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Introduction

The following are detailed notes of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, which were part of a Summer Project Grant, approved by the Maricopa County Community College District in 2014. I would like to thank them for allowing me to spend time and effort on this research.

Please be aware that in what follows, these are actual sentences of Aristotle’s text in some cases, but this is not the whole text. More importantly, I have deleted, paraphrased, and/or reworded many unnecessary words, phrases, sentences, and/or examples (when 2 or 3 would suffice), and added chapter headings (that should be very helpful), numbers, underlining, italicizing, and so on, to make the text easier to understand. I have also added any notes or objections I may have thought about along the way, which are underlined and highlighted in blue. I have also moved his examples nearer to when he describes a principle (sometimes he says, e.g., “X is Y and not-Y” and then gives an example of not-Y for several sentences, until finally getting to an example of Y; I moved the example to make it more easily accessible).

In addition, these notes are in no way to be thought of as being a substitute for reading all of the *Nicomachean Ethics* for oneself; these notes are merely what I thought was most important, and put into a form that I could more easily understand. I use the following capitalized abbreviations: ARG = argument, OBJ = objection, REP = reply (to an objection), and EX(s) = example(s). Definitions are from the MAC Dictionary (v. 2.2.1), and are designated as follows: “Word to be defined [=definition – DY (€ to designate that it’s my note and not Aristotle’s definition)].”

Lastly, despite all these disclaimers, I do sincerely hope that these notes are of some value to the reader.

BOOK I:

I.1 Every Human Activity Aims at Some Good (1094a).

Every art, inquiry, action and choice, is thought to aim at some good; so the good is that at which all things aim. Some ends are activities; others are products apart from the activities that produce them (in which case the nature of the products are better than the activities). Since there are many actions, arts, and sciences, there are also many ends (e.g. the end of the medical art is health; shipbuilding, a vessel; strategy, victory; and economics, wealth). The ends of the master arts (military victory, health) are to be preferred to all the subordinate ends (e.g., bridle-making, exercise); for it is for the sake of the former that the latter are pursued.

I.2 We Must Study the Chief (Human) Good; Politics’ End is the Chief Human Good (1094a-b).

If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (then the process would go on to infinity and our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good. The knowledge of this good will have a great influence on life. Like archers who have a mark to aim at, we shall be more likely to hit upon our target. So we must try, in outline at least, to determine what it is, and of which of the sciences or capacities it is the object. It would seem to belong to the most authoritative art and that which is
most truly the master art: politics. For politics ordains which of the sciences should be studied in a state, and which each class of citizens should learn and up to what point they should learn them; and we see even the most highly esteemed capacities to fall under this, e.g. strategy, economics, rhetoric; since politics uses the rest of the sciences, and since it legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to abstain from, the end of this science must include those of the others, so that this end must be the human good. Though it is worthwhile to attain the end merely for one man, it is finer and more godlike to attain it for a nation or for city-states. [DY: Parallel with Socrates’ statement in the Crito that, as much as we should honor our parents, we should honor the state even more.] These, then, are the ends at which our inquiry, being concerned with politics, aims.

I.3 We Cannot be Too Precise; Inexperienced Youth do Not Benefit from Political Science (1094b-1095a).

Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject matter admits of; fine and just actions, which political science investigates, exhibit much variety and fluctuation, so that they may be thought to exist only by convention, and not by nature. And goods also exhibit a similar fluctuation because they bring harm to many people; men have been undone by wealth, and others by courage. It is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits: it is evidently equally foolish to accept probable reasoning from a mathematician and to demand from a rhetorician demonstrative proofs.

A young man is not a proper hearer of lectures on political science: he is inexperienced in the actions that occur in life, but its discussions start from these and are about these; and, further, since he tends to follow his passions, his study will be vain and unprofitable, because the end aimed at is not knowledge but action. And it makes no difference whether he is young in years or youthful in character; the defect does not depend on time, but on his living and pursuing each successive object as passion directs. To such persons, as to the incontinent, knowledge brings no profit; but to those who desire and act in accordance with a rational principle knowledge about such matters will be of great benefit.

I.4 Political Science Aims at Happiness; the Many and Wise Agree, but Differ on What Happiness is; Those with Good Habits can Hear Lectures on Political Science (1095a-b).

Political science aims at the highest of all goods achievable by action: happiness. Both the many and the wise say that it is happiness, and identify living well and faring well with being happy; they differ about what happiness is they differ: the many think it is some plain and obvious thing, like pleasure, health, wealth, or honor (they argue about this too, and the same person will say it is health when he is ill, with wealth when he is poor), and admire those who proclaim some great thing that is above their comprehension. The wise (e.g., Plato) thought that apart from these many goods there is another that is good in itself and causes the goodness of every good.

Note that there is a difference (as Plato would say) between arguments from and those to the first principles. We must begin with things familiar to us. Hence anyone who listens intelligently to lectures about what is noble, just and political science subjects must have been brought up in good habits. If the facts (starting-points) are sufficiently plain to him, he will not need the reason as well. And as for him who neither has nor can get them, there is Hesiod’s advice:

Far best is he who knows all things himself;
Good, he that hearkens when men counsel right;
But he who neither knows, nor lays to heart
Another’s wisdom, is a useless wight [=a person of a specified kind, esp. one regarded as unfortunate - DY].
I.5 Three Kinds of Life; Pleasure, Honor, Virtue, and Money-Making/Wealth are Not the Chief Good (1095b-1096a).

The many seem (not without some reason) to identify the good/happiness with pleasure; which is the reason why they love the life of enjoyment. There are three prominent types of life: pleasure, the political, and the contemplative life. The many are evidently quite slavish in their tastes, preferring a life suitable to beasts, but they have some good role models in kings (e.g. Sardanapallus, king of Assyria). But people of superior refinement and of active disposition identify happiness with honor (i.e., the end of the political life). But honor seems too superficial, since it depends on others to bestow honor rather than on the honoree. The good we seek is something of one's own and not easily taken from one. Further, men seem to pursue honor from men of practical wisdom on the ground of their virtue; so perhaps virtue, rather than honor, is the end of the political life. But even virtue appears somewhat incomplete, because possessing it is compatible with being asleep, lifelong inactivity, and, with the greatest sufferings and misfortunes; but no one would call a man living like this happy. Third comes the contemplative life, which we shall consider later.

The life of money-making is one undertaken under compulsion, and wealth is not the good we are seeking; wealth is merely useful and for the sake of something else. So pleasure, honor, virtue, and wealth are ends, since they are loved for themselves. But not even these are the chief good, so we will dismiss them.

I.6 Criticisms of Plato’s Form/Idea of the Good (1096a-1097a).

We will now consider the universal good thoroughly, even though our friends have introduced the Forms/Ideas. Yet while both are dear, piety requires us to honor truth above our friends. [DY: I have addressed all of the following objections in my work, *Plato Meets His Critics: Volume I: Aristotle.* Key: ARG = argument, OBJ = objection, and REP = reply]

[ARG1] Prior/Posterior Goods: They did not posit Ideas of classes within which they recognized priority and posteriority (which is why they did not posit an Idea embracing all numbers); things are called good in the category of substance, quality, relation, etc. and substance (that which is per se) is prior in nature to the relative; so that there could not be a common Idea set over all these goods. [ARG2] Ten Goods so No One Good: Since things are said to be good in as many ways as they are said to be (good as substance (God and reason), quality (virtues), quantity (the moderate), relation (the useful), time (the right opportunity), place, etc.), clearly the good cannot be something universally present in all cases and single; for then it would not have been predicated in all the categories but in one only. [ARG3] Not One Science of the Good: Since of the things answering to one Idea there is one science, there would have been one science of all the goods; but there are many sciences even of the things that fall under one category; e.g., opportunity in war is studied by strategy and in disease by medicine, and the moderate in food is studied by medicine and in exercise by the science of gymnastics. [ARG4] No Good “In Itself”?: What in the world do they mean by “a thing itself”; e.g., in man himself and in a particular man, the account of man is one and the same. Insofar as they are men, they will be the same; the same goes for good (men). [ARG5] Eternality of Goodness Makes No Difference: The Good will not be good any the more for being eternal, since that which lasts long is no whiter than that which perishes in a day. [ARG6] Pythagoreans’ Good is Better: The Pythagoreans seem to give a more plausible account of the good, when they place the one in the column of goods (Plato’s nephew Speusippus seems to have followed them). [DY: Is this puzzling, since Aristotle has argued that Plato is wrong that there is one Good (there are ten, for Aristotle), but here is praising Pythagoreans for claiming that the One is in the column of goods?]

[ARG7] OBJ: The Good-In-Themselves Goods v. Useful Goods (REP: There is Not One Idea of Good that All Goods In Themselves Has): Platonists have not been speaking about all goods, and that the goods that are pursued and loved for themselves are called good by reference to a single Form, while those which tend to produce or to preserve these somehow or to prevent their contraries are called so by reference to these, and in a different sense. So goods must be spoken of in two ways: goods in themselves, and goods useful by reason of these. Are things good in themselves called good by reference to a single Idea? Intelligence, sight, certain pleasures and honors are good in themselves, because they are pursued even when isolated from others. Even if we pursue these also for the sake of something else, they are still good in themselves. If nothing other than the Idea is good in itself, then the Form will be empty. But if intelligence, sight,
certain pleasures and honors are good in themselves, the account of the good will have to be identical in them all (e.g., whiteness is identical in snow and in white lead). But the accounts the goodness of honor, wisdom, and pleasure are distinct and diverse; therefore, the good is not something common answering to one Idea.

**ARG8** Goods Are One By Analogy? In what way are things called good? They do not seem to be like the things that only chance have the same name. Are goods one, then, by being derived from one good or by all contributing to one good, or are they rather one by analogy? Certainly as sight is in the body, so is reason in the soul, and so on in other cases. **ARG9** No Practicable or Attainable Good: OBJ: Concerning the Idea of Good: even if there is some one good which is universally predicable of goods or is capable of separate and independent existence, clearly it could not be achieved or attained by man (which is what we are now seeing). Perhaps having knowledge of this good with a view to the goods that are attainable and achievable would be worthwhile; using this as a pattern, we could know better the goods that are good for us and attain them. REP: However, this argument clashes with the procedure of the sciences; though all sciences aim at some good and seek to supply the deficiency of it, they ignore and do not even seek the knowledge of the good, which is not probable if it is so great an aid. Moreover, it is hard to see how a weave or a carpenter will be benefited in regard to his own craft by knowing this “good itself”, or how the man who has viewed the Idea itself will be a better doctor or general thereby. For a doctor seems not even to study health in this way, but the health of man, or perhaps rather the health of a particular man (for it is individuals that he is healing).

## 1.7 Happiness is the Good we Seek for the Sake of Everything Else; It is Complete and Self-Sufficient; the Function of Humans/the Human Good in a Complete Life; Not a Precise Account (1097a-1098b).

Returning to the good, it seems different in different actions and arts; it is different in medicine (health), in strategy (victory), and so on. The good of each is that for whose sake everything else (action or choice) is done. So if there is an end for all that we do, this will be the good achievable by action, and if there are more than one, these will be the goods achievable by action.

Since there are evidently more than one end, and we choose some of these (e.g. wealth, flutes, and in general instruments) for the sake of something else, clearly not all ends are complete ends; but the chief good is evidently something complete. Therefore, if there is only one complete end, this will be what we are seeking, and if there are more than one, the most complete of these will be what we are seeking. Things desirable in themselves are more complete than things desirable only for the sake of other things; things complete without qualification are those that are always desirable in themselves and never for the sake of something else.

We always choose happiness (above all else) for itself and never for the sake of something else; but honor, pleasure, reason, and every virtue we choose indeed for themselves (for if nothing resulted from them we should still choose each of them), but we choose them also for the sake of happiness. No one chooses happiness for the sake of these, nor, in general, for anything other than itself. **DY OBJ:** It is puzzling that Aristotle has stated that we do not pursue happiness for anything other than itself, but he states here that “in general” we do not choose happiness for the sake of honor, pleasure, reason or any virtue; this implies that it is theoretically possible for one to choose to do these things.

The complete good is thought to be self-sufficient, by which we do not mean that which is sufficient for a man living by himself, but also for parents, children, wife, and in general for his friends and fellow citizens, since man is sociable by nature. The self-sufficient we now define as that which when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing; and this is happiness; and further, happiness is the most desirable of all things, without being counted as one good thing among others. So happiness is something complete and self-sufficient, and is the end of action.

Let us first ascertain the function of humans. For just as for a flute-player, a sculptor, or any artist, and, in general, for all things that have a function or activity, the good and the “well” is thought to reside in the function, so would it seem to be for man, if he has a function. What then can the function of man be? Life seems to be common even to plants (nutrition and growth), but we are seeking what is peculiar to man. So let us exclude nutrition and growth. Next is a life of perception, but horses, oxen, and every animal have that, so we exclude perception. There remains, then, an active life of reason (which plants and animals do not have). If the
function of man is an activity of soul in accordance with (or not without) rational principle, and if we say an X and a good X have a function which is the same in kind, e.g. a lyre-player and a good lyre-player (the function of a lyre-player is to play the lyre, and that of a good lyre-player is to do so well; then the human good is activity of soul in conformity with virtue, and if there are more than one virtue, in conformity with the best and most complete.

But we must add “in a complete life”. For one swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy.

Let this serve as an outline of the good; for we must not look for precision in all things alike, but in each class of things such precision as accords with the subject matter, and so much as is appropriate to the inquiry. [Now of first principles we see some by induction, some by perception, some by a certain habituation, and others too in other ways.]

I.8 Our Account of Happiness Agrees with Others; Happiness is the Best, Noblest and Most Pleasant; Happiness Needs External Goods (1098b-1099b).

We must consider what is commonly said about goods, which have been divided into three classes, and some are described as external, others as relating to soul or to body; and we call those that relate to soul most properly and truly goods. But we are positing actions and activities relating to soul (and not external goods). So our account must be sound, since it is an old one and agreed on by philosophers. Another belief that harmonizes with our account is that the happy man lives well and fares well (this is practically our definition of happiness).

Everyone identifies happiness with virtue, some with practical wisdom, others with philosophic wisdom, all or one of these, accompanied by pleasure or not without pleasure; others include external prosperity. So we should be right in at least some one respect or even in most respects, since we agree with these to an extent.

Our account accords with those who identify happiness with virtue or some one virtue; but it makes a big difference whether we place the chief good in possession or in use, in a disposition or in activity. For the disposition of goodness may exist without producing any good result, as in a man who is asleep or in some other way quite inactive, but the activity cannot; for one who has the activity will of necessity be acting, and acting well. And as in the Olympic Games: it is not the most beautiful and the strongest that are crowned but those who compete (for it is some of these that are victorious), so those who act rightly win the noble and good things in life.

Their life is also in itself pleasant; pleasure is a feeling of soul, and to each man that which he is said to be a lover of is pleasant (e.g. a horse is pleasant to the lover of horses; just acts are pleasant to the lover of justice and in general virtuous acts to the lover of virtue). For most men, their pleasures conflict with one another because these are not by nature pleasant, but the lovers of what is noble and virtuous find pleasant the things that are by nature pleasant. So their life has no further need of pleasure; virtuous actions have pleasure in themselves. [DY: Note that Aristotle follows Plato in stating that a truly happy person has a pleasant life; Plato puts it that the person who knows the Good experiences true pleasure, while those seeking bodily pleasures seek false or bad pleasures.] The man who does not rejoice in noble actions is not even good; since no one would call a man just who did not enjoy acting justly, nor any man liberal who did not enjoy liberal actions; and similarly in all other cases. The good man judges well about the good and noble and he judges in the way we have described. Happiness then is the best, noblest, and most pleasant thing, and these attributes are not severed as in the inscription at Delos –

Most noble is that which is justest, and best is health; But pleasantest is it to win what we love.

For all these properties belong to the best activities; and these, or one – the best – of these, we identify with happiness.

Evidently, as we said, happiness needs the external goods as well; it is impossible, or not easy, to do noble acts without the proper equipment. In many actions we use friends, riches and political power as instruments; and there are some things the lack of which takes the luster from blessedness, as good birth, satisfactory children,
beauty; for the man who is very ugly in appearance or ill-born or solitary and childless is hardly happy, and perhaps a man would be still less so if he had thoroughly bad children or friends or had lost good children or friends by death. So happiness seems to need this sort of prosperity in addition [DY: Doesn’t this make happiness not self-sufficient?]; thus some identify happiness with good fortune, though others identify it with virtue.

I.9 Happiness is Acquired by Study and Care; It Might be God-Given; Animals and Boys Cannot be Happy (1099b-1100a).

Is happiness acquired by learning, habituation, some other sort of training, divine providence, or chance? Now if there is any gift of the gods to men, it is reasonable that happiness should be god-given. Even if happiness is not god-sent but comes as a result of virtue and some process of learning or training, it seems to be among the most godlike things; for the prize and end of virtue seems to be the best thing and something godlike and blessed.

Everyone who is not maimed as regards virtue may win it by a certain kind of study and care. It is better to be happy in this way than by chance, since everything that depends on the action of nature is by nature as good as it can be; and to entrust to chance what is greatest and most noble would be a very defective arrangement.

Our definition of happiness is a certain kind of activity of soul. Not including happiness, some goods are necessary/intrinsic and others are instrumental. This agrees with what we said earlier, since the end of political science is the best end, and political science spends most of its pains on making the citizens to be of a certain character, viz. good and capable of noble acts.

So we do not call the ox, horse or any other animal happy; none of them is capable of sharing in such activity. For this reason also a boy is not happy; he is not yet capable of such acts, owing to his age; and boys who are called happy are being congratulated by reason of the hopes we have for them. We require not only complete virtue but also a complete life, since many changes occur in life, and all manner of chances (and one who has experienced such chances and has ended wretchedly no one calls happy).

I.10 Can We Call a Man Happy While He’s Alive? Do the Misfortunes of Children Cause Unhappiness (After Death)? The Happy Man Cannot Become Miserable and is Blessed (1100a-1101a).

So can no one at all be called happy while he lives? Is it also the case that a man is happy when he is dead? Or isn’t this quite absurd since we say that happiness is an activity? But if we do not call the dead man happy, and if one can then safely call a man blessed as being at last beyond evils and misfortunes, consider this: both evil and good are thought to exist for a dead man, as much as for one who is alive but not aware of them; e.g. (dis)honors and the good or bad fortunes of children and descendants. The problem: though a man has lived blessedly up to old age and has had a death worthy of his life, many reverses may befall his descendants – some of them may be bad and attain the life they deserve. So it would be odd if the dead man were to share in these changes and become at one time happy, at another wretched; it would also be odd if the fortunes of the descendants did not for some time have some effect on the happiness of their ancestors.

If we must see the end and only then call a man having been blessed before, surely it is odd that when he is happy we cannot truly predicate “happy” of him because we do not wish to call living men happy, on account of (1) the changes that may befall them and (2) we have assumed happiness to be something permanent and by no means easily changed, while a single man may suffer many turns of fortune’s wheel. If we were to follow his fortunes, we should often call the same man happy and again wretched; human life, as we said, needs these as well, while virtuous activities or their opposites are what determine happiness or the reverse.

No function of man has so much permanence as virtuous activities (these are thought to be more durable even than knowledge), and of these themselves the most valuable are more durable because those who are blessed spend their life most readily and most continuously in these. Permanence of virtuous activities will belong to the happy man, and he will be happy throughout his life; for always, or by preference to everything
else, he will do and contemplate what is virtuous, and he will bear the chances of life most nobly and altogether decorously, if he is “truly good” and “beyond reproach”.

Many events happen by chance, and differ in importance; small pieces of good fortune or of its opposite clearly do not weigh down the scales of life one way or the other, but a multitude of great events if they turn out well will make life more blessed (they themselves can add beauty to life, and/or the way a man deals with them may be noble and good); if they turn out ill can crush and maim blessedness; they both bring pain with them and hinder many activities. Even in these nobility can shine through, when a man bears with resignation many great misfortunes, not through insensibility to pain but through nobility and greatness of soul.

