasure, though, is complete at any time. Clearly, then, pleasure and motion would be different from each other, and pleasure is one of the things that are whole and complete. This would also seem to follow from the fact that one can't move except in a stretch of time, whereas one can be pleased without one; for what occurs in the now is a kind of whole. From this it is also clear that people are wrong to say that pleasure is a motion or a coming-

2 A triglyph is a vertically grooved block in the frieze of a Doric temple.

to-be. These terms are not said of everything, but only of things that are divisible and not wholes. There is no coming-to-be of seeing, or of a point, or of a unit, and none of these is a motion or a coming-to-be; nor, then, is pleasure, since it is a kind of whole. Every sense is active in relation to its object, and a sense in good condition is completely active in relation to the finest of the objects that fall under it (for this more than anything seems to be what complete activity is—whether we say the sense itself is active, or that in which it resides, let it make no difference). In each case, then, the best activity is that of the subject in the best condition in relation to the most excellent of its objects.

PLEASURE COMPLETES ACTIVITY

Aristotle argues that pleasure completes activity, and that pleasures differ as their activities do.

And this activity would be the most complete and the most pleasant. For there is pleasure corresponding to every sense, and likewise to thought and contemplation; the most complete activity is the most pleasant, and the most complete is that of the subject in good condition in relation to the most excellent of its objects; and pleasure completes the activity. But pleasure doesn't complete it in the same way as the object perceived and the perception do when they are good—just as health and the doctor are not in the same way the cause of someone's being healthy. That there is pleasure corresponding to each sense is clear (we do say that sights and sounds are pleasant); and it's clear too that it is greatest when the sense is at its best and is active in relation to an object of that kind. When both the object and the perceiver are like this, there will always be pleasure, so long as there is both something to act and something to be acted on. Pleasure completes the activity not in the way the state present within it does, but as a sort of end that supervenes, like the bloom of youth on those in their prime. So long, then, as the object of thought or perception is as it should be, and so is what judges or contemplates it, [1175a] there will be pleasure in the activ-

ity; for when what is acted on and what acts are alike and related to each other in the same way, the same result naturally comes about. How is it, then, that no one is pleased continuously? Is it that we grow tired? Nothing human is capable of continuous activity, so pleasure doesn't occur continuously either, since it follows on activity. Some things delight us when they are new, but later not as much, for the same reason. At first our thought is stimulated and intensely active about them, as with people's sight when they look hard at something; but afterward the activity is not like that but slackens, and so the pleasure fades too. One might think that everyone desires pleasure because everyone also aims at living. Life is a kind of activity, and each person is active about the things, and with the faculties, that he loves most—the musical person, for instance, with his hearing about melodies, the lover of learning with his thought about objects of study, and likewise each of the rest. And pleasure completes the activities, and so it completes living, which they desire. It is reasonable, then, that they aim at pleasure too, since it completes life for each of them, and life is choiceworthy. Whether we choose life for the sake of pleasure or pleasure for the sake of life, let's leave aside for now. The two appear to be yoked together and not to admit of separation, since without activity there is no pleasure, and pleasure completes every activity.

That is why pleasures seem to differ in kind too. We think that things different in kind are completed by different things (this is how it appears with both natural things and products of craft, such as animals and trees, a painting, a statue, a house, a utensil); and similarly, that activities differing in kind are completed by things differing in kind. The activities of thought differ in kind from those of the senses, and these differ in kind among themselves; so too, then, do the pleasures that complete them. This would appear also from the fact that each pleasure is closely bound up with the activity it completes. For an activity's proper pleasure increases it. People who are active with pleasure judge each thing better and are more precise. Those who