If activities are what determine the character of life, no blessed man can become miserable; he will never do the acts that are hateful and mean. For the man who is truly good and wise bears all the chances of life becomingly and always makes the best of circumstances, as a good general makes the best military use of the army at his command and a shoemaker makes the best shoes out of the hides that are given him. So the happy man can never become miserable – though he will not reach blessedness, due to great misfortunes.

Neither will the happy man be moved from his happiness easily or by any ordinary misadventures, but only by many great ones, nor, if he has had many great misadventures, will he recover his happiness in a short time, but if at all, only in a long and complete one in which he has attained many splendid successes. [DY: Isn’t this inconsistent with the last sentence of the last paragraph? The happy man can never become miserable or unhappy [last paragraph], but the happy man can become unhappy through many great misadventures?]

Why then should we not say that he is happy who is active in conformity with complete virtue and is sufficiently equipped with external goods, not for some chance period but throughout a complete life? Or must we add “and who is destined to live thus and die as befits his life”? Certainly the future is obscure to us, while happiness is an end and something in every way final. If so, we shall call blessed those among living men in whom these conditions are, and are to be, fulfilled – blessed men.

I.11 The (Mis)Fortunes of Friends Cannot Make a Happy Man Unhappy or Significantly Affect the Dead (1101a-b).

That the fortunes of descendants and of all a man's friends should not affect his happiness at all seems a very unfriendly doctrine, and one opposed to the opinions men hold; but since the events that happen are numerous and admit of all sorts of difference, so we will speak generally. Since man's own misadventures can be weighty or light, so too there are differences among the misadventures of all our friends, and it makes a difference whether the various sufferings befall the living or the dead, this difference also must be taken into account; or rather, perhaps, the fact that doubt is felt whether the dead share in any good or evil. So even if anything whether good or evil penetrates to them, it must be something weak and negligible, either in itself or for them, or if not, at least it must be such in degree and kind as not to make happy those who are not happy nor to take away their blessedness from those who are. The good or bad fortunes of friends, then, seem to have some effects on the dead, but effects of such a kind and degree as neither to make the happy unhappy nor to produce any other change of the kind.

I.12 Happiness is Blessed, Divine, Complete, and Prized as a First Principle; Virtue is Praised (1101b-1102a).

Is happiness among the things that are praised or rather among the things that are prized (happiness is not to be placed among potentialities)? Everything that is praised seems to be praised because it is of a certain kind and is related somehow to something else (we praise the just, brave, or good man and virtue itself because of the actions and functions involved; this is clear also from the praises of the gods; for it seems absurd that the gods should be referred to our standard, but this is done because praise involves a reference to something else). But if praise is for things such as we have described, clearly what applies to the best things is not praise, but something greater and better, as is indeed obvious; for what we do to the gods and the most godlike of men is to call them blessed and happy. And so too with good things; no one praises happiness as he does justice, but rather calls it blessed, as being something more divine and better.
Analogously, Eudoxus advocated the supremacy of pleasure from the fact that, though a good, pleasure is not praised, which indicated that it is better than the things that are praised, such as God and the good; by reference to these, all other things are judged. Praise is appropriate to virtue; as a result of virtue men tend to do noble deeds; but happiness is among the things that are prized and complete, from the fact that it is a first principle; it is for the sake of this that we all do everything else, and the first principle and cause of goods is, we claim, something prized and divine.

I.13 A Political Scientist Must Know the Soul; Two Irrational Parts of the Soul (Vegetative and Appetitive) and One Rational (Reason), All with Subparts; Two Kinds of Virtue: Intellectual and Moral (1102a-1103a).

Since happiness is an activity of soul in accordance with complete virtue, we must consider the nature of virtue so we can perhaps see better the nature of happiness. The true student of politics, too, is thought to have studied this above all things; he wishes to make his fellow citizens good and obedient to the laws (e.g., Cretan and Spartan lawgivers). Clearly the virtue we must study is human virtue; the good we were seeking was human good and the happiness human happiness. By human virtue we mean not that of the body but that of the soul; and happiness also we call an activity of soul. So the student of politics must know somehow the facts about soul, as the man who is to heal the eyes must know about the whole body also; and all the more since politics is more prized and better than medicine; as even the best educated doctors spend much time on acquiring knowledge of the body, the student of politics must study the soul, to a sufficient but not excessive extent.

We must use some of what Plato said: e.g. that one element in the soul is irrational and one has a rational principle. We will leave aside whether these are separated as the parts of the body or of anything divisible are, or are distinct by definition but by nature inseparable.

Of the irrational element one division (vegetative, which causes nutrition and growth) seems to be widely distributed, and must be assigned to all nurslings, embryos, and full-grown creatures. The virtue of this seems to be common to all and not specifically human; so let us leave the nutritive capacity alone, since it has by its nature no share in human virtue.

There is another irrational element in the soul (appetitive) that fights against and resists the rational principle (though it shares it in a sense). We praise the reason of the continent man and of the incontinent, and the part of their soul that has reason, since it urges them aright and towards the best objects. Exactly as paralyzed limbs when we choose to move them to the right turn on the contrary to the left, so is it with the soul; the impulses of incontinent people move in contrary directions. But while in the body we see that which moves astray, in the soul we do not. In what sense it is distinct from the other elements does not concern us. Even appetite seems to have a share in reason; in the continent man it obeys reason – and presumably in the temperate and brave man it is still more obedient; in them it speaks, on all matters, with the same voice as reason. [DY: Aristotle agrees with Plato that the Spirit (or appetitive) part of the soul is usually an ally with Reason.]

So the irrational element also appears to be two-fold. The vegetative element in no way shares in reason, but the appetitive and in general the desiring element in a sense shares in it, insofar as it listens to and obeys it (as in paying heed to one's father or one's friends). The irrational element is in some sense persuaded by reason, e.g., by the giving of advice, by all reproof, and exhortation.

Virtue is distinguished into kinds in accordance with this difference; some virtues are intellectual and others moral; philosophic wisdom, understanding and practical wisdom are intellectual virtues: liberality and temperance are moral virtues. In speaking about a man's character we do not say that he is wise or has understanding but that he is good-tempered or temperate; yet we praise the wise man also with respect to his disposition; and of dispositions we call those which merit praise virtues.

BOOK II:
II.1 Whence Intellectual and Moral Virtue Come; We Exercise Virtues to Gain Them, as With Crafts; Dispositions Arise Out of Activities; Habits in Youth Make All the Difference to Produce Virtue/Vice (1103a-b).

Since there is intellectual and moral virtue: intellectual virtue owes both its birth and growth to teaching (hence requiring experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit (its name is formed by a slight variation of “habit”). Thus none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature (nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature). For instance, the stone that by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor can fire be habituated to move downwards, nor can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another. So, we are adapted by nature to receive virtues, and are made perfect by habit.

Of all the things that come to us by nature, we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity (e.g., the senses; for it was not by often seeing or often hearing that we got these senses – we had them before we used them, and did not come to have them by using them); but virtues we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well (e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre); so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.

This is what happens in states: legislators make the citizens good by forming habits in them, and this is the wish of every legislator; and those who do not effect it miss their mark, and it is in this that a good constitution differs from a bad one.

Every virtue is both produced and destroyed by the same cause, and similarly every art; it is from playing the lyre that both good and bad lyre-players are produced. This is true of all the rest; men will be good or bad builders as a result of building well or badly; we would not need teachers if all men would have been born good or bad at their craft. So too with the virtues: by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become just or unjust, and by doing the acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or confidence, we become brave or cowardly. The same is true of appetites and feelings of anger; some men become temperate and good-tempered, others self-indulgent and irascible, by behaving in one way or the other in the appropriate circumstances. Thus, dispositions arise out of like activities. This is why the activities we exhibit must be of a certain kind; it is because the dispositions correspond to the differences between these. Whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference.

II.2 How We Ought to Do Actions; Virtues are Destroyed by Excess and Defect, and Preserved by the Mean; Having Virtue Means Abstaining from Excess or Defect (1103b-1004b).

Since we are not aiming at theoretical knowledge now (we are not inquiring in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good – otherwise our inquiry would have been useless), we must examine the nature of actions, namely how we ought to do them, because actions determine the nature of the dispositions that are produced [see II.1]. We must assume the common principle that we must act according to right reason (we will discuss both what it is and how it is related to the other virtues later). We also must agree that the whole account of matters of conduct must be given in outline and not precisely; we must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion, as in the art of medicine or of navigation.

First, it is the nature of such things to be destroyed by defect and excess (e.g., strength and of health) – to gain light on things imperceptible we must use the evidence of sensible things. Both excessive and defective exercise destroy strength, and similarly drink or food which is above or below a certain amount destroys health, while that which is proportionate both produces, increases, and preserves it; so too in the case of temperance, courage, and the other virtues. The man who flies from and fears everything and does not stand his ground against anything becomes a coward, and the man who fears nothing at all but goes to meet every danger becomes rash; and similarly the man who indulges in every pleasure and abstains from none becomes self-indulgent, while the man who shuns every pleasure, as boors do, becomes in a way insensible; so temperance and courage are destroyed by excess and defect, and preserved by the mean.

Strength is produced by taking much food and undergoing much exertion, and the strong man will be most able to do these things. So too is it with the virtues: by abstaining from pleasures we become temperate,
and it is when we have become so that we are most able to abstain from them; and similarly with courage: by being habituated to despise things that are terrible and to stand our ground against them we become brave, and once brave we shall be most able to stand our ground against them.

II.3 From Pleasure We do Bad Things; From Pains, We Refrain from doing Good Things; Virtue does What is Best Regarding Pleasures and Pains; Vice the Opposite; So Pleasures and Pains are the Focus of the Study of Political Science and Virtue (1104b-1105a).

We must take as a sign of dispositions the pleasure or pain that supervenes on acts; EX1: the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and delights in this very fact is temperate, while the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent; EX2: he who stands his ground against things that are terrible and delights in this or at least is not pained is brave, while the man who is pained is a coward. Moral virtue is concerned with pleasures and pains; it is on account of pleasure that we do bad things, and on account of pain that we abstain from noble ones. Hence we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from youth, as Plato says, so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought; this is proper education.

If virtues are concerned with actions and passions, and every passion and every action is accompanied by pleasure and pain, virtue will be concerned with pleasures and pains. The theory of punishment uses these means: it is a kind of cure, and it is the nature of cures to be effected by contraries.

Every disposition of soul has a nature relative to and concerned with the kind of things by which it tends to be made worse or better; it is by reason of pleasures and pains that men become bad, by pursuing the wrong ones or avoiding the right ones. We assume that [moral] virtue tends to do what is best with regard to pleasures and pains, and badness does the contrary.

Similarly, there are three objects of choice (the noble, the advantageous, the pleasant) and three of avoidance (the base, the injurious, the painful); the good man tends to go right and the bad man to go wrong, and especially about pleasure; this is common to the animals and accompanies all objects of choice; for even the noble and the advantageous appear pleasant.

Pleasure has grown up with us all from our infancy; this is why it is difficult to rub off this passion, engrained as it is in our life. We more or less measure even our actions by pleasure and pain. So our whole inquiry must be about these; to feel delight and pain rightly or wrongly has no small effect on our actions.

It is harder to fight with pleasure than with anger, but both art and virtue are always concerned with what is harder; even the good is better when it is harder. Therefore, the whole concern of both virtue and political science is with pleasures and pains; the man who uses these well will be good, he who uses them badly bad.

Thus virtue is concerned with pleasures and pains, and by the acts from which it arises it is both increased and, if done differently, destroyed, and the acts from which it arose are those in which it actualizes itself.

II.4 Being Grammatical Requires Knowledge; Being Virtuous Requires Knowledge, Choosing Acts For Their Own Sakes, and Proceeding from a Firm and Unchangeable Character; A Just Action is Done How a Just Man Would do It; Most People Theorize about Good Actions But do Not do Them (1105a-b).

What do we mean by saying that we must become just by doing just acts, and temperate by doing temperate acts? If men do just and temperate acts, they are already just and temperate, exactly as, if they do what is grammatical or musical they are proficient in grammar and music.

Or is this not true even of the arts? It is possible to do something grammatical either by chance or under the guidance of another. A man will be proficient in grammar only when he has both done something grammatical and done it grammatically, in accordance with the grammatical knowledge in himself.

The cases of the arts and virtues are not similar; the products of the arts have their goodness in themselves, so that it is enough that they should have a certain character, but if the acts that are in accordance with the virtues have themselves a certain character, it does not follow that they are done justly or temperately.
The agent also must be in a certain condition when he does them; in the first place he must have knowledge, secondly he must choose the acts for their own sake, and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character. These are not reckoned in as conditions of the possession of the arts, except the bare knowledge; but as a condition of the possession of the virtues, knowledge has little or no weight. Even though it’s a necessary condition of possessing a virtue, while the very conditions that result from often doing just and temperate acts count for everything.

Actions are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them as just and temperate men do them. It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good.

Most people do not do these, but take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way, behaving somewhat like patients who listen attentively to their doctors, but do none of the things they are ordered to do. As the latter will not be made well in body by such a course of treatment, the former will not be made well in soul by such a course of philosophy.

II.5 Virtue is a Disposition v. a Passion or a Capacity (1105b-1106a).
We must consider what virtue is. Since things that are found in the soul are of three kinds – passions, capacities, and dispositions – virtue must be one of these. By passions I mean appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain; by capacities the things in virtue of which we are said to be capable of feeling these, e.g. of becoming angry or being pained or feeling pity; by dispositions the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions (e.g. with reference to anger we stand badly if we feel it violently or too weakly, and well if we feel it moderately).

Neither the virtues nor the vices are passions, because we are not called good or bad on the ground of our passions, but are so called on the ground of our virtues and our vices, and because we are neither praised nor blamed for our passions (i.e., the man who feels fear or anger is not praised, nor is the man who simply feels anger blamed, but the man who feels it in a certain way), but for our virtues and our vices we are praised or blamed. We feel anger and fear without choice, but the virtues are choices or involve choice. Further, in respect of the passions we are said to be moved, but in respect of the virtues and the vices we are said not to be moved but to be disposed in a particular way.

Thus virtues are also not capacities; we are neither called good nor bad, nor praised nor blamed, for the simple capacity of feeling the passions; we have the capacities by nature, but we are not made good or bad by nature.

If, then, the virtues are neither passions nor capacities, all that remains is that they should be dispositions.

Thus we have stated what virtue is in respect of its genus.

II.6 Virtue is a Disposition Concerned with Choice that Makes a Person Good and Do Well; Virtue is (and aims at) an Intermediate Relative to Us, Between Two Extremes (Excess and Deficiency); One can be Vicious in Many Ways, but Virtuous in Only One Way; Every Action/Passion does Not Admit of a Mean (1106a-1107a).
What sort of disposition is it? Every virtue both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the virtue and makes the work of that thing be done well; e.g. the virtue of the eye makes both the eye and its work good; it is by the virtue of the eye that we see well. Similarly the virtue of the horse makes a horse both good in itself and good at running and at carrying its rider and at awaiting the attack of the enemy. Analogously, the virtue of man also will be the disposition which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well.

In everything that is continuous and divisible it is possible to take more, less, or an equal amount, and that either in terms of the thing itself or relatively to us; and the equal is an intermediate (mean) between excess...
and defect. By the intermediate in the object I mean that which is equidistant from each of the extremes, which is one and the same for all men; by the intermediate relative to us that which is neither too much nor too little – and this is not one, nor the same for all. For instance, if ten is many and two is few, six is intermediate, taken in terms of the object; for it exceeds and is exceeded by an equal amount; this is intermediate according to arithmetical proportion. But the intermediate relative to us is not to be taken so; if ten pounds are too much for a particular person to eat and two too little, it does not follow that the trainer will order six pounds; for this also is perhaps too much for the person who is to take it, or too little – too little for Milo, too much for the beginner in athletic exercises. The same is true of running and wrestling. Thus a master of any art avoids excess and defect, but seeks the intermediate and chooses this – the intermediate not in the object but relatively to us.

Since we often say of good works of the art that it is not possible either to take away or to add anything, implying that excess and defect destroy the goodness of works of art, while the mean preserves it (and good artists look to this in their work); and if virtue is more exact and better than any art, as nature also is, then virtue must have the quality of aiming at the intermediate. That is, moral virtue, since it is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. EX: Both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of virtue. Similarly with regard to actions also there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. Now virtue is concerned with passions and actions, in which excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and both these things are characteristics of virtue. Therefore virtue is a kind of mean, since it aims at what is intermediate.

It is possible to fail in many ways (for evil belongs to the class of the unlimited, as the Pythagoreans conjectured, and good to that of the limited), while to succeed is possible only in one way (for which reason one is easy and the other difficult – to miss the mark easy, to hit it difficult); thus again, excess and defect are characteristic of vice, and the mean of virtue; men are good in but one way, but bad in many. [DY: Cf. Plato in the Republic]

So virtue is a disposition concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by reason and in the way in which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. It is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on defect; and again it is a mean because the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions, while virtue both finds and chooses that which is intermediate. Hence in respect of its substance and the account that states its essence is a mean, with regard to what is best and right it is an extreme.

But not every action nor every passion admits of a mean; some have names that already imply badness, e.g. spite, shamelessness, envy, and in the case of actions adultery, theft, murder; for all of these and suchlike things imply by their names that they are themselves bad, and not the excesses or deficiencies of them. It is not possible, then, ever to be right with regard to them; one must always be wrong. Nor does goodness or badness with regard to such things depend on committing adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right way, but simply to do any of them is to go wrong. It would be equally absurd, then, to expect that in unjust, cowardly, and self-indulgent action there should be a mean, an excess, and a deficiency; at that rate there would be a mean of excess and of deficiency, an excess of excess, and a deficiency of deficiency. But as there is no excess and deficiency of temperance and courage because what is intermediate is in a sense an extreme [DY: This makes no sense, given that Aristotle names the excess of courage as rashness and the deficiency cowardice, elsewhere see II.2 and II.7], so too of the actions we have mentioned there is no mean nor any excess and deficiency, but however they are done they are wrong; in general there is neither a mean of excess and deficiency, nor excess and deficiency of a mean.
II.7 Virtues (Means) and Their Excesses and Deficiencies Named (and Unnamed): Courage, Temperance, Liberty, Magnificence, Proper Pride, Ambition, Good Temper, Truthfulness, Ready-Wit, Friendliness, Modesty, and Righteous Indignation (1107a-1108b).

Let us apply the general statement to the individual facts. With regard to feelings of fear and confidence courage is the mean; of the people who exceed, he who exceeds in fearlessness has no name (many of the dispositions have no name), while the man who exceeds in confidence is rash, and he who exceeds in fear and falls short in confidence is a coward. With regard to pleasures and pains – not all of them, and not so much with regard to the pleasures – the mean is temperance, the excess self-indulgence. Persons deficient with regard to the pleasures are not often found, but let us call them “insensible”.

With regard to giving and taking of money the mean is liberality, the excess and the defect prodigality and stinginess. They exceed and fall short in contrary ways to one another; the prodigal exceeds in spending and falls short in taking, while the stingy man exceeds in taking and falls short in spending. (At present we are giving a mere outline or summary, and are satisfied with this; later these dispositions will be more exactly determined.) With regard to money there are also other dispositions – a mean, magnificence (for the magnificent man differs from the liberal man; the former deals with large sums, the latter with small ones), an excess, tastelessness and vulgarity, and a deficiency, niggardliness; these differ from the dispositions opposed to liberality, and the mode of their difference will be stated later.

With regard to honor and dishonor the mean is proper pride, the excess is known as a sort of empty vanity, and the deficiency is undue humility: and as we said liberality was related to magnificence, differing from it by dealing with small sums, so there is a disposition similarly related to proper pride, being concerned with small honors while that is concerned with great. For it is possible to desire small honors as one ought, and more than one ought, and less, and the man who exceeds in his desires is called ambitious, the man who falls short unambitious, while the intermediate person has no name. The dispositions also are nameless, except that that of the ambitious man is called ambition. Hence the people who are at the extremes lay claim to the middle place; and we ourselves sometimes call the intermediate person ambitious and sometimes unambitious, and sometimes praise the ambitious man and sometimes the unambitious. The reason of our doing this will be stated in what follows; but now let us speak of the remaining dispositions according to the method that has been indicated.