enjoy doing geometry, for instance, become geometers and grasp each point better; similarly, lovers of music, lovers of building and all the rest make progress in their own proper work by enjoying it. So the pleasures increase the activities, and what increases a thing is proper to it; 1175b and for things different in kind, what is proper to them is also different in kind. This would appear still more clearly from the fact that pleasures from other sources get in the way of activities. Lovers of pipe music can't pay attention to arguments if they overhear someone playing the pipes, since they enjoy piping more than their present activity; so the pleasure of piping destroys the activity of argument. The same thing happens in other cases when someone is active about two things at once. The more pleasant activity crowds out the other—all the more if it differs greatly in pleasantness—so that one stops engaging in the other altogether. That's why, when we are enjoying anything intensely, we hardly do anything else, and we do other things when we are only mildly pleased with something; people who munch snacks in the theater, for instance, do it most when the performers are bad. Since an activity's proper pleasure makes it more precise, more lasting and better, while alien pleasures spoil it, clearly the two are far apart. Alien pleasures do pretty much what an activity's proper pains do. For proper pains destroy activities—if, for instance, someone finds writing or calculating unpleasant and painful: the one doesn't write, the other doesn't calculate, because the activity is painful. So opposite effects on an activity come from its proper pleasures and pains; and the proper ones are those that arise from the activity in itself. Alien pleasures, as has been said, do something similar to pain: they destroy the activity, though not in the same way. Since activities differ in goodness and badness, and some are choiceworthy, some to be avoided and some neither, the same holds for pleasures, since each activity has its own proper pleasure. The pleasure proper to an excellent activity is decent, and that proper to a base one is bad; for appetites, too, are praiseworthy when they are for fine things and blameworthy when they are for shameful ones. But

the pleasures in activities are more proper to them than the desires are. The desires are distinct from the activities both in time and in nature, while the pleasures are close to the activities and so hard to distinguish from them that there is dispute whether the activity is the same thing as the pleasure. Still, pleasure doesn't seem to be thought or perception (that would be absurd); but because it isn't separated from them, it appears to some to be the same. As activities are different, then, so are the pleasures. 1176a Sight differs from touch in purity, and hearing and smell from taste; so the pleasures differ similarly, and the pleasures of thought differ from these, and each group among themselves. Each animal also seems to have its own proper pleasure, as it has its own function—namely, the pleasure that corresponds to its activity. This would appear, too, if one looks at them one by one: the pleasure of a horse is different from that of a dog or a human being—as Heraclitus says, donkeys would choose rubbish rather than gold, since food is more pleasant to donkeys than gold. So the pleasures of creatures different in kind differ in kind, and it is reasonable that those of the same kind do not differ. Yet among human beings, at least, they vary quite a lot: the same things delight some and pain others, and are painful and hateful to some, pleasant and lovable to others. This happens with sweet things too. The same things don't seem sweet to someone with a fever and to someone healthy, nor does the same thing seem warm to a sick person and to one in good condition. The same happens in other cases. But in all such cases, what is really so seems to be what appears so to the excellent person. If this is right, as it seems to be, and excellence—the good person, as such—is the measure of each thing, then pleasures too would be what appear to be pleasures to him, and pleasant things what he enjoys. If what he finds distasteful appears pleasant to someone, that's no wonder, since human beings suffer many kinds of corruption and damage; but these things are not pleasant, except to these people and to those in this condition. Clearly, then, we should not say that the admittedly shameful pleasures are pleasures, except to the corrupt. But among

those that seem decent, what kind of pleasure, or which one, should we say is the pleasure of a human being? Or is it clear from the activities, since pleasures follow on these? Whether, then, there is one activity or several belonging to the complete and blessed man, the pleasures that complete them would be called human pleasures in the strict sense, and the rest in a secondary sense and at many removes, as are the activities.

HAPPINESS IS NOT AMUSEMENT

Aristotle argues that happiness lies in excellent activity, not in amusement.

Now that we have discussed the excellences, friendships and pleasures, it remains to go through happiness in outline, since we posit it as the end of human affairs. Our account will be more concise if we take up again what was said before. We said, then, that it is not a state; for then it could belong to someone who slept through his whole life, living the life of a plant, or to someone suffering the greatest misfortunes. 1176b If these consequences are unacceptable, and we should rather place it in some activity, as was said earlier; and if some activities are necessary and choiceworthy for the sake of other things, while others are choiceworthy in themselves, then clearly happiness should be placed among those choiceworthy in themselves and not among those choiceworthy for the sake of something else; for happiness lacks nothing but is self-sufficient. Activities are choiceworthy in themselves when nothing is sought from them beyond the activity. Actions in accordance with excellence seem to be of this kind, since doing fine and excellent things is among what is choiceworthy for its own sake. So do pleasant amusements, since people don't choose them for the sake of other things; in fact, they are harmed by them more than benefited, neglecting their bodies and their property. Most of those who are considered happy take refuge in such pastimes, which is why people who are witty in such pastimes are well regarded at the courts of tyrants: they make themselves pleasant in the

things the tyrants aim at, and such people are what the tyrants need. These things are thought to belong to happiness because those in positions of power spend their leisure in them; but perhaps such people are no evidence. For excellence and intellect, from which excellent activities come, don't consist in holding power; and if these people, having never tasted pure pleasure, worthy of a free person, take refuge in bodily pleasures, we shouldn't on that account think these more choiceworthy. Children, too, think that what is valued among them is best. It is reasonable, then, that just as different things appear valuable to children and to men, so different things appear valuable to bad and to decent people. As has often been said, then, what is valuable and pleasant is what is so to the excellent person; and to each person the most choiceworthy activity is the one in accordance with his own state, and so to the excellent person it is the activity in accordance with excellence. Happiness, then, does not lie in amusement. It would be absurd if the end were amusement, and if we toiled and suffered hardship our whole life long for the sake of amusing ourselves. For practically everything we choose, we choose for the sake of something else—except happiness, since that is the end. To be serious and to labor for the sake of amusement seems foolish and altogether childish; but to amuse oneself so as to be serious, as Anacharsis put it, seems right. For amusement is like relaxation, and we need relaxation because we can't labor continuously. Relaxation, then, is not an end, [1177a] since it happens for the sake of activity. The happy life seems to be a life in accordance with excellence, and such a life involves seriousness; it does not consist in amusement. We also say that serious things are better than funny things and things done in fun, and that the activity of the better thing—whether the better part of a person or the better person—is always the more serious; and the activity of what is better is superior, and so already happier.[3] Besides, anyone at all, even a slave, could enjoy bodily pleasures no less than the best of people; but no

3 Anacharsis was a Scythian prince of the sixth century BC, later counted among the proverbial wise men.

one grants a slave a share in happiness—unless he also grants him a life of his own. For happiness does not lie in pastimes of this kind, but in activities in accordance with excellence, as we have said before.

THE LIFE OF CONTEMPLATION

Aristotle argues that the happiest life is the activity of intellect in contemplation.

If happiness is activity in accordance with excellence, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest excellence, and this will be the excellence of the best thing in us. Whether this is intellect or something else that is thought by nature to rule and lead us and to have a conception of what is fine and divine—whether it is itself divine or only the most divine thing in us—the activity of this in accordance with its proper excellence will be complete happiness. That this activity is contemplative, we have already said. And this would seem to agree both with what we said earlier and with the truth. For this activity is the highest (since intellect is the highest thing in us, and the objects of intellect are the highest of the things that can be known); and it is also the most continuous, since we are able to contemplate continuously more than we can do anything else at all. We think, too, that pleasure must be mixed in with happiness; and the activity in accordance with wisdom is, by common agreement, the most pleasant of the activities in accordance with excellence. At any rate, philosophy seems to hold pleasures that are marvelous for their purity and their stability, and it is reasonable that those who know should pass their time more pleasantly than those who are still inquiring. Again, what is called self-sufficiency will belong most of all to contemplative activity. The wise person, the just person and the rest all need the necessities of life; but once they are adequately supplied with these, the just person still needs people toward whom and with whom to act justly, and so do the moderate person, the courageous person and each of the others. The wise person, by