With regard to anger also there is an excess, a deficiency, and a mean. Although they can scarcely be said to have names, yet since we call the intermediate person good-tempered let us call the mean good temper; of the persons at the extremes let the one who exceeds be called irascible, and his vice irascibility, and the man who falls short an inirascible sort of person, and the deficiency inrascibility.

There are three other means, which are all concerned with intercourse in words and actions, but differ from one another in that one is concerned with truth in this sphere, the other two with pleasantness; and of this one kind is exhibited in giving amusement, the other in all the circumstances of life. In all things the mean is praiseworthy, and the extremes neither praiseworthy nor right, but worthy of blame. Most of these dispositions also have no names, but we must try, as in the other cases, to invent names ourselves so that we may be clear and easy to follow. With regard to truth, then, the intermediate is a truthful sort of person and the mean may be called truthfulness, while the pretense which exaggerates is boastfulness and the person characterized by it a boaster, and that which underestates is mock modesty and the person characterized by it mock-modest. With regard to pleasantness in the giving of amusement the intermediate person is ready-witted and the disposition ready wit, the excess is buffoonery and the person characterized by it a buffoon, while the man who falls short is a sort of boor and his disposition is boorishness. With regard to the remaining kind of pleasantness, that which is exhibited in life in general, the man who is pleasant in the right way is friendly and the mean is friendliness, while the man who exceeds is an obsequious person if he has no end in view, a flatterer if he is aiming at his own advantage, and the man who falls short and is unpleasant in all circumstances is a quarrelsome and surly sort of person.

There are also means in the passions and concerned with the passions; since shame is not a virtue, and yet praise is extended to the modest man. Even in these matters one man is said to be intermediate, and another to exceed, as for instance the bashful man who is ashamed of everything; while he who falls short or is not ashamed of anything at all is shameless, and the intermediate person is modest. Righteous indignation is a mean between envy and spite, and these dispositions are concerned with the pain and pleasure that are felt at the
fortunes of our neighbors; the man who is characterized by righteous indignation is pained at undeserved good fortune, the envious man, going beyond him, is pained at all good fortune, and the spiteful man falls so far short of being pained that he even rejoices. We shall later distinguish two kinds of justice and say how each of them is a mean; and similarly we shall treat also of the rational virtues.

II.8 The Excess, Deficiency, and Mean are All Opposed to One Another; the Greatest Contrariety is Between the Extremes; Sometimes the Deficiency or the Excess is More Distant from the Mean (1108b-1109a).

There are three kinds of disposition, two of them vices, involving excess and deficiency and one a virtue, viz. the mean, and all are in a sense opposed to all; the extreme dispositions are contrary both to the intermediate disposition and to each other, and the intermediate to the extremes; as the equal is greater relative to the less, less relative to the greater, so the middle dispositions are excessive relative to the deficiencies, deficient relative to the excesses, both in passions and in actions. The brave man appears rash relative to the coward, and cowardly relative to the rash man; and similarly the temperate man appears self-indulgent relative to the insensible man, insensible relative to the self-indulgent, and the liberal man prodigal relative to the mean man, mean relative to the prodigal.

These dispositions being thus opposed to one another, the greatest contrariety is that of the extremes to each other, rather than to the intermediate.

To the mean in some cases the deficiency, in some the excess is more opposed; e.g. it is not rashness, which is an excess, but cowardice, which is a deficiency, that is more opposed to courage, and not insensibility, which is a deficiency, but self-indulgence, which is an excess, that is more opposed to temperance.

II.9 It is Hard to be Good, Since We Must do the Right Thing at the Right Time, etc.; It is Hard to Determine in What Way, How Long, to What Extent, etc. to be Angry (1109a-b).

That moral virtue is a mean, then, and in what sense it is so, and that it is a mean between two vices, the one involving excess, the other deficiency, and that it is such because its character is to aim at what is intermediate in passions and in actions, has been sufficiently stated. Hence it is no easy task to be good. In everything it is no easy task to find the middle, e.g. to find the middle of a circle is not for every one but for him who knows; so, too, anyone can get angry – that is easy – or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right aim, and in the right way, that is not for every one, nor is it easy; that is why goodness is both rare and laudable and noble.

Hence he who aims at the intermediate must first depart from what is the more contrary to it: of the extremes one is more erroneous, one less so; therefore, since to hit the mean is hard in the extreme, we must as a second best, as people say, take the least of the evils. EX: In everything the pleasant or pleasure is most to be guarded against; we do not judge it impartially. If we dismiss pleasure thus we are less likely to go astray and we shall best be able to hit the mean.

But this is no doubt difficult, and especially in individual cases; it is not easy to determine both how and with whom and on what provocation and how long one should be angry; we too sometimes praise those who fall short and call them good-tempered, but sometimes we praise those who get angry and call them manly. The man, however, who deviates little from goodness is not blamed, whether he do so in the direction of the more or of the less, but only the man who deviates more widely; for he does not fail to be noticed. But up to what point and to what extent a man must deviate before he becomes blameworthy it is not easy to determine by reasoning, any more than anything else that is perceived by the senses; such things depend on particular facts, and the decision rests with perception. So much, then, makes it plain that the intermediate disposition is in all things to be praised, but that we must incline sometimes towards the excess, sometimes towards the deficiency; for so shall we most easily hit the mean and what is right.
III.1 Voluntary and Involuntary Passions/Actions; Involuntary Occur Due to Compulsion or Ignorance; Voluntary Occur When the Moving Principle is in the Person, and in His/Her Power to do or Not do; Things Done Due to Ignorance are Non-Voluntary; Acts Done in Anger or Due to Appetite are Not Involuntary (1109b-1111b).

Since we praise and blame voluntary passions and actions forgive or pity those that are involuntary, it is necessary to distinguish the voluntary and involuntary, especially for those who are studying virtue, and for legislators who assign both honors and punishments.

Involuntary things take place under compulsion or owing to ignorance. Compulsion is where the moving principle is outside and the person who acts or is acted upon contributes nothing (e.g. if he were to be carried somewhere by a wind, or by men who had him in their power).

But concerning things that are done from fear of greater evils or for some noble object (e.g. if a tyrant were to order one to do something base, having one's parents and children in his power, and if one did the action they were to be saved, but otherwise would be put to death), it is debatable whether such actions are involuntary or voluntary. Something of the sort happens also with regard to, e.g., the throwing of goods overboard in a storm; in the abstract no one throws goods away voluntarily, but on condition of its securing the safety of himself and his crew any sensible man does so. Such actions are mixed, but are more like voluntary actions; they are worthy of choice at the time when they are done, and the end of an action is relative to the occasion. Both the terms, then, “voluntary” and “involuntary”, must be used with reference to the moment of action. The man acts voluntarily: the principle that moves the instrumental parts of the body in such actions is in him, and the things of which the moving principle is in a man himself are in his power to do or not to do. Such actions, therefore, are voluntary, but in the abstract perhaps involuntary; no one would choose any such act in itself.

Men are sometimes even praised, when they endure something base or painful in return for great and noble objects gained; in the opposite case they are blamed, since to endure the greatest indignities for no noble end or for a trifling end is the mark of an inferior person. On some actions praise indeed is not bestowed, but forgiveness is, when one does what he ought not under pressure that overstrains human nature and which no one could withstand. It is difficult sometimes to determine what should be chosen at what cost, and what should be endured in return for what gain, and yet more difficult to abide by our decisions; as a rule what is expected is painful, and what we are forced to do is base, whence praise and blame are bestowed on those who have been compelled or have not.

[Aristotle repeats here: ]What sort of acts should be called compulsory? Actions are so when the cause is in the external circumstances and the agent contributes nothing. But the things that in themselves are involuntary, but now and in return for these gains are worthy of choice, and whose moving principle is in the agent, are in themselves involuntary, but now and in return for these gains voluntary. (What sort of things are to be chosen in return for what it is not easy to state; for there are many differences in the particular cases.)

If someone were to say that pleasant and noble objects have a compelling power, forcing us from without, all acts would be for him compulsory; it is for these objects that all men do everything they do. And those who act under compulsion and unwillingly act with pain, but those who do acts for their pleasantness and nobility do them with pleasure; it is absurd to make external circumstances responsible, and not oneself, as being easily caught by such attractions, and to make oneself responsible for noble acts but the pleasant objects responsible for base acts.

Everything that is done due to ignorance is non-voluntary; it is only what produces pain and regret that is involuntary. The man who has done something owing to ignorance, and feels not the least vexation at his action, has not acted voluntarily, since he did not know what he was doing, nor yet involuntarily, since he is not pained. The person who acts from ignorance and regrets it is an involuntary agent, and the person who does not regret it is a non-voluntary agent.
Acting by reason of ignorance seems also to be different from acting in ignorance; for the man who is drunk or in a rage is thought to act as a result not of ignorance but of one of the causes mentioned, yet not knowingly but in ignorance.

Every wicked man is ignorant of what he ought to do and what he ought to abstain from, and error of this kind makes men unjust and in general bad; but the term “involuntary” tends to be used not if a man is ignorant of what is to his advantage—it is not ignorance in choice that makes action involuntary (it makes men wicked), nor ignorance of the universal (for that men are blamed), but ignorance of particular circumstances of the action and the objects with which it is concerned (on which both pity and forgiveness depend, since the person who is ignorant of any of these acts involuntarily).

A man may be ignorant, then, of who he is, what he is doing, what or whom he is acting on, and sometimes also what (e.g. what instrument) he is doing it with, and to what end (e.g. for safety), and how he is doing it (e.g. whether gently or violently). Now of all of these no one could be ignorant unless he were mad, and evidently also he could not be ignorant of the agent; how could he not know himself? But of what he is doing a man might be ignorant, as for instance people say “it slipped out of their mouths as they were speaking”, or “they did not know it was a secret”. More EXs: one might give a man a draught to save him, and really kill him; or one might want to touch a man, as people do in sparring, and really strike him. The ignorance may relate, then, to any of these things, i.e. of the circumstances of the action, and the man who was ignorant of any of these is thought to have acted involuntarily, and especially if he was ignorant on the most important points (what he is doing and with what aim). Further, the doing of an involuntary act due to ignorance of this sort must be painful and involve regret.

Voluntary action occurs when the moving principle is in the agent himself and the agent is aware of the particular circumstances of the action. Acts done by reason of anger or appetite are not rightly called involuntary. First, on that showing no animals or children will act voluntarily; second, is it meant that we do not do voluntarily any of the acts that are due to appetite or anger, or that we do the noble acts voluntarily and the base acts involuntarily? This is absurd, since one and the same thing is the cause. It would surely be odd to describe as involuntary the things one ought to desire; and we ought both to be angry at certain things and to have an appetite for certain things, e.g. for health and for learning. Also what is involuntary is thought to be painful, but what is in accordance with appetite is thought to be pleasant. Again, what is the difference in respect of involuntariness between errors committed upon calculation and those committed in anger? Both are to be avoided, but the irrational passions are thought not less human than reason is, and therefore also the actions that proceed from anger or appetite are the man's actions. It would be odd, then, to treat them as involuntary.

III.2 Choice; Children and Animals do Voluntary Actions but do Not Choose; Choice is Not Appetite, Anger, Wish, Nor an Opinion; Choice is Voluntary and Might Be the Result of Previous Deliberation (1111b-1112a).

Let us discuss choice; it is thought to be most closely bound up with virtue and to discriminate characters better than actions do.

Choice seems to be voluntary, but is not the same thing as the voluntary (voluntary is wider). Both children and other animals share in voluntary action, but not in choice, and acts done on the spur of the moment we describe as voluntary, but not as chosen.

Choice is neither appetite, anger, wish, nor a kind of opinion. Choice is not common to irrational creatures, but appetite and anger are. The incontinent man acts with appetite, but not with choice; the continent man acts with choice, but not with appetite. Appetite is contrary to choice, but not appetite to appetite. Again, appetite relates to the pleasant and the painful, choice neither to the painful nor to the pleasant.

Choice is still less anger; acts due to anger are thought to be less than any other objects of choice.

Choice is not wish, though near to it; choice cannot relate to impossibles, and if anyone said he chose them he would be thought silly; but there may be a wish even for impossibles, e.g. for immortality. [DY: Proof that Aristotle does not think that humans are immortal.] Wish may relate to things that could in no way be brought about by one’s own efforts, e.g. that a particular actor or athlete should win in a competition; but no
one chooses such things, but only the things that he thinks could be brought about by his own efforts. Wish relates rather to the end, choice to what contributes to the end; EX: we wish to be healthy, but we choose the acts which will make us healthy, and we wish to be happy and say we do, but we cannot well say we choose to be so; in general, choice seems to relate to the things that are in our own power.

For this reason, choice cannot be opinion; opinion is thought to relate to all kinds of things, no less to eternal things and impossible things than to things in our own power; and opinion is distinguished by its falsity or truth, not by its badness or goodness, as choice is.

Perhaps no one really says choice is identical to opinion in general (and they are correct): by choosing what is good or bad we are men of a certain character, which we are not by holding certain opinions. [DY: If I hold immoral opinions, that doesn’t make me a man of poor character? ] And we choose to get or avoid something good or bad, but we have opinions about what a thing is or whom it is good for or how it is good for him; we can hardly be said to opine to get or avoid anything. [DY: I cannot have the opinion that I should obtain or refrain from obtaining X? ] Choice is praised for being related to the right object rather than for being rightly related to it, opinion for being truly related to its object. We choose what we best know to be good, but we opine what we do not know at all; and it is not the same people that are thought to make the best choices and to have the best opinions, but some are thought to have fairly good opinions, but by reason of vice to choose what they should not. If opinion precedes choice or accompanies it, that makes no difference, because we are considering whether it is identical with some kind of opinion.

So what or what kind of thing is choice? Choice is voluntary, but not all that is voluntary to be an object of choice. Is it what has been decided on by previous deliberation, since choice involves reason and thought?

III.3 We do Not Deliberate about Eternal Things, Things that Move in the Same Way or Variously, or Even All Human Affairs; We Deliberate about Things That are in our Power, Done by the Agent Himself and Not about the End, but about the Means to the End; Choice is Deliberate Desire about Things in our Own Power (1112a-1113a).

Is everything a possible subject of deliberation, or is deliberation impossible about some things? We ought presumably to call not what a fool or a madman would deliberate about, but what a sensible man would deliberate about, a subject of deliberation. No one deliberates about eternal things (e.g. about the universe or the incommensurability of the diagonal and the side of a square); nor about the things that involve movement and always happen in the same way, whether of necessity or by nature or from any other cause (e.g. the solstices and the risings of the stars); nor about things that happen now in one way, now in another (e.g. droughts and rains); nor about chance events (the finding of treasure); nor even about all human affairs (e.g. no Spartan deliberates about the best constitution for the Scythians). None of these things can be brought about by our own efforts.

We deliberate about things that are in our power and can be done. Nature, necessity, and chance are thought to be causes, and also thought and everything that depends on man. In the exact and self-contained sciences there is no deliberation, e.g. about the letters of the alphabet (we know how they should be written); but the things that are brought about by our own efforts, but not always in the same way, are the things about which we deliberate (e.g. questions of medical treatment or of money-making). We deliberate more in navigation than in gymnastics, and more also in the case of the arts (here we have more doubt) than in that of the sciences. Deliberation is concerned with things where the event is obscure or indeterminate. We seek help in deliberation on important questions, distrusting ourselves as not being equal to deciding.

We deliberate not about ends but about what contributes to ends. EXs: a doctor does not deliberate whether he shall heal, nor an orator whether he shall convince, nor a statesman whether he shall produce law and order, nor does any one else deliberate about his end. Having set the end they consider how and by what (best or most easily, if more than one) means it is to be attained, till they come to the first cause, the last discovery. The person who deliberates seems to inquire and analyze in the way described as though he were analyzing a geometrical construction (not all inquiry appears to be deliberation – for instance mathematical inquiries – but all deliberation is inquiry), and what is last in the order of analysis seems to be first in the order of becoming. And if we come upon an impossibility, we give up the search (e.g. if we need money and this cannot
be got); but if a thing appears possible (i.e., things that might be brought about by our own or our friends’ efforts) we try to do it. The subject of investigation is sometimes the instruments, sometimes the use of them; and similarly in the other cases – sometimes the means, sometimes the mode of using it or the means of bringing it about. So man is a moving principle of actions; deliberation is about the things to be done by the agent himself, and actions are for the sake of things other than themselves. The end cannot be a subject of deliberation, but only what contributes to the ends; nor indeed can the particular facts be a subject of it, as whether this is bread or has been baked as it should; these are matters of perception. If we are to be always deliberating, we shall have to go on to infinity.

The same thing is deliberated upon and is chosen, except that the object of choice is already determinate, since the object of choice is what has been decided as a result of deliberation. Everyone ceases to inquire how he is to act when he has brought the moving principle back to himself and to the ruling part of himself; this is what chooses. The object of choice being one of the things in our own power which is desired after deliberation, choice is deliberate desire of things in our own power; when we have decided as a result of deliberation, we desire in accordance with our deliberation.

We may take it, then, that we have described choice in outline, and stated the nature of its objects and the fact that it is concerned with what contributes to the ends.

III.4 Wish for the Good v. the Apparent Good; Dilemma Thereof (1113a-b).

Wish is for the end; some think it is for the good, others for the apparent good. Those who say that the good is the object of wish must admit that the man who chooses wrongly wishes, but does not wish for his object of wish in all cases (if it is good, the object of wish must also be good; if it is bad, the object of wish is bad); but those who say the apparent good is the object of wish must admit that there is no natural object of wish, but only what seems so to each man. Now different things appear so to different people, and, if it so happens, even contrary things.

If these consequences are unpleasing, are we to say that absolutely and in truth the good is the object of wish, but for each person the apparent good; that which is in truth an object of wish is an object of wish to the good man, while any chance thing may be so to the bad man, as in the case of bodies also the things that are in truth wholesome are wholesome for bodies which are in good condition, while for those that are diseased other things are wholesome – or bitter or sweet or hot or heavy, and so on; since the good man judges each class of things rightly, and in each the truth appears to him? For each state of character has its own ideas of the noble and the pleasant, and perhaps the good man differs from others most by seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them. In most things the error seems to be due to pleasure; for it appears a good when it is not. We therefore choose the pleasant as a good, and avoid pain as an evil.

III.5 The Exercise of Virtues/Vice is Concerned with Wish, Deliberation and Choice; Virtues/Vices are in our Power; No One is Involuntarily Blessed, but Wickedness is Voluntary; Punishing or Honoring Acts; Bodily Vices are in our Power; Dispositions are Voluntary (1113b-1115a).

We wish for the end, we deliberate and choose the means/actions (that must be voluntary) to the end. The exercise of the virtues is concerned with these, so virtue and vice are also in our own power; where it is in our power to act it is also in our power not to act, and vice versa. So: if to act, where this is noble and in our power, not to act will be base and also in our power; and if not to act, where this is noble and in our power, to act will be base and also be in our power. If it is in our power to do noble or base acts, and likewise in our power not to do them, and this was what being good or bad meant, then it is in our power to be virtuous or vicious.

“No one is voluntarily wicked nor involuntarily blessed” is partly false and partly true; no one is involuntarily blessed, but wickedness is voluntary (or we shall have to deny that man is a moving principle or begetter of his actions as of children). If we cannot refer actions to moving principles other than those in ourselves, the acts whose moving principles are in us must themselves also be in our power and voluntary.
EXs: Individuals in their private capacity and legislators punish and take vengeance on those who do wicked acts (unless they have acted under compulsion or from ignorance for which they are not themselves responsible), while they honor those who do noble acts, as though they meant to encourage the latter and deter the former. But no one is encouraged to do the things that are neither in our power nor voluntary; it is assumed that there is no gain in being persuaded not to be hot or in pain or hungry or the like, since we shall experience these feelings nonetheless. Indeed, we punish a man for his very ignorance, if he is thought responsible for the ignorance, as when penalties are doubled in the case of drunkenness; the moving principle is in the man himself, since he had the power of not getting drunk and his getting drunk was the cause of his ignorance. And if [DY: “Willful ignorance”] we punish those who are ignorant of anything in the laws that they ought to know and that is not difficult, and so too in the case of anything else that they are thought to be ignorant of through carelessness; we assume that it is in their power not to be ignorant, since they have the power of taking care.