contrast, can contemplate even on his own, and the wiser he is, the more he can do so. He does better, perhaps, if he has fellow workers; but all the same he is the most self-sufficient. 1177b And this activity alone would seem to be loved for its own sake, since nothing comes from it beyond the contemplating, whereas from practical activities we gain something, more or less, beyond the action itself. Happiness also seems to lie in leisure: we are busy so that we may have leisure, and we make war so that we may live in peace. Now the activity of the practical excellences lies in politics or in war, and actions concerned with these seem to be unleisured—those of war entirely so. For no one chooses to make war, or stirs up a war, for the sake of making war; a person would seem utterly bloodthirsty if he turned his friends into enemies so that there might be battles and slaughter. But the politician's activity is unleisured too: beyond political activity itself, it seeks to secure positions of power and honors—or at any rate happiness for the politician himself and his fellow citizens, a happiness distinct from political activity, and which we are plainly seeking as something distinct. Suppose, then, that among actions in accordance with the excellences, political and military actions stand out in fineness and greatness, but are unleisured, aim at some further end and are not chosen for their own sake; whereas the activity of intellect, being contemplative, seems to excel in seriousness, to aim at no end beyond itself, and to have its own proper pleasure (which in turn increases the activity); and suppose that self-sufficiency, leisure, freedom from weariness (so far as that is possible for a human being), and all the other things ascribed to the blessed person are evidently features of this activity. Then this will be the complete happiness of a human being—provided it takes up a complete span of life, for nothing that belongs to happiness is incomplete. But such a life would be higher than the human level. For a person will live like this not insofar as he is human, but insofar as there is something divine in him; and as far as this divine element differs from the composite, so far does its activity differ from activity in accordance with the other kind of excellence. If,

then, intellect is divine in comparison with a human being, the life in accordance with intellect is divine in comparison with human life. We should not follow those who advise us to think human thoughts because we are human, or mortal thoughts because we are mortal. Rather, we should make ourselves immortal as far as we can, and do everything to live in accordance with the highest thing in us. For even if it is small in bulk, 1178a in power and worth it far surpasses everything. It would seem, too, that each of us actually is this thing, since it is the authoritative and better part of us.[4] It would be odd, then, if a person chose not his own life but someone else's. And what we said before will apply now too: what properly belongs to each thing by nature is best and most pleasant for it. So for a human being the life in accordance with intellect is best and most pleasant, since intellect, more than anything else, is what a human being is. This life, then, will also be the happiest.

THE LIFE OF THE OTHER EXCELLENCES

Aristotle calls the life of practical excellence happy in a secondary way and ranks it below contemplation.

The life in accordance with the other kind of excellence is happiest in a secondary way, since the activities in accordance with it are human. For we do just and courageous acts, and the others that accord with the excellences, toward one another—in contracts, services and actions of every kind, and in our feelings—observing what is fitting for each person; and all these are evidently human. Some of them even seem to arise from the body, and excellence of character seems in many ways bound up with the feelings. Practical wisdom, too, is yoked to excellence of character, and excellence of character to practical wisdom, since the starting points of practical wisdom accord with the excellences of character, and what is right in the excellences of character accords with practical wisdom. And since these are also linked with the feelings, they will belong to the composite;

4 The "composite" is the human being as a compound of soul and body.

and the excellences of the composite are human. So, then, are the life and the happiness that accord with them. The happiness of intellect, by contrast, is separate. Let that much be said about it, since to work it out precisely is a larger task than the one before us. It would seem, too, to need external resources only a little, or at least less than the happiness of character. Let us grant that both need the necessities, and to an equal degree—even if the politician takes more trouble over the body and things of that sort—for the difference here would be small. But where their activities are concerned there will be a great difference. The generous person will need money to do generous deeds; so will the just person, for paying back what he owes (since wishes can't be seen, and even people who are not just pretend to wish to act justly); the courageous person will need power, if he is to accomplish any of the deeds that accord with his excellence; and the moderate person will need the opportunity. Otherwise how will he, or any of the others, be recognized for what he is? People also dispute whether decision or actions matter more for excellence, on the grounds that it involves both. [1178b] Clearly its completeness would lie in both; but actions need many things, and the greater and finer they are, the more they need. The person who contemplates, on the other hand, needs none of these things, at least for the activity itself; in fact they are, so to speak, even hindrances, at least to contemplation. But insofar as he is a human being and lives with others, he chooses to do what accords with excellence, and so he will need such things for living a human life. That complete happiness is a kind of contemplative activity will also be clear from the following. We suppose the gods above all to be blessed and happy; but what sort of actions ought we to ascribe to them? Just ones? Won't they look ridiculous making contracts, returning deposits and so on? Courageous ones, then—facing terrors and running risks because it is fine? Or generous ones? But to whom will they give? And it would be absurd if they actually had money or anything like it. And what would their moderate actions be? Isn't that a vulgar thing to praise them for, since they don't have base

appetites? If we went through them all, everything to do with action would appear petty and unworthy of gods. Yet everyone supposes that the gods are alive, and so active; surely they don't sleep, like Endymion. Now if a living being is deprived of acting, and still more of producing, what is left but contemplation? So the activity of the god, which surpasses all others in blessedness, will be contemplative; and so, among human activities, the one most akin to this will be the happiest. A sign of this is that the other animals have no share in happiness, being completely deprived of such activity.[5] For the whole life of the gods is blessed, while human life is blessed insofar as it has some likeness of such activity; but none of the other animals is happy, since they have no share at all in contemplation. Happiness, then, extends just as far as contemplation does, and those who contemplate more are happier—not incidentally, but by virtue of the contemplation, since it is valuable in itself. So happiness would be a kind of contemplation.

But since he is human, the happy person will also need external prosperity. For our nature is not self-sufficient for contemplating: the body must be healthy, and there must be food and other care as well. 1179a Still, we should not think that someone who is to be happy will need many great things, even if it is not possible to be blessed without external goods. For self-sufficiency and action do not depend on excess, and one can do fine things without ruling land and sea; a person can act in accordance with excellence even from moderate means. (This can be seen clearly: private individuals seem to do decent things no less than those in power—even more, in fact.) It is enough to have that much, since the life of someone who is active in accordance with excellence will be happy. Solon, too, was perhaps right in his description of the happy when he said they were people moderately supplied with external goods, who had done what he thought were the finest deeds, and had lived moderately; for it is possible for people with moderate possessions to do what they should. Anaxagoras also seems to have sup-

5 Endymion, in myth, was a beautiful youth granted endless sleep.

posed that the happy person was neither rich nor powerful, when he said he wouldn't be surprised if the happy person struck most people as odd; for they judge by externals, since externals are all they perceive. So the opinions of the wise seem to agree with our arguments. Such things carry some conviction, then; but in practical matters the truth is judged from deeds and from life, since these are what is decisive. We must therefore examine what we have said by bringing it to bear on deeds and life: if it harmonizes with the deeds, we should accept it, and if it clashes, we should suppose it to be mere words. The person who is active in accordance with intellect, who cultivates it and is in the best condition, also seems to be the one most loved by the gods. For if the gods have some care for human affairs, as they are thought to, it would be reasonable for them to delight in what is best and most akin to them (and that would be intellect), and to reward those who most love and honor it, on the grounds that these people care for what the gods hold dear and act rightly and finely. And it is plain enough that all this belongs most of all to the wise person. He, then, is the most loved by the gods; and the same person is likely to be the happiest too. So in this way as well the wise person will be happiest of all.

FROM ETHICS TO LAWGIVING

Aristotle argues that becoming good requires good laws and habits, and turns to the study of legislation.