Men who do not take care are themselves by their slack lives responsible for becoming men of that kind, and men are themselves responsible for being unjust or self-indulgent, in that they cheat or spend their time in drinking bouts and the like; it is activities exercised on particular objects that make the corresponding character. EX: people training for any contest or action; they practice the activity the whole time. Not to know that it is from the exercise of activities on particular objects that dispositions of character are produced is the mark of a thoroughly senseless person. It is irrational to suppose that a man who acts unjustly does not wish to be unjust or a man who acts self-indulgently to be self-indulgent. If without being ignorant a man does the things that will make him unjust, he will be unjust voluntarily. Yet it does not follow that if he wishes he will cease to be unjust and will be just: The man who is ill become well on those terms – although he may be ill voluntarily, through living incontinently and disobeying his doctors. In that case it was then open to him not to be ill, but not now, when he has thrown away his chance, just as when you have let a stone go it is too late to recover it; but yet it was in your power to throw it, since the moving principle was in you. So, too, to the unjust and to the self-indulgent man it was open at the beginning not to become men of this kind, and so they are such voluntarily; but now that they have become so it is not possible for them not to be so.

But not only are the vices of the soul voluntary, but those of the body also for some men, whom we accordingly blame; while no one blames those who are ugly by nature, we blame those who are so owing to want of exercise and care. So it is, too, with respect to weakness and infirmity; no one would reproach a man blind from birth or by disease or from a blow, but rather pity him, while everyone would blame a man who was blind from alcoholism or some other form of self-indulgence. Of vices of the body, then, those in our own power are blamed, those not in our power are not. [DY: Cf. Epictetus: The body is not in our power.] And if this be so, in the other cases also the vices that are blamed must be in our own power.

OBJ: Someone may say that all men aim at the apparent good, but have no control over how things appear to him; but the end appears to each man in a form answering to his character. REP: if each man is somehow responsible for the state he is in, he will also be himself somehow responsible for how things appear; but if not, no one is responsible for his own evildoing, but everyone does evil acts through ignorance of the end, thinking that by these he will get what is best, and the aiming at the end is not self-chosen but one must be born with an eye, as it were, by which to judge rightly and choose what is truly good, and he is well endowed by nature who is well endowed with this. It is what is greatest and noblest, and what we cannot get or learn from another, but must have just such as it was when given us at birth, and to be well and nobly endowed with this will be complete and true natural endowment. If this is true, how will virtue be more voluntary than vice? To good and bad men alike, the end appears and is fixed by nature or whatever, and it is by referring everything else to this that men do whatever they do.

Whether it is not by nature that the end appears to each man such as it does appear, but something also depends on him, or the end is natural but because the good man does the rest voluntarily virtue is voluntary, vice also will be nonetheless voluntary; in the bad man there is equally present that which depends on himself in his actions even if not in his end. If the virtues are voluntary (we are ourselves somehow part-causes of our states of character, and it is by being persons of a certain kind that we assume the end to be so and so), the vices also will be voluntary; for the same is true of them.

We have stated the virtues’ genus in outline, viz. that they are means and dispositions, they tend by their own nature to the doing of the acts by which they are produced, they are in our power and voluntary, and act as
right reason prescribes. But actions and dispositions are not voluntary in the same way; we are masters of our actions from the beginning right to the end, if we know the particular facts, but though we control the beginning of our dispositions the gradual progress is not obvious, any more than it is in illnesses; because it was in our power, however, to act in this way or not in this way, therefore the dispositions are voluntary.

[Let us take up virtues, and say what sort of things (and how) they are concerned with (them). First, courage.]

III.6 Courage; We Should Fear Some Evils (Death, Disgrace) but Not Others (Poverty, Disease); Death is the Most Terrible of All Things; the Brave Person is Fearless in the Face of a Noble Death (in War) (1115b).

Courage is a mean with regard to fear and confidence, as stated; we plainly fear terrible things; i.e., evils; people even define fear as expectation of evil. We fear all evils (e.g. disgrace, poverty, disease [DY: Plato refers to poverty and disease as apparent evils in the Republic and I believe the Phaedo], friendlessness, death), but the brave man is not thought to be concerned with all; to fear some things is right and noble, and it is base not to fear them (e.g. disgrace; he who fears disgrace is good and modest, and he who does not is shameless). He is, however, by some people called brave, by an extension of the word; he has in him something that is like the brave man, since the brave man also is a fearless person. Poverty and disease we perhaps ought not to fear, nor in general the things that do not proceed from vice and are not due to a man himself. But the man who is fearless of these is not brave, though we apply the word to him also in virtue of a similarity; some who in the dangers of war are cowards are liberal and are confident in face of the loss of money. Nor is a man a coward if he fears insult to his wife and children or envy or anything of the kind; nor brave if he is confident when he is about to be flogged. The brave man is concerned with the greatest sort of terrible things; no one is more likely than he to stand his ground against what is dreadful. Death is the most terrible of all things, since it is the end, and nothing is thought to be any longer either good or bad for the dead. But the brave man is not concerned with death in all circumstances (e.g. at sea or in disease), but only in the noblest: those in battle; these take place in the greatest and noblest danger. (This agrees with the ways in which honors are bestowed in city-states and at the courts of monarchs.) The brave person is one who is fearless in face of a noble death, and of all emergencies that involve death (and those of war are of the highest degree). The brave man is fearless at sea and in disease too, but not in the same way as the sailor; the brave man has given up hope for safety, and dislikes the thought of death in this shape, while sailors are hopeful because of their experience. We show courage in situations where there is the opportunity of showing prowess or where death is noble; but in death by sea or disease, neither of these conditions is fulfilled.

III.7 Courage; The Brave Person Faces/Fears the Right Things at the Right Time, and so on, as Reason Directs; the Coward Flies from What is Troublesome; the Rash Exceeds in Confidence about What Really is Terrible (1115b-1116a).

What is terrible is not the same for all men; but there are things terrible even beyond human strength, which are terrible to everyone (at least to every sensible man); but the terrible things that are not beyond human strength differ in magnitude and degree, and so too do the things that inspire confidence. The brave man is as dauntless as man may be, so he will fear the things that are not beyond human strength, but fear them as he ought and as reason directs, facing them for the sake of what is noble; this is the end of virtue. But it is possible to fear these more, or less, and again to fear things that are not terrible as if they were. Faults: fearing what one should not, fearing as we should not, fearing when we should not, and so on; and so too with things that inspire confidence. The man who faces and who fears the right things and with the right aim, in the right way and at the right time, and who feels confidence under the corresponding conditions, is brave; the brave man feels and acts according to the merits of the case and in whatever way reason directs. The end of every activity is conformity to the corresponding disposition. This is true of the brave man as well as of others. But courage is noble, so the end also is noble; each thing is defined by its end. Therefore it is for a noble end that the brave man endures and acts as courage directs.
Of those who exceed in fearlessness there is no name (we have said previously that many dispositions have no names), but he would be a sort of madman or insensible person if he feared nothing, neither earthquakes nor the waves; while the man who exceeds in confidence about what really is terrible is rash. The rash man, however, is also thought to be boastful and only a pretender to courage; at all events, as the brave man is with regard to what is terrible, so the rash man wishes to appear; and so he imitates him in situations where he can. Hence also most of them are a mixture of rashness and cowardice; while in these situations they display confidence, they do not hold their ground against what is really terrible. The man who exceeds in fear is a coward; he fears both what he ought not and as he ought not, and all the similar characterizations attach to him. He is lacking also in confidence; but he is more conspicuous for his excess of fear in painful situations. The coward is a despairing sort of person who fears everything. The brave man, on the other hand, has the opposite disposition; for confidence is the mark of a hopeful disposition. The coward, the rash man, and the brave man, then, are concerned with the same objects but are differently disposed towards them; for the first two exceed and fall short, while the third holds the middle and right position; and rash men are precipitate, and wish for dangers beforehand but draw back when they are in them, while brave men are keen in the moment of action, but quiet beforehand.

Thus, courage is a mean with respect to things that inspire confidence or fear, in the circumstances that have been stated; and it chooses or endures things because it is noble to do so, or because it is base not to do so. But to die to escape from poverty or love or anything painful is not the mark of a brave man, but rather of a coward; it is softness to fly from what is troublesome, and such a man endures death not because it is noble but to fly from evil. [DY: No offense to Aristotle, but he fled Athens to avoid letting the Athenians sin against philosophy as they had with Socrates. So Aristotle flew from what is troublesome and noble?]

III.8 Five Kinds of Apparent (Not True) Courage: Political, Experience with Particular Facts, Passion, Sanguinity, and Ignorance (1116a-1117a).

There are five other kinds of courage: (1) Political courage: this is most like true courage. Citizens seem to face dangers because of the penalties imposed by the laws and the reproaches they would otherwise incur, and because of the honors they win by such action; and therefore those peoples seem to be bravest among whom cowards are held in dishonor and brave men in honor. This kind of courage is most like what we described earlier because it is due to virtue; it is due to shame and to desire of a noble object (i.e. honor) and avoidance of disgrace, which is ignoble. Those who are compelled by their rulers are inferior, since they act not from shame but from fear, and avoid not what is disgraceful but what is painful; so they cannot be ranked in the same class. EXs: Those who give them their posts, and beat them if they retreat, do the same, and so do those who draw them up with trenches or something of the sort behind them; all of these apply compulsion. But one ought to be brave not under compulsion but because it is noble to be so.

(2) Courage qua experience with regard to particular facts. EXs: This is why Socrates thought courage was knowledge, and soldiers exhibit it in the dangers of war. [There seem to be many empty alarms in war, of which these have had the most comprehensive experience; therefore they seem brave, because the others do not know the nature of the facts. Their experience makes them most capable of doing without being done to, since they can use their arms and have the kind that are likely to be best both for doing and for not being done to; therefore they fight like armed men against unarmed or like trained athletes against amateurs; in such contests it is not the bravest men that fight best, but those who are strongest and have their bodies in the best condition. Soldiers turn cowards, however, when the danger puts too great a strain on them and they are inferior in numbers and equipment; soldier-cowards are the first to fly, while citizen-forces die at their posts, as happened at the temple of Hermes.] To citizen-forces flight is disgraceful and death is preferable to safety on those terms; while soldier-cowards from the very beginning faced the danger on the assumption that they were stronger, and when they know the facts they fly, fearing death more than disgrace; but the brave man is not that sort of person.

(3) Courage qua passion (sometimes): those who act from passion, like wild beasts rushing at those who have wounded them, are thought to be brave, because brave men also are passionate; for passion above all things is eager to rush on danger [hence Homer's “put strength into his passion,” “aroused their spirit and
III.9 Courage is Concerned with Things that Inspire Fear; It is Harder to Face What is Painful Than to Abstain from What is Pleasant (1117a).

We have, then, described the character both of brave men and of those who are thought to be brave.

Courage is concerned with confidence and fear, but more with the things that inspire fear; he who is undisturbed in face of these and bears them as he should is more truly brave than the man who does so towards the things that inspire confidence. It is for facing what is painful (as said) that men are called brave. Courage also involves pain, and is justly praised; it is harder to face what is painful than to abstain from what is pleasant. Yet the end which courage sets before it would seem to be pleasant, but to be concealed by the attending circumstances, as happens also in athletic contests; the end at which boxers aim is pleasant – the crown and the honors – but the blows they take are distressing to flesh and blood, and painful, and so is their whole exertion; and because the blows and the exertions are many the end, which is but small, appears to have nothing pleasant in it. And so, if the case of courage is similar, death and wounds will be painful to the brave man and against his will, but he will face them because it is noble to do so or because it is base not to do so. And the more he is possessed of virtue in its entirety and the happier he is, the more he will be pained at the thought of death; life is best worth living for such a man, and he is knowingly losing the greatest goods, and this is painful. But he is nonetheless brave, and perhaps all the more so, because he chooses noble deeds of war at that cost. It is not the case, then, with all the virtues that the exercise of them is pleasant, except insofar as it reaches its end. But it is quite possible that the best soldiers may be not men of this sort but those who are less brave but have no other good; these are ready to face danger, and they sell their life for trifling gains.

So much, then, for courage; it is not difficult to grasp its nature in outline, at any rate, from what has been said.

...
III.10 Temperance is Concerned with Bodily Pleasures (Not Sight, Sounds or Smells, but Taste and Mostly with Touch); Touch can be Self-Indulgent; Since Animals have Touch Too, Humans who Enjoy Touch are Brutish (1117a-1118b).

Let us speak of temperance, the virtue of the irrational parts. We have said that temperance is a mean with regard to pleasures (for it is less, and not in the same way, concerned with pains); self-indulgence also is manifested in the same sphere. So let us determine with what sort of pleasures they are concerned. Assume the distinction between bodily and soul pleasures (e.g., love of honor and learning; the lover of each of these delights in that of which he is a lover, the body being in no way affected, but rather the mind; but men who are concerned with pleasures of honor and learning, or other non-bodily pleasures, are called neither temperate nor self-indulgent). Those who are fond of hearing and telling stories and who spend their days on anything that turns up are gossips, but not self-indulgent, nor are those who are pained at the loss of money or of friends.

Temperance must be concerned with bodily pleasures, but not all even of these; those who delight in objects of vision, such as colors and shapes and painting, are called neither temperate nor self-indulgent; yet it would seem possible to delight even in these either as one should or to excess or to a deficient degree.

Nor to those who delight in the objects of hearing; no one calls those who delight extravagantly in music or acting self-indulgent, nor those who do so as they ought temperate.

Nor to those who delight in odor, unless it be incidentally; we do not call those self-indulgent who delight in the odor of apples or roses or incense, but rather those who delight in the odor of unguents or of dainty dishes; self-indulgent people delight in pleasant odors because these remind them of the objects of their appetite.

When people are hungry and delight in the smell of food, it is self-indulgent since these are objects of appetite to the person.

Nor is there in nonhuman animals any pleasure connected with these senses except incidentally. EXs: Dogs do not delight in the scent of hares, but in the eating of them (the scent told them the hares were there); the lion does not delight in the lowing of the ox, but in eating it (but perceived by the lowing that it was near). Temperance and self-indulgence are concerned with the kind of pleasures that the other animals share in, and so appear slavish and brutish; these are touch and taste. But they appear to make little or no use of taste; the business of taste is the discriminating of flavors, which is done by wine-tasters and people who season dishes; but they hardly take pleasure in making these discriminations, or at least self-indulgent people do not, but in the actual enjoyment, which in all cases comes through touch (food, drink, and sex). This is why a certain gourmand prayed that his throat might become longer than a crane’s, implying that it was the contact that he took pleasure in. Thus touch with which self-indulgence is connected is the most widely shared of the senses and so is justly a matter of reproach, because it attaches to us not as men but as animals.

To delight in such things and to love them above all others is brutish.

III.11 Temperance; Natural Appetites (Food, Drink, Sex); the Self-Indulgent Err in Three Ways; the Pains and Cravings of the Self-Indulgent; “Insensibles” Who Delight in Pleasures Less Than They Should are Not Human (1118b-1119a).

Some appetites are common; others are peculiar to individuals and acquired. EX: Appetite for food is natural, since everyone who is without it craves for food and/or drink, and for love if he is young and lusty; but not everyone craves for this or that kind of nourishment or love, nor for the same things. In the natural appetites few go wrong, and only in one direction, that of excess; “belly-gods” eat or drink whatever is offered to themselves till they are surfeited, and so exceed the natural amount, since natural appetite is the replenishment of one's deficiency (they fill their belly beyond what is right and have an entirely slavish character).

Concerning pleasures peculiar to individuals, many people go wrong and in many ways. Self-indulgent people delight either in the wrong things, or more than most people do, or in the wrong way.

Excess with regard to pleasures is self-indulgence and is culpable; with regard to pains one is not (as with courage) called temperate for facing them or self-indulgent for not doing so; the self-indulgent man is so called because he is pained more than he ought at not getting pleasant things (even his pain being caused by pleasure), and the temperate man is so called because he is not pained at the absence of what is pleasant and at his abstinence from it.
The self-indulgent man craves all pleasant things or those that are most pleasant, and is led by his appetite to choose these at the cost of everything else; hence he is pained both when he fails to get them and when he is craving them (for appetite involves pain); but it seems absurd to be pained for the sake of pleasure. People who fall short with regard to pleasures and delight in them less than they should are hardly found; for such insensibility is not human. Even the other animals distinguish different kinds of food and enjoy some and not others; and if there is any one who finds nothing pleasant and nothing more attractive than anything else, he must be something quite different from a man; this sort of person has not received a name because he hardly occurs. The temperate man occupies a middle position with regard to these objects. For he neither enjoys the things that the self-indulgent man enjoys most but rather dislikes them; nor in general the things that he should not, nor anything of this sort to excess, nor does he feel pain or craving when they are absent, or does so only to a moderate degree, and not more than he should, nor when he should not, and so on; but the things that, being pleasant, make for health or for good condition, he will desire moderately and as he should, and also other pleasant things if they are not hindrances to these ends, or contrary to what is noble, or beyond his means. For he who neglects these conditions loves such pleasures more than they are worth, but the temperate man is not that sort of person, but the sort of person that right reason prescribes.

III.12 Temperance; Self-Indulgence Actuated by Pleasure; Cowardice by Pain, and Both are Voluntary; Children Live at the Beck and Call of Appetite; Desire for Pleasure (Not) in Conflict with Reason (1119a-b).

Self-indulgence is more like a voluntary disposition than cowardice. Self-Indulgence is actuated by pleasure (to be chosen), cowardice by pain (to be avoided because it upsets and destroys the nature of the person who feels it and pleasure does not). So self-indulgence is more voluntary and a matter of reproach; it is easier to become accustomed to its objects, since there are many things of this sort in life, and the process of habituation to them is free from danger, while with terrible objects the reverse is the case. But cowardice is voluntary in a different degree from its particular manifestations; it is itself painless, but in these we are upset by pain, so that we even throw down our arms and disgrace ourselves in other ways; hence our acts are even thought to be done under compulsion. But in the self-indulgent man, the particular acts are voluntary (he does them with craving and desire), but the whole disposition is less so; no one craves to be self-indulgent.

“Self-indulgence” is applied also to childish faults; they bear a certain resemblance to what we have been considering (childish faults are called after self-indulgences). That which desires what is base and which develops quickly ought to be kept in a chastened condition, and these characteristics belong above all to appetite and to children, since children in fact live at the beck and call of appetite, and it is in them that the desire for what is pleasant is strongest. If desire for pleasure is not going to be obedient and subject to the ruling principle, it will go to great lengths; in an irrational being the desire for pleasure is insatiable and tries every source of gratification, and the exercise of appetite increases its innate force, and if appetites are strong and violent they even expel the power of calculation. Hence they should be moderate and few, and should in no way oppose reason – and this is what we call an obedient and chastened disposition – and as the child should live according to the direction of his tutor, so the appetitive element should live according to reason. Hence the appetitive element in a temperate man should harmonize with reason; the noble is the mark at which both aim, and the temperate man craves the things he ought, as and when he ought, as reason directs.

Here we conclude our account of temperance.

BOOK IV:
IV.1 Liberality (Virtue), and Prodigality and Meanness (Extremes); The Liberal Person Gives and Takes Wealth in the Right Way, etc.; the Prodigal Person Gives Too Much and Takes Too Little, and from the Wrong Sources; the Mean Person Takes Too Much and/or Gives Too Little (1119b-1122a).

Liberality is the mean with regard to wealth; the liberal man is praised with regard to the giving and taking of wealth, and especially in respect of giving. Wealth is all the things whose value is measured by money. Prodigality and meanness are excesses and defects with regard to wealth; the mean are those who care more than they ought for wealth; we sometimes use “prodigality” in a complex sense: prodigals are those who are incontinent and spend money on self-indulgence and so they are thought to be the poorest characters (they combine more vices than one, so one vice does not apply). “Prodigal” is a single evil quality, wherein one wastes one’s substance (i.e., one is being ruined by one’s own fault).

Things that have a use (such as riches) may be used either well or badly; everything is used best by the man who has the virtue concerned with it; so riches will be used best by the liberal man, since he has the virtue concerned with wealth. Spending and giving seem to be the using of wealth; so the liberal man gives to the right people (than taking from the right sources and not from the wrong). It is more characteristic of virtue to do good than to have done good to one, and more characteristic to do what is noble than not to do what is base; and it is not hard to see that giving implies doing good and doing what is noble, and taking implies having good done to one or not acting basely. Gratitude is felt towards him who gives, not towards him who does not take, and praise also is bestowed more on him. It is easier not to take than to give; men are more apt to give away their own too little than to take what is another’s. Givers, too, are called liberal; but those who do not take are not praised for liberality but rather for justice; while those who take are hardly praised at all. And the liberal are almost the most loved of all virtuous characters, since they are useful; and this depends on their giving.

Virtuous actions are noble and done for the sake of the noble. So the liberal man will give for the sake of the noble, and rightly; he will give to the right people, the right amounts, and at the right time, with all the other qualifications that accompany right giving; and that too with pleasure or without pain; that which is virtuous is pleasant or free from pain – least of all will it be painful. But he who gives to the wrong people or not for the sake of the noble but for some other cause, will be called not liberal but by some other name. Nor is he liberal who gives with pain; for he would prefer the wealth to the noble act, and this is not characteristic of a liberal man. But no more will the liberal man take from wrong sources; such taking is not characteristic of the man who sets no store by wealth. Nor will he be a ready asker; it is not characteristic of a man who confers benefits to accept them lightly. But he will take from the right sources, e.g., from his own possessions, not as something noble but as a necessity, that he may have something to give. Nor will he neglect his own property, since he wishes by means of this to help others. And he will refrain from giving to anybody and everybody, that he may have something to give to the right people, at the right time, and where it is noble to do so. It is highly characteristic of a liberal man also to go to excess in giving, so that he leaves too little for himself; it is the nature of a liberal man not to look to himself. The term “liberality” is used relatively to a man’s substance; liberality resides not in the multitude of the gifts but in the disposition of the giver, and this is relative to the giver’s substance. There is therefore nothing to prevent the man who gives less from being the more liberal man, if he has less to give. Those are thought to be more liberal who have not made their wealth but inherited it; in the first place they have no experience of want, and secondly all men are fonder of their own productions, as are parents and poets. It is not easy for the liberal man to be rich, since he is not apt either at taking or at keeping, but at giving away, and does not value wealth for its own sake but for the sake of giving. Hence comes the charge that is brought against fortune, that those who deserve riches most get it least. But it is not unreasonable that it should turn out so; he cannot have wealth, any more than anything else, if he does not take pains to have it. Yet he will not give to the wrong people nor at the wrong time, and so on; for he would no longer be acting in accordance with liberality, and if he spent on these objects he would have nothing to spend on the right objects (he is liberal who spends according to his substance and on the right objects; and he who exceeds is prodigal). We do not call despots prodigal; it is not easy for them to give and spend beyond the amount of their possessions. Liberality, being a mean with regard to giving and taking of wealth, the liberal man will both give and spend the right amounts and on the right objects, alike in small things and in great, and that with pleasure; he will also take the right amounts and from the right sources. The virtue being a mean with regard to both, he
will do both as he ought; right taking accompanies right giving, and wrong taking is contrary to it, and accordingly those that accompany each other are present together in the same man, while the contrary kinds evidently are not. But if he happens to spend in a manner contrary to what is right and noble, he will be painsed, but moderately and as he ought; it is the mark of virtue both to be pleased and to be painsed at the right objects and in the right way.

The prodigal errs in that he is neither pleased nor painsed at the right things or in the right way. Prodigality exceeds in giving and not taking, and falls short in taking, while meanness falls short in giving, and exceeds in taking, except in small things.

The characteristics of prodigality are not often combined; it is not easy to give to all if you take from none; private persons soon exhaust their substance with giving, and it is to these that the name of prodigals is applied – though a man of this sort would seem to be in no small degree better than a mean man. He is easily cured both by age and by poverty, and thus he may move towards the middle disposition. For he has the characteristics of the liberal man, since he both gives and refrains from taking, though he does neither of these in the right manner or well. This is why he is thought to have not a bad character; it is not the mark of a wicked or ignoble man to go to excess in giving and not taking, but only of a foolish one. The man who is prodigal in this way is thought much better than the mean man both for the aforesaid reasons and because he benefits many while the mean man benefits no one, not even himself.

Most prodigal people also take from the wrong sources, and are in this respect mean. They become apt to take because they wish to spend and cannot do this easily; their possessions soon run short. Thus they are forced to provide means from some other source. Because they care nothing for honor, they take recklessly and from any source; for they have an appetite for giving, and they do not mind how or from what source. So their giving is not liberal: it is not noble, nor does it aim at nobility, nor is it done in the right way; sometimes they make rich those who should be poor, and will give nothing to people of respectable character, and much to flatterers or those who provide them with some other pleasure. Most of them are self-indulgent: they spend lightly and waste money on their indulgences, and incline towards pleasures because they do not live with a view to what is noble.

If the prodigal man is treated with care, he will arrive at the intermediate and right disposition. But meanness is both incurable (for old age and every disability is thought to make men mean) and more innate in men than prodigality; most men are fonder of getting money than of giving. There are many kinds of meanness.

Meanness consists in two things: deficiency in giving and excess in taking, and is not found complete in all cases but is sometimes divided: some men go to excess in taking, others fall short in giving. Those called “miserly”, “close”, “stingy”, all fall short in giving, but do not covet the possessions of others nor wish to get them. In some this is due to a sort of honesty and avoidance of what is disgraceful (for some seem, or at least profess, to hoard their money for this reason, that they may not some day be forced to do something disgraceful; to this class belong the cheeseparer and every one of the sort; he is so called from his excess of unwillingness to give anything); while others again keep their hands off the property of others from fear, on the ground that it is not easy, if one takes the property of others oneself, to avoid having one’s own taken by them; they are therefore content neither to take nor to give.

Other mean people exceed in respect of taking by taking anything and from any source, e.g. those who ply sordid trades, pimps and all such people, and those who lend small sums and at high rates. All of these take more than they ought and from wrong sources. What is common to them is evidently sordid love of gain; they all put up with a bad name for the sake of gain, and little gain at that. Those who make great gains but from wrong sources, and not the right gains (e.g. despots when they sack cities and spoil temples) are not mean but rather are wicked, impious, and unjust.

And it is natural that meanness is described as the contrary of liberality; not only is it a greater evil than prodigality, but men err more often in this direction than in the way of prodigality as we have described it.

So much, then, for liberality and the opposed vices.
IV.2 Magnificence (Virtue), Niggardliness and Vulgarity (Extremes); The Magnificent Person Spends Large Amounts of Money on the Right Kind of Thing and in the Right Way; the Niggardly Person Spends Too Little and Laments Spending Anything; the Vulgar Person Spends Too Much, is Tasteless, and Shows Off his Wealth (1122a-1123a).

Magnificence is also a virtue concerned with wealth, involving large expenditures (surpassing liberality in scale). But the scale is relative; the expense of equipping a trireme is not the same as that of heading a sacred embassy. It is what is fitting in relation to the agent, and to the circumstances and the object. The magnificent man is liberal, but the liberal man is not necessarily magnificent. The deficiency of this disposition is niggardliness, the excess vulgarity, lack of taste, and the like, which do not go to excess in the amount spent on right objects, but by showy expenditure in the wrong circumstances and the wrong manner.

The magnificent man is like an artist; he can see what is fitting and spend large sums tastefully. As we said, a disposition is determined by its activities and by its objects. The expenses of the magnificent man are large, fitting to its result, worthy of the expense, the expense should be worthy of the result, or should even exceed it, and spent for the sake of the noble (which is common to the virtues). And he will do so gladly and lavishly; nice calculation is a niggardly thing. And he will consider how the result can be made most beautiful and most becoming rather than for how much it can be produced and how it can be produced most cheaply. It is necessary that the magnificent man be also liberal, since the liberal man also will spend what he ought and as he ought; and it is in these matters that the greatness implied in the name of the magnificent man – his bigness, as it were – is manifested, since liberality is concerned with these matters; and at an equal expense he will produce a more magnificent result. For a possession and a result have not the same virtue. The most valuable possession is that which is worth most (e.g. gold), but the most valuable result is that which is great and beautiful (the contemplation of such a thing inspires admiration, and so does magnificence); and the virtue of a result involves magnitude. **Magnificence** is an attribute of expenditures of the kind which we call honorable: **EXs**: those connected with the gods – votive offerings, buildings, and sacrifices – and similarly with any form of religious worship, and all those that are proper objects of public-spirited ambition, as when people think they ought to equip a chorus or a trireme, or entertain the city, in a brilliant way. But we have have to ask who the agent is and what means he has; the expenditure should be worthy of his means, and suit not only the result but also the producer. Hence a poor man cannot be magnificent, since he has not the means with which to spend large sums fittingly; and he who tries is a fool, since he spends beyond what can be expected of him and what is proper, but it is right expenditure that is virtuous. But great expenditure is becoming to those who have suitable means to start with, acquired by their own efforts or from ancestors or connections, and to people of high birth or reputation, and so on; all these things bring with them greatness and prestige. Of private occasions of expenditure the most suitable are those that take place once for all. **EXs**: a wedding or anything of the kind, or anything that interests the whole city or the people of position in it, and also the receiving of foreign guests and the sending of them on their way, and gifts and counter-gifts; for the magnificent man spends not on himself but on public objects, and gifts bear some resemblance to votive offerings. A magnificent man will also furnish his house suitably to his wealth (even a house is a sort of public ornament), and will spend by preference on those works that are lasting (these are the most beautiful), and on every class of things he will spend what is becoming; the same things are not suitable for gods and for men, nor in a temple and in a tomb. And since each expenditure may be great of its kind, and what is most magnificent absolutely is great expenditure on a great object, but what is magnificent here is what is great in these circumstances, and greatness in the work differs from greatness in the expense (for the most beautiful ball or bottle is magnificent as a gift to a child, but the price of it is small and mean), – therefore it is characteristic of the magnificent man, whatever kind of result he is producing, to produce it magnificently (for such a result is not easily surpassed) and to make it worthy of the expenditure.

The vulgar man goes to excess by spending beyond what is right. On small objects of expenditure he spends much and displays a tasteless showiness; e.g. he gives a club dinner on the scale of a wedding banquet, and when he provides the chorus for a comedy he brings them on to the stage in purple. He does these things not for the sake of the noble but to show off his wealth, and because he thinks he is admired for these things, and where he ought to spend much he spends little and where little, much. The niggardly man on the other hand will fall short in everything, and after spending the greatest sums will spoil the beauty of the result for a trifle,
and whatever he is doing he will hesitate and consider how he may spend least, and lament even that, and think he is doing everything on a bigger scale than he ought. These dispositions are vices, but they do not bring disgrace because they are neither harmful to one’s neighbor nor very unseemly.

IV.3 Pride (Virtue), Unduly Humble, and Vain (Extremes); The Proud Man Rightly Thinks Himself Worthy of Great Things; The Unduly Humble Man does Not Think Himself as Worthy as He is; The Vain Man Thinks Himself More Worthy Than He is; The Proud Man is Completely Virtuous and Pride is the Crown of the Virtues; Undue Humility is More Common and Further Away from Pride than Vanity (1123a-1125a).

Pride is concerned with great things; the proud man thinks himself worthy of great things, being worthy of them; he who does so beyond his deserts is a fool, but no virtuous man is foolish or silly. He who is worthy of little and thinks himself worthy of little is temperate, but not proud; he who thinks himself worthy of great things, being unworthy of them, is vain; though not every one who thinks himself worthy of more than he really is worthy of is vain. The man who thinks himself worthy of less than he is really worthy of is unduly humble, whether his deserts are great or moderate, or his deserts be small but his claims yet smaller. And the man whose deserts are great is most unduly humble; what would he have done if they had been less? The proud man is an extreme in respect of the greatness of his claims, but a mean in respect of the rightness of them; for he claims what is in accordance with his merits, while the others go to excess or fall short.

Desert is relative to external goods; and the greatest of these is that which we render to the gods, and which people of position most aim at, and which is the prize appointed for the noblest deeds: honor (surely the greatest of external goods). Proud men are concerned with and chiefly claim honor, but in accordance with their deserts. The unduly humble man falls short both in comparison with his own merits and in comparison with the proud man’s claims. The vain man goes to excess in comparison with his own merits, but does not exceed the proud man’s claims.

The proud man, since he deserves most, must be good in the highest degree; the better man always deserves more, and the best man most. And greatness in every virtue would seem to be characteristic of a proud man. And it would be most unbecoming for a proud man to fly from danger, swinging his arms by his sides, or to wrong another; to what end should he do disgraceful acts, he to whom nothing is great? Nor would he be worthy of honor if he were bad; honor is the prize of virtue and it is to the good that it is rendered. Pride is a sort of crown of the virtues; it makes them greater, and it is not found without them. Therefore it is hard to be truly proud; it is impossible without nobility and goodness of character. At honors that are great and conferred by good men he will be moderately pleased, thinking that he is coming by his own or even less than his own; there can be no honor that is worthy of perfect virtue, yet he will at any rate accept it since they have nothing greater to bestow on him; but honor from casual people and on trifling grounds he will utterly despise, since it is not this that he deserves, and dishonor too, since in his case it cannot be just. He will also bear himself with moderation towards wealth and power and all good or evil fortune, whatever may befall him, and will be neither over-joyed by good fortune nor over-pained by evil. Not even about honor does he care much, although it is the greatest thing (power and wealth are desirable for the sake of honor – at least those who have them wish to get honor by means of them); and for him to whom even honor is a little thing the others must be so too. Hence proud men are thought to be disdainful.

The goods of fortune also are thought to contribute towards pride. Men who are well born are thought worthy of honor, and so are those who enjoy power or wealth; they are in a superior position and so are held in greater honor. Hence even such things make men prouder; they are honored by some for having them; but in truth the good man alone is to be honored; he, however, who has both advantages is thought the more worthy of honor. But those who without virtue have such goods are neither justified in making great claims nor entitled to the name of “proud”; these things imply perfect virtue. Without virtue it is not easy to bear gracefully the goods of fortune (many become disdainful and insolent); and, being unable to bear them, and thinking themselves superior to others, they despise others and do what they please. They imitate the proud man without
being like him, and this they do where they can; so they do not act virtuously, but they do despise others. The proud man despises justly (since he thinks truly), but the many do so at random.

He does not run into trifling dangers, nor is he fond of danger, because he honors few things; but he will face great dangers, and when he is in danger he is unsparing of his life, knowing that there are conditions on which life is not worth having. And he is the sort of man to confer benefits, but he is ashamed of receiving them [DY: Why, if he is worthy and right that he should be honored to a certain extent, would he be ashamed of receiving benefits]; the one is the mark of a superior, the other of an inferior. And he is apt to confer greater benefits in return; thus the original benefactor besides being paid will incur a debt to him, and will be the gainer by the transaction. They seem also to remember any service they have done, but not those they have received (he who receives a service is inferior to him who has done it, but the proud man wishes to be superior), and to hear of the former with pleasure, of the latter with displeasure. The proud man asks for nothing or scarcely anything, but gives help readily, and is dignified towards people who enjoy high position and good fortune, but unassuming towards those of the middle class; it is a difficult and lofty thing to be superior to the former, but easy to be so to the latter, and a lofty bearing over the former is no mark of ill-breeding, but among humble people it is as vulgar as a display of strength against the weak. The proud man does not aim at the things commonly held in honor, or the things in which others excel; he is sluggish and holds back except where great honor as a great result is at stake, and is a man of few deeds, but of great and notable ones. He must also be open in his hate and in his love (to conceal one's feelings is a mark of timidity), and must care more for truth than for what people will think, and must speak and act openly; he is free of speech because he is contemptuous, and he is given to telling the truth, except when he speaks in irony to the vulgar. He must be unable to make his life revolve round another, unless it be a friend; this is slavish, and for this reason all flatterers are servile and people lacking in self-respect are flatterers. Nor is he given to admiration; nothing to him is great. Nor is he mindful of wrongs; it is not the part of a proud man to have a long memory, especially for wrongs, but rather to overlook them. Nor is he a gossip; he will speak neither about himself nor about another, since he cares not to be praised nor for others to be blamed; nor again is he given to praise; and for the same reason he is not an evil-speaker, even about his enemies, except from haughtiness. With regard to necessary or small matters he is least of all men given to lamentation or the asking of favors; it is the part of one who takes such matters seriously to behave so with respect to them. He is one who will possess beautiful and profitless things rather than profitable and useful ones; this is more proper to a character that suffices to itself.

Further, a slow step is thought proper to the proud man, a deep voice, and a level utterance; the man who takes few things seriously is not likely to be hurried, nor the man who thinks nothing great to be excited, while a shrill voice and a rapid gait are the results of hurry and excitement.

The man who falls short of the proud man is unduly humble, and the man who goes beyond him is vain. Now these too are not thought to be bad (they are not evil-doers), but only mistaken. The unduly humble man, being worthy of good things, robs himself of what he deserves, and seems to have something bad about him from the fact that he does not think himself worthy of good things, and seems also not to know himself; else he would have desired the things he was worthy of, since these were good. Such people are not thought to be fools, but rather unduly retiring, which seems actually to make them worse; each class of people aims at what corresponds to its worth, and these people stand back even from noble actions and undertakings, deeming themselves unworthy, and from external goods no less. Vain people are fools and ignorant of themselves, and that manifestly; not being worthy of them, they attempt honorable undertakings, and then are found out; and they adorn themselves with clothing and outward show and such things, and wish their strokes of good fortune to be made public, and speak about them as if they would be honored for them. But undue humility is more opposed to pride than vanity is; it is both commoner and worse.
IV.4 Unnamed Virtue Related to Honor (Virtue), Ambition, and Lack of Ambition (Extremes); The Unnamed Aims at Proper Honor in Small or Middling Things (v. Pride, at Large Things); Ambition at More Honor than is Fitting; and Lack of Ambition at Less Honor than is Fitting (1125b).

There seems to be an honor-related virtue that is related to pride as liberality is to magnificence. Both dispose us as is right with regard to middling and unimportant objects; as in getting and giving of wealth there is a mean and an excess and defect, so too honor may be desired more than is right, or less, or from the right sources and in the right way. We blame both the ambitious man as aiming at honor more than is right and from wrong sources, and the unambitious man as not choosing to be honored even for noble reasons. But sometimes we praise the ambitious man as being manly and a lover of what is noble, and the unambitious man as being moderate and temperate as we said in our first treatment of the subject. Evidently, since people are fond of such and such in more than one way, we do not assign the term “ambition” always to the same thing, but when we praise the quality we think of the man who loves honor more than most people, and when we blame it we think of him who loves it more than is right. The mean being without a name, the extremes seem to dispute for its place as though that were vacant. But where there is excess and defect, there is also an intermediate; now men desire honor both more than they should and less; therefore it is possible also to do so as one should; at all events this is the disposition that is praised, being an unnamed mean in respect of honor. Relatively to ambition it seems to be unambitiousness, and relative to unambitiousness it seems to be ambition, while relatively to both it seems in a sense to be both.

IV.5 Good Temper (Virtue), Anger/Irascibility (Excess), and Inirascibility (Deficiency); The Good Tempered are Angry at the Right Times for the Right Reasons; The Irascible are Angry at the Wrong Times and Excessively; The Inirascible are Not Angry Enough at the Right Things (1125b-1126b).

Good temper is a mean with respect to anger (though it inclines towards the deficiency – inirascibility). The excess might be called a sort of irascibility. For the passion is anger, while its causes are many and diverse.

The good-tempered man is angry at the right things and with the right people, and, further, as he ought, when he ought, and as long as he ought, and is praised. The good-tempered man tends to be unperturbed and not to be led by passion, but to be angry in the manner, at the things, and for the length of time, that reason dictates; but he errs rather in the direction of deficiency; the good-tempered man is not revengeful, but rather tends to forgive.