If, then, we have said enough in outline about these matters and about the excellences, and also about friendship and pleasure, should we think that our project has reached its end? Or is it, as they say, [1179b] that in matters of action the end is not to study and know each thing but rather to do it? In that case, knowing about excellence is not enough either; we must try to possess it and use it—or become good in whatever other way we can. Now if arguments were enough by themselves to make people decent, they would rightly have earned many large fees, as Theognis

says, and we would have had to get hold of them. As it is, arguments evidently have the power to encourage and spur on the generous-minded among the young, and to make a well-born character, one that truly loves what is fine, open to being possessed by excellence; but they are evidently unable to spur the many on toward being fine and good. For the many are not naturally inclined to obey a sense of shame, but fear, or to keep away from base things because they are shameful, but because of the penalties. Living by feeling, they pursue their own pleasures and whatever will bring them about, and avoid the opposing pains; but they have not even a notion of what is fine and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it. What argument could reshape people like that? For it is impossible, or at least not easy, to dislodge by argument what has long been ingrained in people's characters. We should perhaps be content if, when we have everything by which people seem to become decent, we get some share of excellence. Some think people become good by nature, others by habit, others by teaching. What comes from nature is plainly not up to us, but belongs, through some divine causes, to those who are truly fortunate. Argument and teaching may well not have force with everyone; the listener's soul must first have been cultivated by habits to enjoy and to hate in the right way, like soil that is to nourish the seed. For someone who lives by feeling would not listen to an argument turning him away, or even understand it; and how can you persuade someone in that state to change? In general, feeling seems to yield not to argument but to force. So there must already be a character somehow akin to excellence, one that loves what is fine and is repelled by what is shameful. But it is hard to get the right upbringing for excellence from youth if one has not been raised under the right laws; for living moderately and with endurance is not pleasant to most people, especially the young. That is why their upbringing and pursuits must be ordered by laws, since these will not be painful once they have become habitual. 1180a But it is perhaps not enough to get the right upbringing and care when young; since people must keep up

these pursuits and be habituated to them when they are grown men as well, we would need laws about this too, and in general about the whole of life. For most people obey necessity rather than argument, and penalties rather than what is fine. That is why some think that lawgivers should urge people toward excellence and exhort them for the sake of the fine, expecting that those who have been decently prepared by their habits will listen; but should impose punishments and penalties on those who disobey or are of poorer nature, and banish the incurable altogether. For the decent person, who lives with a view to the fine, will obey reason, while the base person, who craves pleasure, must be corrected by pain, like a beast of burden. That is also why they say the pains should be those most opposed to the pleasures such people love. If, then, as we have said, the person who is to be good must be raised well and habituated well, and then live in decent pursuits and do nothing base either involuntarily or voluntarily, and if this would come about for people who live according to some kind of intellect and right order that has force behind it—well, a father's command does not have force or compulsion, nor in general does the command of any one man, unless he is a king or something of the sort; but law does have compelling power, being a rule that proceeds from a kind of practical wisdom and intellect. Besides, people hate individuals who oppose their impulses, even if they do so rightly; but law is not resented when it prescribes what is decent. Yet it is only in the city of the Spartans, or there and in a few others, that the lawgiver seems to have taken care over upbringing and pursuits. In most cities such matters are neglected, and each person lives as he wishes, "laying down the law for children and wife," like the Cyclopes. The best thing, then, is for there to be public care, and of the right kind, and for the city to be able to carry it out. But when the community neglects it, it would seem to be up to each person to help his own children and friends toward excellence—or at least to decide to do so. And from what we have said, it would seem that he would be better able to do this if he became a lawgiver. For public care