The deficiency, a sort of inirascibility, is blamed. Those who are not angry at the things they should be are thought to be fools, and so are those who are not angry in the right way, at the right time, or with the right persons; such a man is thought not to feel things nor to be pained by them, and, since he does not get angry, he is thought unlikely to defend himself; and to endure being insulted and to put up with insults to one's friends is slavish.

The excess can be manifested in all the points (one can be angry with the wrong persons, at the wrong things, more than is right, too quickly, or too long); yet all are not found in the same person. Indeed they could not; evil destroys even itself, and if it is complete becomes unbearable. Hot-tempered people get angry quickly and with the wrong persons and at the wrong things and more than is right, but their anger ceases quickly – which is the best point about them. This happens to them because they do not restrain their anger but retaliate openly owing to their quickness of temper, and then their anger ceases. Choleric people are excessively quick-tempered and ready to be angry with everything and on every occasion. Sulky people are hard to appease, and retain their anger long; they repress their passion. But it ceases when they retaliate; revenge relieves them of their anger, producing in them pleasure instead of pain. If this does not happen they retain their burden; owing to its not being obvious no one even reasons with them, and to digest one’s anger in oneself takes time. Such people are most troublesome to themselves and to their dearest friends. We call bad-tempered those who are angry at the wrong things, more than is right, and longer, and cannot be appeased until they inflict vengeance or punishment.
To good temper we oppose the excess rather than the defect; not only is irascibility commoner (since revenge is the more human), but bad-tempered people are worse to live with.

It is not easy to define how, with whom, at what, and how long one should be angry, and at what point right action ceases and wrong begins. The man who strays a little from the path, either towards the more or towards the less, is not blamed, since sometimes we praise those who exhibit the deficiency, and call them good-tempered, and sometimes we call angry people manly, as being capable of ruling. The decision of right anger depends on the particular facts and on perception. But it is plain that the middle disposition is praiseworthy—that 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 defects are blameworthy.

IV.6 Unnamed Virtue Related to Friendship (Virtue), Obsequiousness and Churlishness/Contentiousness (Extremes); The Unnamed Virtuous Person will Endure or Resent to the Right Amount, Giving Pain or Pleasure to Others Rightly When Socially Necessary; the Obsequious Person Praise Everything and Everyone, Never Giving Any Pain to Anyone; the Churlish/Contentious Person Oppose Everything and do Not Care about Giving Pain (1126b-1127a).

The obsequious are those who (in gatherings of men, in social life and the interchange of words and deeds) give pleasure, praise everything and never oppose, but think they should give no pain to the people they meet; the churlish and contentious are those who oppose everything and care not a whit about giving pain. The dispositions we have named are culpable and the middle disposition is laudable—that in virtue of which a man will put up with, and will resent, the right things and in the right way; but no name has been assigned to it, though it most resembles friendship. The man who corresponds to this middle disposition is very much what, with affection added, we call a good friend. But it differs from friendship in that it implies no passion or affection for one's associates; since it is not by reason of loving or hating that such a man takes everything in the right way, but by being a man of a certain kind. He will behave so alike towards those he knows and those he does not know, towards intimates and those who are not so, except that in each of these cases too he will behave as is befitting; it is not proper to have the same care for intimates and for strangers, nor again to pain them in the same ways. He will associate with people in the right way; but it is by reference to what is noble and expedient that he will aim at either giving pain or at contributing pleasure. He is concerned with the pleasures and pains of social life; and wherever it is not noble, or is harmful, for him to contribute pleasure, he will refuse, and will choose rather to give pain; also if his acquiescence in another's action would bring disgrace, and that in a high degree, or injury, on the agent, while his opposition brings a little pain, he will not acquiesce but will decline. He will associate differently with people in high station and with ordinary people, with closer and more distant acquaintances, and so too with regard to all other differences, rendering to each class what is befitting, and while for its own sake he chooses to contribute pleasure, and avoids the giving of pain, he will be guided by the consequences, if these are greater, i.e. the noble and the expedient. For the sake of a great future pleasure, too, he will inflict small pains.

The man who aims at being pleasant with no ulterior object is obsequious, but the man who does so in order that he may get some advantage in the direction of money or the things that money buys is a flatterer; while the man who quarrels with everything is, as has been said, churlish and contentious.

IV.7 Unnamed Virtue Related to Truthfulness (Virtue), Boastfulness and Mock-Modesty (Extremes); the “Truthful” Person Pursues Truth or Falsehood in Words and Deeds; the Boastful Person Claims (More) Reputed Things when He Lacks Them; the Mock-Modest Person Disclaims, Understates, or Belittles What He Has (1127a-1127b).

The mean for boastfulness is found in almost the same sphere; and this also is without a name. Let us now describe those who pursue truth or falsehood alike in words and deeds and in the claims they put forward. The boastful man claims the things that bring repute, when he has not got them, or claims more of them than he has; the mock-modest man disclaims what he has or belittles it; the man who observes the mean is one who calls
a thing by its own name, being truthful both in life and in word, owning to what he has, and neither more nor less. Thus the truthful man is worthy of praise, and both forms of untruthful man are culpable.

The truthful man is not necessarily the man who keeps faith in his agreements in things that pertain to justice or injustice (this would belong to another virtue), but is the man who in the matters in which nothing of this sort is at stake is true both in word and in life because his character is such. Such a man would seem to be as a matter of fact equitable. The man who loves truth, and is truthful where nothing is at stake, will still more be truthful where something is at stake; he will avoid falsehood as something base, seeing that he avoided it even for its own sake; and such a man is worthy of praise. He inclines rather to understate the truth; this seems in better taste because exaggerations are wearisome.

He who claims more than he has with no ulterior object is a contemptible sort of fellow (otherwise he would not delight in falsehood), but seems futile rather than bad; but if he does it for an object, such as for the sake of reputation or honor is (for a boaster) not very much to be blamed, but he who does it for money, or the things that lead to money, is an uglier character (it is not the capacity that makes the boaster, but the choice; for it is in virtue of his disposition and by being a man of a certain kind that he is a boaster); as one man is a liar because he enjoys the lie itself, and another because he desires reputation or gain.

Mock-modest people, who understate things, seem more attractive in character; they are thought to speak not for gain but to avoid parade; and here too it is qualities that bring reputation that they disclaim, as Socrates used to do. Those who disdain trifling and obvious qualities are called humbugs and are more contemptible; and sometimes this seems to be boastfulness, like the Spartan dress; both excess and great deficiency are boastful. But those who use understatement with moderation and understate about matters that do not very much force themselves on our notice seem attractive. The boaster is the worse character.

IV.8 Ready-Wit (Virtue), Buffoonery and Boorish (Extremes); The Ready-Witted Person Says and Listens as One Should, and Jests Tastefully/Tactfully/Rightly; the Buffoon Jests Too Much and at the Wrong Things; the Boor Jests Not at All or Not Enough (1127b-1128b).

Since life includes leisure and amusement, there seems here also to be a kind of intercourse that is tasteful; there is such a thing as saying and listening to what one should and as one should. The kind of people one is speaking or listening to will also make a difference. Those who carry humor to excess are thought to be vulgar buffoons, striving after humor at all costs, and aiming rather at raising a laugh than at saying what is becoming and at avoiding pain to the object of their fun; those who can neither make a joke themselves nor put up with those who do are thought to be boorish and unpolished. Those who joke in a tasteful way are called ready-witted, which implies a sort of readiness to turn this way and that; such sallies are thought to be movements of the character. Most people delight more than they should in amusement and in jesting, and so even buffoons are called ready-witted because they are found attractive; but they clearly differ from the ready-witted man, and to no small extent.

The ready-witted man is tactful saying and listening to such things as befit a good and well-bred man; the well-bred man's jesting differs from that of a vulgar man, and the joking of an educated man from that of an uneducated. One may see this even from the old and the new comedies; to the authors of the former indecency of language was amusing, to those of the latter innuendo is more so; and these differ in no small degree in respect of propriety. Now should we define the man who jokes well by his saying what is not unbecoming to a well-bred man, or by his not giving pain, or even giving delight, to the hearer? Or is the latter, at any rate, itself indefinite, since different things are hateful or pleasant to different people? The kind of jokes he will listen to will be the same; the kind he can put up with are also the kind he seems to make. [DY OBJ]: I disagree; one can put up with many jokes that one could or would never tell, and even not laugh at them.] There are jokes he will not make; the jest is a sort of abuse, and there are things that lawmakers forbid us to abuse; and they should, perhaps, have forbidden us even to make a jest of such. The refined and well-bred man, therefore, is, as it were, a law to himself.

The buffoon is the slave of his sense of humor, and spares neither himself nor others if he can raise a laugh, and says things none of which a man of refinement would say, and to some of which he would not even
But relaxation and amusement are thought to be a necessary element in life.

IV.9 Shame (Fear of Disrepute) is a Passion, not a Disposition or Virtue (1128b-1129a).
Shame should not be described as a virtue (it is more like a passion than a disposition), but it is defined as a kind of fear of disrepute and produces an effect similar to that produced by fear of danger; people who feel disgraced blush, and those who fear death turn pale. Both, therefore, are in a sense bodily conditions, which is thought to be characteristic of passion rather than of a disposition.

The passion is not becoming to every age, but only to youth. Young people should be prone to shame because they live by passion and therefore commit many errors, but are restrained by shame; and we praise young people who are prone to this passion, but an older person no one would praise for being prone to the sense of disgrace, since we think he should not do anything that need cause this sense. The sense of disgrace is not even characteristic of a good man, since it is consequent on bad actions (such actions should not be done; and if some actions are disgraceful in very truth and others only according to common opinion, this makes no difference; for neither class of actions should be done, so that no disgrace should be felt); and it is a mark of a bad man even to be such as to do any disgraceful action. To be so constituted as to feel disgraced if one does such an action, and for this reason to think oneself good, is absurd; it is for voluntary actions that shame is felt, and the good man will never voluntarily do bad actions. But shame may be said to be conditionally a good thing; if a good man did such actions, he would feel disgraced; but the virtues are not subject to such a qualification. If shamelessness – not to be ashamed of doing base actions – is bad, that does not make it good to be ashamed of doing such actions. Continence too is not virtue, but a mixed sort of disposition (discussed later). Now let us discuss justice.

BOOK V:

V.1 Justice (Virtue) Produces Just Actions and Injustice (Vice) Unjust Acts; Just is Lawful, Equal and Produce or Preserve Happiness for Society; Injustice Unlawful and Unequal; Justice is Complete Virtue; the Worst Man is Evil Both to Himself and Others (1129a-1130a).
We must consider what kind of actions justice and injustice are concerned with, what sort of mean justice is, and its two extremes.

Rough sketch: Justice is the disposition that makes people disposed to do what is just and makes them act justly and wish for what is just; injustice is the disposition that makes them act unjustly and wish for what is unjust.

“Justice” and “injustice” are ambiguous, but because the homonymy is close, it escapes notice and is not obvious as it is, comparatively, when the meanings are far apart, e.g. Let us then ascertain the different ways in which a man may be said to be unjust. Both the lawless man and the grasping and unequal man are thought to be unjust, so that evidently both the law-abiding and the equal man will be just. The just is the lawful and the equal, the unjust the unlawful and the unequal.

Since the unjust man is grasping, he must be concerned with goods related to prosperity and adversity (taken absolutely these are always good, but for a particular person are not always good). (Men pray for and pursue the same things; but they should not, but should pray that the things that are good absolutely may also be good for them, and should choose the things that are good for them.) The unjust man does not always choose the greater, but also the less – in the case of things bad absolutely; but because the lesser evil is itself thought to be in a sense good, and graspingness is directed at the good, therefore he is thought to be grasping. And he is unequal; for this contains and is common to both.

Since the lawless man was seen to be unjust and the law-abiding man just, evidently all lawful acts are in a sense just acts; for the acts laid down by the legislative art are lawful, and each of these, we say, is just. The laws in their enactments on all subjects aim at the common advantage either of all or of the best or of those who
hold power, or something of the sort; so that in one sense just acts tend to produce and preserve happiness and its components for the political society. And the law bids us do both the acts of a brave man (e.g. not to desert our post or take to flight or throw away our arms), and those of a temperate man (e.g. not to commit adultery or outrage), and those of a good-tempered man (e.g. not to strike another or speak evil), and similarly with regard to the other virtues and forms of wickedness, commanding some acts and forbidding others; and the rightly-framed law does this rightly, and the hastily conceived one less well.

This form of justice is complete virtue— not absolutely, but in relation to others. So justice is the greatest of virtues and “neither evening nor morning star” is so wonderful; and proverbially “in justice is every virtue comprehended”. Justice is complete virtue in its fullest sense, because it is the actual exercise of complete virtue. It is complete because he who possesses it can exercise his virtue towards others too and not merely by himself. Justice, alone of the virtues, is another’s good, because it is related to others; it does what is advantageous to another, either a ruler or a partner. The worst man is he who exercises his wickedness both towards himself and towards his friends, and the best man is not he who exercises his virtue towards himself but he who exercises it towards another; this is a difficult task. Justice in this sense is not part of virtue but virtue entire and without qualification; nor is the contrary injustice a part of vice but vice entire.


We are investigating the justice that is a part of virtue, and injustice in the particular sense.

This justice exists, because while the man who exhibits in action for the other forms of wickedness acts unjustly but not graspingly (e.g. the man who throws away his shield through cowardice, speaks harshly through bad temper, or fails to help a friend with money through meanness), when a man acts graspingly he often exhibits none of (nor all of) these vices, but certainly wickedness of some kind (for we blame him) and injustice. There is a particular kind of injustice that is a part of general injustice, and something unjust that answers to a part of what is generally unjust (contrary to the law). EX: if one man commits adultery for the sake of gain and makes money by it, he is unjust (due to want of gain) but not self-indulgent; if another does so at the bidding of appetite though he loses money and is penalized for it, he is self-indulgent rather than grasping (unjust). All other unjust acts are ascribed to some particular kind of wickedness: EXs: adultery to self-indulgence, the desertion of a comrade in battle to cowardice, physical violence to anger; but if a man makes gain, his action is ascribed to no form of wickedness but injustice. So there is apart from general injustice another, particular, injustice that shares the name and nature of the first, because its definition falls within the same genus.

Thus, there is more than one kind of justice, and that there is one that is distinct from virtue entire; we must try to grasp what 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. To the unlawful answers the afore-mentioned sort of injustice (all that is unequal is unlawful, but not all that is unlawful is unequal), the unjust and injustice are not the same as but different from the former kind, as part from whole; particular injustice is a part of general injustice, and similarly justice in the one sense of justice in the other. So we must speak also about particular justice and particular injustice, and similarly about the just and the unjust. And how the just and the unjust which answer to these are to be distinguished is evident; practically the majority of the acts commanded by the law are those which are prescribed from the point of view of virtue taken as a whole; the law bids us practice every virtue and forbids us to practice any vice. And the things that tend to produce virtue taken as a whole are those of the acts prescribed by the law that have been prescribed with a view to education for the common good. [We must determine later whether the education that makes him good without qualification is the function of the political art or of another; perhaps it is not the same in every case to be a good man and a good citizen.]

Of particular justice and particular just acts, one kind is manifested in distributions of honor or money or the other things that fall to be divided among those who have a share in the constitution (in these it is possible for one man to have a share either unequal or equal to that of another), and another kind plays a rectifying part in transactions. There are two divisions of rectifying transactions: voluntary [sale, purchase, usury, pledging, lending, depositing, letting (they are called voluntary because the origin of these transactions is voluntary)] and
V.3 Distributive Justice: The Just Involves at Least Four Terms (the Two People and the Two Objects Involved); Injustice = Equals Having Unequal Shares, or Unequals have Equal Shares; the Unjust Violates Proportions; the Just is Proportional; the Unjust has Too Much Good; the Unjustly Treated has Too Little Good (1131a-1132b).

Since the unjust man and act is unequal, there is also an intermediate for the unequal. And this is the equal (and is just); in any kind of action in which there is a more and a less there is also what is equal. Equality implies at least two things: the just must be both intermediate and equal and relative (i.e. for certain persons). Qua intermediate it must be between two extremes; qua equal, it involves two things; qua just, it is for certain people. So the just involves at least four terms; the persons for whom it is in fact just are two, and the things in which it is manifested, the objects, are two. And the same equality will exist between the persons and between the things concerned; as the latter – the things concerned – are related, so are the former; if they are not equal, they will not have what is equal, but this is the origin of quarrels and complaints – when either equals have and are awarded unequal shares, or unequals equal shares. Awards should be according to merit; all men agree that what is just in distribution must be according to merit in some sense, but democrats identify it with the status of freeman, supporters of oligarchy with wealth (or with noble birth), and supporters of aristocracy with virtue.

The just is a species of the proportionate (proportion being not a property only of the kind of number which consists of abstract units, but of number in general). Proportion is equality of ratios, and involves four terms at least: EX: as the line A is to the line B, so is the line B to the line C; and the just, too, involves at least four terms, and the ratio is the same. EX: as the term A, then, is to B, so will C be to D, and so, as A is to C, B will be to D. The conjunction, then, of the term A with C and of B with D is what is just in distribution, and this species of the just is intermediate, and the unjust is what violates the proportion; the proportional is intermediate, and the just is proportional. (Mathematicians call this kind of proportion geometrical; it is in geometrical proportion that it follows that the whole is to the whole as either part is to the corresponding part.) This proportion is not continuous; for we cannot get a single term standing for a person and a thing.

So one term becomes too great, the other too small, as indeed happens in practice; the man who acts unjustly has too much, and the man who is unjustly treated too little, of what is good. In the case of evil the reverse is true; the lesser evil is reckoned a good in comparison with the greater evil.

This is one species of the just.

V.4 Rectificatory/Corrective Justice is an Intermediate Between Loss and Gain (1132b).

Rectificatory justice (another kind of justice) arises in connection with transactions both voluntary and involuntary. Justice in transactions is a sort of equality indeed, and the injustice a sort of inequality, according to arithmetical proportion. It makes no difference whether a good man has defrauded a bad man or a bad man a good one, nor whether it is a good or a bad man that has committed adultery; the law looks only to the distinctive character of the injury, and treats the parties as equal, if one is in the wrong and the other is being wronged, and if one inflicted injury and the other has received it. Since this kind of injustice is an inequality, the judge tries to equalize it; in the case also in which one has received and the other has inflicted a wound, or one has slain and the other been slain, the suffering and the action have been unequally distributed; but the judge tries to equalize things by means of the penalty, taking away from the gain of the assailant. The term “gain” is applied generally to such cases, even if it is not a term appropriate to certain cases (e.g. to the person who inflicts a wound) – and “loss” to the sufferer. So the equal is intermediate between the greater and the less and just, but the gain and the loss are respectively greater and less in contrary ways; more of the good and less of the evil are gain, and the contrary is loss; so corrective justice will be the intermediate between loss and gain. Thus when people dispute, they take refuge in the judge; and to go to the judge is to go to justice; the nature of the judge is to be a sort of animate justice; and they seek the judge as an intermediate, and in some states they call judges mediators, on the assumption that if they get what is intermediate they will get what is just. The judge restores
equality; it is as though there were a line divided into unequal parts, and he took away that by which the greater segment exceeds the half, and added it to the smaller segment. When the whole has been equally divided, they say they have their own (what is equal). [Greek analogy: It is called just \{dikaion\}, because it is a division into two parts \{dicha\}, just as if one were to call it \{dichaion; and the judge \{dikastes\} is one who bisects \{dichastes\}.] Both loss and gain, have come from voluntary exchange; to have more than one's own is called gaining, and to have less than one's original share is called losing (e.g. in buying and selling and in all other matters in which the law has left people free to make their own terms); but when they get neither more nor less but just what belongs to themselves, they have their own and neither lose nor gain.

So the just is intermediate between a sort of gain and a sort of involuntary loss, consisting in having an equal amount before and after the transaction.

V.5 Reciprocity Justice; Just and Unjust Exchanges; All Goods Have to be Measured by One Thing; Money; The Origin of Money; Justice is a Mean/Virtue Between Two Extremes of Injustice (Having Too Much, Unfairly, or Not Enough, Unfairly) (1132b-1134a).