evidently comes about through laws, and decent care through excellent laws. [1180b] Whether they are written or unwritten would seem to make no difference, nor whether they are laws by which one person or many will be educated—any more than it does in music or athletics and the other pursuits.[6] For just as laws and customs have force in cities, so a father's words and habits have force in households—and even more so, because of kinship and the benefits he confers; for his children start out with affection for him and are naturally ready to obey. Further, individual education differs from public education, just as in medicine: in general rest and fasting are good for someone with a fever, but perhaps not for a particular person; and a boxer perhaps doesn't teach everyone the same style of fighting. So it would seem that the particular case is worked out more precisely when the care is private, since each person is more likely to get what suits him. But a doctor, a trainer or anyone else will give the best care to an individual if he knows the universal—what is good for everyone, or for people of a certain kind (for the sciences are said to be about what is common, and they are). Still, perhaps nothing prevents even someone without scientific knowledge from caring well for a single individual, if through experience he has observed precisely what happens in each case—just as some people seem to be their own best doctors, though they couldn't help anyone else at all. Nonetheless, someone who wants to master a craft and to understand it theoretically would seem to have to proceed to the universal and come to know it as far as possible; for we have said that this is what the sciences are about. And perhaps someone who wants to make people better through his care, whether many or few, should try to become a lawgiver, if it is through laws that we can become good. For putting anyone at all—whoever is set before you—into a good condition is not a job for just anybody; if it is for anyone, it is for the person who knows, as in medicine and the other fields that involve care and practical wisdom. Should we next examine,

6 The Cyclopes, the one-eyed giants of the *Odyssey*, live without assemblies or laws, each ruling his own wife and children.

then, where or how one might become a lawgiver? Is it, as in other fields, from the practitioners—the politicians? For lawgiving seemed to be a part of political science. Or does political science appear to be unlike the other sciences and capacities? For in the others, evidently, the same people both pass on the capacities and exercise them—doctors and painters, for instance. But when it comes to politics, it is the sophists who profess to teach it, [1181a] yet none of them practises it; the practitioners are the politicians, who would seem to do this through a kind of capacity and experience rather than through thought. For they evidently neither write nor speak about such matters (though that would perhaps be finer than composing speeches for the law courts and the assembly), nor have they made politicians of their own sons or of any of their friends. Yet it would be reasonable for them to have done so, if they could; for there is nothing better they could leave to their cities, and nothing they would rather choose to have for themselves, or indeed for those dearest to them, than such a capacity. Still, experience seems to contribute no small amount; otherwise people would not have become politicians through familiarity with politics. That is why those who want to know about political science seem to need experience as well. But those sophists who profess to teach it are evidently very far from doing so. For in general they don't even know what sort of thing it is or what it is about; otherwise they would not have classed it as the same as rhetoric, or even as inferior to it, nor would they have thought it easy to legislate by collecting the laws that are well thought of. You can select the best ones, they say—as if the selection itself did not call for comprehension, and as if judging correctly were not the most important thing, just as in music. For people experienced in a given field judge its works correctly and understand by what means or how they are accomplished, and what fits with what; whereas the inexperienced must be content if they can tell whether the work has been done well or badly, as with painting. Laws are like the works of political science; [1181b] how, then, could someone become a lawgiver from them, or judge which are

best? For people evidently don't become doctors from medical handbooks either. And yet these try to state not only the treatments but also how particular kinds of patient might be cured and how each should be treated, distinguishing the various bodily states; but while these seem useful to the experienced, they are useless to those without knowledge. Perhaps, then, collections of laws and constitutions would also be very useful to those who are able to study them and judge what is well done or the opposite, and what sorts of things suit what; but those who go through such material without the trained state would not be able to judge well, except by chance, though they might become more discerning about these matters. Since our predecessors have left the subject of lawgiving unexamined, it is perhaps better that we examine it ourselves, and indeed the whole subject of the constitution, so that our philosophy of human affairs may be completed as far as possible. First, then, let us try to review whatever has been said well on particular points by those before us; then, on the basis of the constitutions we have collected, let us study what sorts of things preserve and destroy cities, and what sorts preserve and destroy each kind of constitution, and for what reasons some cities are well governed and others the opposite.[7] For once these have been studied, we will perhaps have a better view of which constitution is best, how each is arranged, and what laws and customs it uses. Let us begin, then, and discuss it.

7 Aristotle's school compiled accounts of 158 constitutions, of which only the *Constitution of the Athenians* survives.