Some (e.g. Pythagoreans) think that reciprocity is without qualification just; they defined justice without qualification as reciprocity (a third kind of justice). Reciprocity fits neither distributive nor rectificatory justice – in many cases they are not in accord; EX: if an official has inflicted a wound, he should not be wounded in return, and if someone has wounded an official, he ought not to be wounded only but punished in addition. Further, there is a great difference between a voluntary and an involuntary act. But in associations for exchange this sort of justice does hold men together – reciprocity in accordance with a proportion and not on the basis of equality. It is by proportionate requital that the city holds together. Men seek to return either evil for evil – and if they cannot do so, think their position mere slavery – or good for good – and if they cannot do so there is no exchange, but it is by exchange that they hold together. This is why they give a prominent place to the temple of the Graces – to promote the requital of services; for this is characteristic of grace – we should serve in return one who has shown grace to us, and should another time take the initiative in showing it.

Now proportionate return is secured by cross-conjuncture. Let A be a builder, B a shoemaker, C a house, D a shoe. The builder must get from the shoemaker the latter's work, and must himself give him in return his own. If there is proportionate equality of goods, then reciprocal action takes place; if not, the bargain is not equal, and does not hold; for there is nothing to prevent the work of the one being better than that of the other; they must therefore be equated. It is not two doctors that associate for exchange, but a doctor and a farmer, or in general people who are different and unequal; but these must be equated. All things that are exchanged must be somehow commensurable. It is for this end that money has been introduced, and it becomes in a sense an intermediate; money measures all things, and so the excess and the defect – how many shoes are equal to a house or to a given amount of food. All goods must therefore be measured by some one thing, and this unit is demand, which holds all things together (if men did not need one another’s goods at all, or did not need them equally, there would be either no exchange or not the same exchange); but money has become by convention a sort of representative of demand; and this is why it has the name “money” \{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 when the terms have been equated so that as farmer is to shoemaker, the amount of the shoemaker’s work is to that of the farmer’s work. Demand holds things together as a single unit because when men do not need one another (i.e. when neither needs the other or one does not need the other), they do not exchange, as we do when some one wants what one has oneself (e.g. when people permit the exportation of corn in exchange for wine). This equation therefore must be established. For the future exchange – that if we do not need a thing now we shall have it if ever we do need it – money is as it were our surety; it must be possible for us to get what we want by bringing the money. The same thing happens to money itself as to goods – it is not always worth the same; yet it tends to be steadier. This is why all goods must have a price set on them; then there will always be exchange, and if so, association. Money, acting as a measure, makes goods commensurate and equates them; neither would there have been association if there were not exchange, nor exchange if there were not equality, nor equality if there were not commensurability.
Having defined the unjust and the just, just action is intermediate between acting unjustly and being justly treated; the one is to have too much and the other to have too little. Justice is a kind of mean, but not in the same way as the other virtues, but because it relates to an intermediate amount, while injustice relates to the extremes. Justice is that in virtue of which the just man is said to be a doer, by choice, of that which is just, and one who will distribute either between himself and another or between two others not so as to give more of what is desirable to himself and less to his neighbor (and conversely with what is harmful), but so as to give what is equal in accordance with proportion; and similarly in distributing between two other persons. Injustice is similarly related to the unjust, which is excess and defect, contrary to proportion, of the useful or hurtful. Injustice is excess and defect because it is productive of excess and defect — in one's own case excess of what is in its own nature useful and defect of what is hurtful, while in the case of others, proportion may be violated in either direction. In the unjust act to have too little is to be unjustly treated; to have too much is to act unjustly.

V.6 One can Act Unjustly but Not be Unjust; Political Justice is Between Men Governed by Law; Law, Not Man, Rules a City; There is No Injustice to What is One’s Own; Household Justice is Justice Towards One’s Wife, Children, and Property (1134a-b).

What sort of unjust acts imply that the doer is unjust with respect to each type of injustice (e.g. a thief, an adulterer, or a brigand)? Surely the answer does not turn on the difference between these types. EX: a man might even lie with a woman knowing who she was, but the origin of this act might be not choice but passion. He acts unjustly but is not unjust; e.g. a man is not a thief, yet he stole, nor an adulterer, yet he committed adultery; and similarly in all other cases.

The reciprocal is related to the just, but what we are looking for is not only what is just without qualification but also political justice, which is found among men who share their life with a view to self-sufficiency, men who are free and either proportionately or arithmetically equal: between those who do not fulfill this condition there is no political justice, but justice in a special sense and by analogy. Justice exists only between men whose mutual relations are governed by law; and law exists for men between whom there is injustice [DY: Cf. Hobbes and Epicurus’ definitions of justice]; legal justice is the discrimination of the just and the unjust. And between men between whom there is injustice there is also unjust action (though there is not injustice between all between whom there is unjust action), and this is assigning too much to oneself of things good in themselves and too little of things evil in themselves. Hence we do not allow a man to rule, but law, because a man behaves thus in his own interests and becomes a tyrant. But the magistrate is the guardian of justice, and, if of justice, then of equality also. So a reward must be given him, and this is honor, and privilege; but 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 this, though they are like it; there can be no injustice in the unqualified sense towards things that are one’s own, but a man’s chattel, and his child until it reaches a certain age and sets up for itself, are as it were part of himself, and no one chooses to hurt himself (so there can be no injustice towards oneself) [DY: suicide attempt, “cutters”]. So the justice or injustice of citizens is not manifested in these relations but according to law, between people naturally subject to law. Hence justice can more truly be manifested towards a wife than towards children and chattels, for the former is household justice; but this is different from political justice.

V.7 Natural v. Legal Political Justice; There is a Difference Between the Act of (In)Justice and What is (Un)Just (1134b-1135a).

Part of political justice is natural and part legal — natural, that which everywhere has the same force and does not exist by people’s thinking this or that; legal, that which is originally indifferent, but when it has been laid down is not indifferent (e.g. that a prisoner’s ransom shall be a mina, or that a goat and not two sheep shall be sacrificed), and again all the laws that are passed for particular cases (e.g. that sacrifice shall be made in honor of X, and the provisions of decrees). Some think that all justice is of this sort, because that which is by nature is unchangeable and has everywhere the same force (as fire burns both here and in Persia), while they see change in the things recognized as just. This is not true in this unqualified way: with the gods it is perhaps not true at all;
with us there is something that is just even by nature, yet all of it is changeable. It is evident which sort of thing, among things capable of being otherwise, is by nature, and which is not but is legal and conventional, assuming that both are equally changeable. And in all other things the same distinction will apply; by nature the right hand is stronger, yet it is possible that all men should come to be ambidextrous. The things that are just not by nature but by human enactment are not everywhere the same, since constitutions also are not the same, though there is but one which is everywhere by nature the best.

Of things just and lawful each is related as the universal to its particulars; the things that are done are many, but of them each is one, since it is universal. [DY: universal justice is one]

There is a difference between the act of injustice and what is unjust, and between the act of justice and what is just; a thing is unjust by nature or by enactment; and this very thing, when it has been done, is an act of injustice, but before it is done is not yet this but is unjust. The general terms “just action”, and “act of justice” are applied to the correction of the act of injustice.

V.8 Voluntary v. Involuntary Just and Unjust Actions; Voluntary = Done in a Man’s Power with Knowledge; Involuntary = Done in Ignorance or Under Compulsion, or Not in One’s Power; Some Voluntary Actions are Chosen and Others are Not; Mistake, Defined; Some Involuntary Unjust Actions are Forgivable; Others are Not (1135a-1136a).

A man acts unjustly or justly whenever he does such acts voluntarily; when involuntarily, he acts neither unjustly nor justly except in an incidental way; for he does things which happen to be just or unjust. Whether an act is or is not one of injustice (or of justice) is determined by its voluntariness or involuntariness; when it is voluntary it is blamed, and at the same time is then an act of injustice; so that there will be things that are unjust but not yet acts of injustice, if voluntariness be not present as well. Voluntary = any of the things in a man’s own power which he does with knowledge, i.e. not in ignorance of either of the person acted on or of the instrument used or of the end that will be attained (e.g. whom he is striking, with what, and to what end), each such act being done not incidentally nor under compulsion (e.g. if you take my hand and strike someone else with it, I do not act voluntarily; the act was not in my power). The person struck may be the striker’s father, and the striker may know that it is a man or one of the persons present, but not know that it is his father; a similar distinction may be made in the case of the end, and with regard to the whole action. Involuntary = that which is done in ignorance, or though not done in ignorance is not in the agent’s power, or is done under compulsion (many natural processes, even, we knowingly both perform and experience, none of which is either voluntary or involuntary; e.g. growing old or dying). But in the case of unjust and just acts alike the injustice or justice may be only incidental; EXs: a man might return a deposit unwillingly and from fear, and then he must not be said either to do what is just or to act justly, except in an incidental way. The man who under compulsion and unwillingly fails to return the deposit must be said to act unjustly, and to do what is unjust, only incidentally. Of voluntary acts we do some by choice, others not by choice; by choice those which we do after deliberation, not by choice those which we do without previous deliberation. There are three kinds of injury in transactions; those done in ignorance are mistakes when the person acted on, the act, the instrument, or the end is other than the agent supposed; EXs: the agent thought either that he was not hitting any one or that he was not hitting with this missile or not hitting this person or to this end, but a result followed other than that which he thought likely (e.g. he threw not with intent to wound but only to prick), or the person hit or the missile was other than he supposed. Now when the injury takes place contrary to reasonable expectation, it is a misadventure. When injury is not contrary to reasonable expectation but does not imply vice, it is a mistake (a man makes a mistake when the ignorance originates in him, but is the victim of accident when its origin lies outside him). When he acts with knowledge but not after deliberation, it is an act of injustice – e.g. the acts due to anger or to other passions necessary or natural to man; when men do such harmful and mistaken acts they act unjustly, and the acts are acts of injustice, but this does not imply that the doers are unjust or wicked; for the injury is not due to vice. [DY: Doesn’t this imply that a person is not unjust or evil when he acts without deliberation and with passion and knowledge? And isn’t he being inconsistent in his use of “mistaken,” since he stated in the previous sentence that a mistake is when the ignorance originates in the person, but here he’s saying that the person has knowledge of his action?] But when a man acts from choice, he is an unjust man and a vicious man.
Hence acts proceeding from anger are rightly judged not to be done of malice aforethought [=the intention to kill or harm, which is held to distinguish unlawful killing from murder - DY]; it is not the man who acts in anger but he who enraged him that starts the mischief. Again, the matter in dispute is not whether the thing happened or not, but its justice; for it is apparent injustice that occasions anger. People do not dispute about the occurrence of the act (unless they do so owing to forgetfulness); but, agreeing about the fact, they dispute on which side justice lies (whereas a man who has deliberately injured another cannot help knowing that he has done so), so that the one thinks he is being treated unjustly and the other disagrees.

But if a man harms another by choice, he acts unjustly; and these are the acts of injustice that imply that the doer is an unjust man, provided that the act violates proportion or equality. Similarly, a man is just when he acts justly by choice; but he acts justly if he merely acts voluntarily.

Of involuntary acts some are forgivable, others not. For the mistakes which men make not only in ignorance but also from ignorance are forgivable, while those which men do not from ignorance but (though they do them in ignorance) owing to a passion which is neither natural nor such as man is liable to, are not forgivable.

V.

9 Being Treated Unjustly is Not Voluntary; the Incontinent Man Does Things That He does Not Think He Ought to Do; the Distributor of More Than One Deserves Acts Unjustly, and He Who Gets an Excessive Share does What is Unjust; One Cannot Treat Oneself Unjustly; It is Not Easy to be Just; Justice is Essentially Something Human (1136a-1137a).

Is there any truth in Euripides' paradoxical words:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{I slew my mother, that's my tale in brief.} \\
\text{Were you both willing, or unwilling both?}
\end{align*}
\]

Is it truly possible to be voluntarily treated unjustly, or is all suffering of injustice involuntary, as all unjust action is voluntary? And is all suffering of injustice involuntary, or is it sometimes voluntary, sometimes involuntary? So, too, with the case of being justly treated; all just action is voluntary, so that it is reasonable that there should be a similar opposition in either case – that both being unjustly and being justly treated should be either alike voluntary or alike involuntary. It is possible to partake of justice incidentally, and similarly of injustice; to do what is unjust is not the same as to act unjustly, nor to suffer what is unjust as to be treated unjustly, and similarly in the case of acting justly and being justly treated: it is impossible to be unjustly treated if the other does not act unjustly, or unjustly treated unless he acts unjustly. If to act unjustly is simply to harm someone voluntarily, and “voluntarily” means “knowing the person acted on, the instrument, and the manner of one’s acting”, and the incontinent [akratic] man voluntarily harms himself, not only will he voluntarily be unjustly treated but it will be possible to treat oneself unjustly. (This also is one of the questions in doubt, whether a man can treat himself unjustly.) A man may voluntarily, owing to incontinence, be harmed by another who acts voluntarily, so it would be possible to be voluntarily treated unjustly. Or is our definition of voluntary incorrect, so we should add “contrary to the wish of the person acted on”? Then a man may be voluntarily harmed and voluntarily suffer what is unjust, but no one is voluntarily treated unjustly; no one wishes to be unjustly treated, not even the incontinent man. He acts contrary to his wish; no one wishes for what he does not think to be good, but the incontinent man does do things that he does not think he ought to do. One who gives what is his own, as Homer says Glaucus gave Diomede

Armour of gold for brazen, the price of a hundred beeves for nine,

is not unjustly treated; though to give is in his power, to be unjustly treated is not, but there must be some one to treat him unjustly. Thus, being unjustly treated is not voluntary.

Two questions remain: (1) whether it is the man who has assigned to another more than his deserts that acts unjustly, or he who has the excessive share, and (2) whether it is possible to treat oneself unjustly. The questions are connected; if the former alternative is possible and the distributor acts unjustly and not the man
who has the excessive share, then if a man assigns more to another than to himself, knowingly and voluntarily, he treats himself unjustly; which is what modest people seem to do, since the virtuous man tends to take less than his share. Or does this statement too need qualification? He perhaps gets more than his share of some other good (e.g. honor or intrinsic nobility). Applying the distinction we applied to unjust action solves the question: he suffers nothing contrary to his own wish, so that he is not unjustly treated as far as this goes, but at most only suffers harm.

The distributor acts unjustly, but not always the man who has the excessive share; it is not he to whom what is unjust appertains that acts unjustly, but he who does the unjust act voluntarily, i.e. the person in whom lies the origin of the action, and this lies in the distributor not in the receiver. Since there is active and passive action, and there is a sense in which lifeless things, or a hand, or a servant who obeys an order, may be said to slay, he who gets an excessive share does not act unjustly; though he does what is unjust.

If the distributor gave his judgment in ignorance, he does not act unjustly in respect of legal justice, and his judgment is not unjust in this sense, but in a sense it is unjust per se (legal justice and primary justice are different); but if with knowledge he judged unjustly, he is himself aiming at an excessive share either of gratitude or of revenge. If he were to share in the unjust act, the man who has judged unjustly for these reasons has got too much; EX: assigning the land on that condition, he received not land but money.

Men think that acting unjustly is in their power, so that being just is easy. But it is not; to lie with one’s neighbor’s wife, to wound another, to deliver a bribe, is easy and in our power, but to do these things as a result of a certain state of character is neither easy nor in our power. Similarly to know what is just and what is unjust requires, men think, no great wisdom, because it is not hard to understand the matters dealt with by the laws (though these are not the things that are just, except incidentally); but how actions must be done and distributions effected in order to be just, to know this is a greater achievement than knowing what is good for health; though even then, while it is easy to know that honey, wine, hellebore (=a poisonous winter-flowering Eurasian plant of the buttercup family — DY], cauterization, and the use of the knife are so, to know how, to whom, and when there should be applied with a view to producing health, is no less an achievement than that of being a physician. Men think that acting unjustly is characteristic of the just man no less than of the unjust.

Men think that acting unjustly is characteristic of the just man no less than of the unjust.

Just acts occur between people who participate in things good in themselves and can have too much or too little of them; some beings (e.g. presumably the gods) cannot have too much of them, and to others, those who are incurably bad, not even the smallest share in them is beneficial but all such goods are harmful, while to others they are beneficial up to a point; therefore justice is essentially something human.

V.10 Equity (Fairness)/The Equitable (Fair) and Their Relations to Justice/Just; the Equitable is Just, Better than One Kind of Justice, and is a Correction of Law Where it is Defective Due to its Universality; the Equitable Man (1137a-1138a).

Our next subject is equity [fairness] and the equitable [fair], and their respective relations to justice and the just. On examination they are neither absolutely the same nor generically different; and while we sometimes praise what is equitable and the equitable man, at other times, it seems strange if the equitable, being something different from the just, is yet praiseworthy; either the just or the equitable is not good, if they are different; or, if both are good, they are the same.

These statements are all in a sense correct and not opposed to one another: the equitable, though it is better than one kind of justice, yet is just, and it is not as being a different class of thing that it is better than the just. The same thing is just and equitable, and while both are good the equitable is superior. What creates the problem is that the equitable is just, but not the legally just but a correction of legal justice, because all law is universal, but about some things it is not possible to make a universal statement that will be correct. In these
cases, the law takes the usual case, though it is not ignorant of the possibility of error. It is nonetheless correct; the error is not in the law nor in the legislator but in the nature of the thing, since the matter of practical affairs is of this kind from the start. When the law speaks universally and a case arises on it which is not covered by the universal statement, then it is right, when the legislator fails us and has erred by over-simplicity, to correct the omission – to say what the legislator himself would have said had he been present, and would have put into his law if he had known. Hence the equitable is just, and better than one kind of justice – not better than absolute justice but better than the error that arises from the absoluteness of the statement. This is the nature of the equitable, a correction of law where it is defective owing to its universality. The reason why all things are not determined by law is that it is impossible to lay down a law about some things, so that a decree is needed (the decree is adapted to the facts).

The equitable man chooses and does such acts, and is no stickler for justice in a bad sense but tends to take less than his share, though he has the law on his side; this disposition is equity, which is a sort of justice, and not a different disposition.

V.11 A Man Cannot Treat Himself Unjustly for Many Reasons (1138a-b).

A man cannot treat himself unjustly: One class of just acts are those acts in accordance with any virtue which are prescribed by the law (e.g. the law does not command a man to kill himself), and what it does not command it forbids. When a man in violation of the law harms another (otherwise than in retaliation) voluntarily, he acts unjustly, and a voluntary agent is one who knows both the person he is affecting and the instrument; and he who through anger voluntarily stabs himself does this contrary to right reason, and this the law does not allow; therefore he is acting unjustly towards the disposition, not towards himself. He suffers voluntarily, but no one is voluntarily treated unjustly. This is why the disposition punishes: a certain loss of civil rights attaches to the man who destroys himself, on the ground that he is treating the state unjustly.

Further, in the sense in which the man who acts unjustly is unjust only and not bad all round, it is not possible to treat oneself unjustly (this is different from the former sense; the unjust man in one sense of the term is wicked just as the coward is, not in the sense of being wicked all round, so that his unjust act does not manifest wickedness in general). That would imply the possibility of the same thing’s having been subtracted from and added to the same thing at the same time; but this is impossible – the just and the unjust always involve more than one person. Further, unjust action is voluntary and done by choice, and is prior (the man who because he has suffered does the same in return is not thought to act unjustly); but if a man harms himself he suffers and does the same things at the same time. Further, a man could be voluntarily treated unjustly. Besides, no one acts unjustly without committing particular acts of injustice; but no one can commit adultery with his own wife or housebreaking on his own house or theft on his own property.

In general, the question “can a man treat himself unjustly?” is solved also by the distinction we applied to the question “can a man be voluntarily treated unjustly?”

[Both being unjustly treated and acting unjustly are bad: the one means having less and the other having more than the intermediate amount, which analogously plays the part here that the healthy does in the medical art, and that good condition does in the art of bodily training. But still acting unjustly is the worse, since it involves vice and is blameworthy – involves vice which is either of the complete and unqualified kind or almost so (not all voluntary unjust action implies injustice), while being unjustly treated does not involve vice and injustice. In itself being unjustly treated is less bad, but there is nothing to prevent its being incidentally a greater evil. But theory cares nothing for this; it calls pleurisy a more serious mischief than a stumble; yet the latter may become incidentally the more serious, if the fall due to it leads to your being taken prisoner or put to death by the enemy.]

Metaphorically and in virtue of a certain resemblance there is a justice, not indeed between a man and himself, but between certain parts of him; yet not every kind of justice but that of master and servant or that of husband and wife. These are the ratios in which the reason part of the soul stands to the irrational part; it is with a view to these parts that people also think a man can be unjust to himself, viz. because these parts are liable to suffer something contrary to their desires; there is therefore thought to be a mutual justice between them as between ruler and ruled.
BOOK VI:

VI.1 How do We Determine the Intermediate by the Dictates of Reason? Two parts of soul (Rational and Irrational); Two Rational Parts: Scientific and Calculative (1138b-1139a).

Since one ought to choose that which is intermediate, not the excess nor the defect, and that the intermediate is determined by the dictates of reason, let us discuss this. In all the dispositions, there is a mark to which the man who possesses reason looks, and heightens or relaxes his activity accordingly, and there is a standard that determines the mean dispositions that we say are intermediate between excess and defect, being in accordance with right reason. But this true statement is by no means illuminating; in all other pursuits involving knowledge, it is true that we must not exert ourselves nor relax our efforts too much nor too little, but to an intermediate extent and as right reason dictates; but if a man had only this knowledge he would be none the wiser; EX: we should not know what sort of medicines to apply to our body if some one were to say “all those which the medical art prescribes, and which agree with the practice of one who possesses the art”. Hence with regard to the dispositions of the soul, it should be determined what right reason is and what is the standard that fixes it.

Let us discuss intellectual virtues further. There are two parts of the soul – reason and the irrational part [DY: He states that there are three parts of the soul in De Anima: Reason, Appetitive, and Nutritive; there are two irrational parts and one rational part; earlier in this work he has implied that there are only two parts as well, which is puzzling ]; further, there are two parts which possess reason – one by which we contemplate the kind of things whose principles cannot be otherwise (theoretical reason/scientific part), and one by which we contemplate variable things (practical reason/calculative part); to deliberate and to calculate are the same thing, but no one deliberates about what cannot be otherwise. We must, then, learn what is the best disposition/virtue of each of these two parts.

VI.2 In Good Choices, Reasoning is True and the Desire is Right; the Good/Bad of Contemplative Intellect are True/False; that of Practical Intellect is Truth in Agreement with Right Desire; Intellect Moves Nothing Unless It Aims at an End and is Practical; No One Deliberates about the Past (1139a-b).

The virtue of a thing is relative to its proper function. There are three things in the soul that control action and truth – sensation, thought, desire.

Sensation originates no action: beasts have sensation but no share in action.

What affirmation and negation are in thinking, pursuit and avoidance are in desire; since moral virtue is a disposition concerned with choice, and choice is deliberate desire, both the reasoning must be true and the desire right, if the choice is to be good, and desire must pursue just what reasoning asserts. This kind of intellect and truth is practical; of the contemplative intellect (that is not practical nor productive), the good and the bad disposition are truth and falsity (this is the function of everything intellectual); while of the practical intellect the good disposition is truth in agreement with right desire.

The origin of action – its efficient, not its final cause – is choice, and that of choice is desire and reasoning with a view to an end. So choice cannot exist either without thought and intellect or without a moral disposition; good action and its opposite cannot exist without a combination of intellect and character. Intellect itself, however, moves nothing, but only the intellect that aims at an end and is practical; this rules the productive intellect as well, since everyone who makes for an end, and that which is made is not an end in the unqualified sense (but only relative to something, i.e. of something) – only that which is done is that; good action is an end, and desire aims at this. Hence choice is either desiderative thought or intellectual desire, and such an origin of action is a man. (Nothing that is past is an object of choice, e.g. no one chooses to have sacked Troy; no one deliberates about the past, but about what is future and contingent, while what is past is not capable of not having taken place; hence Agathon is right in saying, “For this alone is lacking even to God, to make undone things that have once been done.”)
VI.3 Five Dispositions That Soul May Use to Possess Truth: Art, Knowledge, Practical Wisdom, Philosophic Wisdom, and Comprehension; Knowledge is of Necessary and Eternal Things, and is a Disposition of Capacity to Demonstrate (1139b-1140a).

Let us discuss these dispositions once more. There are five dispositions by virtue of which the soul possesses truth by way of affirmation or denial: (1) art [technē], (2) knowledge [epistēme], (3) practical wisdom [phronēsis], (4) philosophic wisdom [sophia], (5) comprehension [noûs] (belief and opinion may be mistaken).

What is knowledge? We all suppose that what we know is not capable of being otherwise; of things capable of being otherwise we do not know, when they have passed outside our observation, whether they exist or not. So the object of knowledge is of necessity and therefore eternal; things that are of necessity in the unqualified sense are all eternal; and things that are eternal are ungenerated and imperishable. [DY: Note the inconsistency with Aristotle’s criticism in NE I.6 that it makes no difference that the Forms are eternal.] Every science is thought to be capable of being taught, and its object of being learned. All teaching starts from what is already known (as we maintain in the Analytics) [DY OB]: This is confirmation that we must have knowledge in order to have knowledge, but Aristotle states in the Analytics that there is no innate knowledge and that one must go through the whole process he describes in order to have demonstrative knowledge.]; it proceeds sometimes through induction and sometimes by deduction. [DY OB]: This doesn’t make sense either, since he says it is by induction, not deduction, that we get to know the starting points, and that we gain demonstrative knowledge via a deductive syllogism. So aren’t both kinds of reasoning involved in the process of gaining demonstrative knowledge? Induction is of first principles and of the universal and deduction proceeds from universals. There are therefore principles from which deduction proceeds, which are not reached by deduction; it is therefore by induction that they are acquired. Knowledge is a disposition of capacity to demonstrate, and has the other limiting characteristics (specified in the Analytics); it is when a man believes in a certain way and the principles are known to him that he has knowledge, since if they are not better known to him than the conclusion, he will have his knowledge only incidentally.

Such is our account of knowledge.

VI.4 Art Is a Disposition Involving Making and True Reasoning, Whose Origin is in the Maker and Not Necessary or Natural, of Things That Come into Being and Can be Otherwise (1140a).

Things made and things done can be otherwise; making and acting are different (for their nature we treat even the discussions outside our school as reliable); so that the reasoned disposition of capacity to act is different from the reasoned disposition of capacity to make. Nor are they included one in the other; for neither is acting making nor is making acting. Art is identical with a disposition of capacity to make, involving a true course of reasoning. All art is concerned with coming into being, i.e. with contriving and considering how something may come into being which is capable of either being or not being, and whose origin is in the maker and not in the thing made; art is concerned neither with things that are, or come into being, by necessity, nor with things that do so in accordance with nature (since these have their origin in themselves). Art must be a matter of making, not of acting. In a sense chance and art are concerned with the same objects; as Agathon says, “art loves chance and chance loves art”. So art (is concerned with what can be otherwise and) is a disposition concerned with making and a true course of reasoning; lack of art has a false course of reasoning.

VI.5 Practical Wisdom; the Practically Wise Person Deliberates Well and Truly about What is Good or Bad for Humans; Practical Wisdom is a Virtue, and Not Knowledge or an Art (1140a-b).

Regarding practical wisdom, let us examine the practically wise person: he is able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, e.g. about what sorts of thing conduce to health or to strength, but about what sorts of thing conduce to the good life in general. The practically wise
calculate well with a view to some good end that is one of those that are not the object of any art. Thus in general the man who is capable of deliberating has practical wisdom. No one deliberates about things that cannot be otherwise nor about things that it is impossible for him to do. Practical wisdom cannot be knowledge nor art; not knowledge because that which can be done is capable of being otherwise, not art because action and making are different kinds of thing. Practical wisdom is a true and reasoned disposition of capacity to act with regard to good and bad things for man. While making has an end other than itself, action cannot; good action itself is its end. EX: Pericles and men like him have practical wisdom, because they can see what is good for themselves and men in general; those can do this who are good at managing households or states. [Temperance preserves one's practical wisdom. What it preserves is a belief of the kind we have described. It is not any and every belief that pleasant and painful objects destroy and pervert, e.g. the belief that the triangle has or has not its angles equal to two right angles, but only beliefs about what is to be done. The principles of the things that are done consist in that for the sake of which they are to be done; but the man who has been ruined by pleasure or pain forthwith fails to see any such principle – to see that for the sake of this or because of this he ought to choose and do whatever he chooses and does; vice is destructive of the principle.]

While there is such a thing as virtue in art, there is no such thing as virtue in practical wisdom; and in art he who errs willingly is preferable, but in practical wisdom, as in the virtues he is the reverse. So practical wisdom is a virtue (not an art) of the calculative reason, which forms opinions (what can be otherwise). It is not only a reasoned disposition because a disposition of that sort may be forgotten but practical wisdom cannot.

VI.6 Knowledge is Belief About Universal/Necessary Things; It is Comprehension/Noûs that Grasps the First Principles (1140b-1141a).
Knowledge is belief about things that are universal and necessary, and there are principles of everything that is demonstrated and of all knowledge (knowledge involves reasoning). The first principle of what is known cannot be an object of knowledge, of art, or of practical wisdom (that which can be known can be demonstrated, and art and practical wisdom deal with things that can be otherwise). Nor are these first principles the objects of wisdom (it is a mark of the wise man to have demonstration about some things). If the dispositions by which we have truth and are never deceived about things that cannot – or can – be otherwise are knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophic wisdom, and comprehension and it is not practical wisdom, scientific knowledge, or philosophic wisdom, it is comprehension [noûs] that grasps the first principles.

VI.7 Wisdom is Comprehension Combined with Knowledge of the Highest Objects; the Political Art and Practical Wisdom are Not the Best Knowledge, Since Man is Not the Best Thing in the World; Practical Wisdom is Concerned with Universals and Particulars (1141a-b).
Wisdom in the arts we ascribe to their most finished exponents (e.g. to Phidias as a sculptor and to Polyclitus as a maker of statues), and here wisdom is virtue in art; but some people are wise in general, not in some particular field or in any other limited respect. So wisdom must be the most finished of the forms of knowledge. So the wise man must know what follows from and possess truth about the first principles. So wisdom [sophia] must be comprehension [noûs] combined with knowledge [epistème] of the highest objects (knowledge which has received its proper completion).

It would be strange to think that the art of politics, or practical wisdom, is the best knowledge, since man is not the best thing in the world. If what is healthy or good is different for men and for fishes, but what is white or straight is always the same, what is wise is the same but what is practically wise is different; it is to that which observes well the various matters concerning itself that one ascribes practical wisdom, and it is to this that one will entrust such matters. Some even of the lower animals have practical wisdom, viz. those which are found to have a power of foresight with regard to their own life. [DY: Note that here Aristotle is claiming that nonhuman animals share in reason in some sense; cf. De Anima, where he implies that nonhuman animals do not have any reason.]
Wisdom and the art of politics cannot be the same; if the disposition of mind concerned with a man's own interests is to be called wisdom, there will be many wisdoms; there will not be one concerned with the good
of all animals (any more than there is one art of medicine for all existing things), but a different wisdom about the good of each species.

But if man is the best of the animals, this makes no difference; there are other things much more divine in their nature even than man: most conspicuously, heavenly bodies. So wisdom is knowledge, combined with comprehension, of the things that are highest by nature. Thus Anaxagoras, Thales, and men like them have wisdom but not practical wisdom: they are ignorant of what is to their own advantage, and they know things that are remarkable, admirable, difficult, and divine, but useless (because they are not seeking human goods). [DY: Thales bought olive presses out of season and made a lot of money, but didn’t care about that, as Aristotle relates; he also solved a military problem involving diverting a river; why does Thales not have practical wisdom?]

[Repeat: Practical wisdom is concerned with things human and things about which it is possible to deliberate; we say this is above all the work of the man of practical wisdom, to deliberate well, but no one deliberates about things that cannot be otherwise, nor about things which have not an end, and that a good that can be brought about by action. The man who is without qualification good at deliberating is the man who is capable of aiming in accordance with calculation at the best for man of things attainable by action.] Practical wisdom is not concerned with universals only—it must also recognize the particulars; it is practical, and practice is concerned with particulars. This is why some who do not know, and especially those who have experience, are more practical than others who know; EX: if a man knew that light meats are digestible and wholesome, but did not know which sorts of meat are light, he would not produce health, but the man who knows that chicken is wholesome is more likely to produce health.

VI.8 Political Wisdom v. Practical Wisdom; Three Kinds of Practical Wisdom: Household Management, Legislation, and Politics (Deliberative and Judicial); Young People can be Mathematically Wise, but not Practically Wise; Deliberative Errors may be about the Universal or the Particular; Practical Wisdom is Neither Knowledge nor Comprehension (1141b-1142a).

Political wisdom and practical wisdom are the same disposition of mind, but not identical. With political wisdom, the practical wisdom which plays a controlling part is legislative wisdom, while that which is related to this as particulars to their universal is known by the general name “political wisdom”; this has to do with action and deliberation, for a decree is a thing to be carried out in the form of an individual act. This is why the exponents of this art are alone said to take part in politics; these alone do things as manual laborers do things.

Practical wisdom also is identified especially with that form of it which is concerned with a man himself—with the individual; and this is known by the general name “practical wisdom”; there are three kinds of practical wisdom: (1) household management, (2) legislation, (3) politics, one part of which is deliberative and the other judicial. Knowing what is good for oneself (practical wisdom) is one kind of knowledge; while politicians are thought to be busybodies. Those who think thus seek their own good, and consider that one ought to do so. Yet perhaps one’s own good cannot exist without household management, nor without a form of government. Further, how one should order one’s own affairs is not clear and needs inquiry.

While young men become geometricians and mathematicians and wise in matters like these, a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found. Such wisdom is concerned not only with universals but with particulars, which become familiar from experience, but a young man has no experience, for it is length of time that gives experience. Why may a boy become a mathematician, but not a wise man or a natural scientist? The objects of mathematics exist by abstraction and are clear to them, while the first principles of these other subjects come from experience, and young men have no conviction about these.

Error in deliberation may be either about the universal or about the particular; EX: we may fail to know either that all water that weighs heavy is bad, or that this particular water weighs heavy.

Practical wisdom is not knowledge since it is concerned with the ultimate particular fact, since the thing to be done is of this nature. It is opposed to comprehension, since comprehension is of the definitions (for which no reason can be given), while practical wisdom is concerned with the ultimate particular, which is the object not of knowledge but of perception—not the perception of qualities peculiar to one sense but a perception akin
VI.9 Deliberation is a Certain Kind of Inquiry, Not Knowledge, Skill in Conjecture, Readiness of Mind, Opinion; Good Deliberation is Correctness Concerning What Conduces to the End of Which Practical Wisdom is the True Apprehension (1142a-b).

There is a difference between inquiry and deliberation; for deliberation is a particular kind of inquiry. Is the nature of virtue in deliberation (1) a form of knowledge, (2) opinion, (3) skill in conjecture, or (4) some other kind of thing? It is not knowledge; men do not inquire about the things they know about, but good deliberation is a kind of deliberation, and he who deliberates inquires and calculates. Nor is it skill in conjecture, which involves no reasoning and is something that is quick in its operation, but men deliberate a long time, and one should carry out quickly the conclusions of one’s deliberation, but should deliberate slowly. Readiness of mind (a sort of skill in conjecture) is different from virtue in deliberation. Virtue in deliberation is not opinion of any sort. But since the man who deliberates badly makes a mistake, while he who deliberates well does so correctly, virtue in deliberation is clearly a kind of correctness, but neither of knowledge nor of opinion; there is no such thing as correctness of knowledge (since there is no such thing as error of knowledge), and correctness of opinion is truth; and at the same time everything that is an object of opinion is already determined. But virtue in deliberation involves reasoning, so it is correctness of thinking; this is not yet assertion, since, while opinion is not inquiry but already assertion, the man who is deliberating, whether he does so well or ill, is searching for something and calculating.

Virtue in deliberation is a certain correctness of deliberation; hence we must first inquire what deliberation is and what it is about. Since there is more than one kind of correctness, plainly virtue in deliberation is not any and every kind; the incontinent man and the bad man will reach as a result of his calculation what he sets himself to do, so that he will have deliberated correctly, but he will have got for himself a great evil. To have deliberated well is a good thing; it is this kind of correctness of deliberation that is virtue in deliberation – that which tends to attain what is good. But it is possible to attain even good by a false deduction and to attain what one ought to do but not by the right means, the middle term being false; so that this too is not yet virtue in deliberation – this disposition in virtue of which one attains what one ought but not by the right means. It is possible to attain it by long deliberation while another man attains it quickly. So in the former case we have not yet got virtue in deliberation, which is rightness with regard to the expedient – rightness in respect both of the conclusion, the manner, and the time. Further it is possible to have deliberated well either in the unqualified sense or with reference to a particular end. Virtue in deliberation in the unqualified sense, then, is that which succeeds with reference to what is the end in the unqualified sense, and virtue in deliberation in a particular sense is that which succeeds relatively to a particular end. If, then, it is characteristic of men of practical wisdom to have deliberated well, virtue in deliberation will be correctness concerning what conduces to the end of which practical wisdom is the true apprehension.

VI.10 Understanding [súnesis] is Not Knowledge, Opinion, One of the Sciences, or Practical Wisdom; Understanding is the Exercise of Opinion to Judge Soundly in a Matter of Practical Wisdom; Learning is Understanding (1142b-1143a).

Understanding [súnesis] and goodness of understanding are neither entirely the same as knowledge [epistéme] or opinion [dóxa] (at that rate all men would have been men of understanding), nor are they one of the particular sciences, such as medicine (the science of health), or geometry (the science of spatial magnitudes). Understanding is neither about things that are always and are unchangeable, nor about any and every one of the things that come into being, but about things that may become subjects of questioning and deliberation. Hence understanding concerns the same objects as practical wisdom; but they are not the same: Practical wisdom issues commands (since its end is what ought to be done or not to be done); but understanding only judges. (Understanding is identical with goodness of understanding, men of understanding with men of good understanding.) Understanding is neither the having nor the acquiring of practical wisdom; but as learning is
called understanding when it means the exercise of the faculty of knowledge, so “understanding” is the exercise of the faculty of opinion for the purpose of judging soundly of what someone else says about matters with which practical wisdom is concerned. So we use “understanding” for men of good understanding, viz. from the application of the word to learning; we often call learning understanding.

VI.11 Judgment is the Right Discrimination of the Equitable and Implies Forgiveness; Judgment, Understanding, Practical Wisdom, and Comprehension Occur Together in Humans, Deal With Ultimates/Particulars, and are Natural; Wisdom does Not Come Naturally; It is by Comprehension that We Know the Starting-Points; We Should Listen to the Undemonstrated Opinions of Experienced, Older, Practically Wise People as Much as Demonstrations (1143a-b).

Judgment is the right discrimination of the equitable, when men are forgiving and to have judgment. The equitable man is above all others a man of forgiveness and identifies equity with forgiveness about certain facts. Forgiveness is judgment that discriminates what is equitable and does so correctly.

All the dispositions considered (judgment, understanding, practical wisdom, and comprehension) converge on the same point, because we credit the same people with possessing judgment, comprehension practical wisdom, and understanding. All these capacities deal with ultimates (particulars); and being a man of understanding and good judgment or forgiveness consists in being able to judge about the things with which practical wisdom is concerned; the equities are common to all good men in relation to other men. All things that have to be done are included among particulars or ultimates; not only must the man of practical wisdom know particular facts, but understanding and judgment are also concerned with things to be done, and these are ultimates. Comprehension is concerned with the ultimates in both directions; both the primary definitions and the ultimates are objects of comprehension and not of argument, and in demonstrations comprehension grasps the unchangeable and primary definitions, while in practical reasonings it grasps the last and contingent fact, i.e. the second proposition. These are the starting-points of that for the sake of which, since the universals are reached from the particulars; so we must have perception of these, and this is comprehension.

These dispositions (judgment, understanding, and comprehension) are natural endowments, while no one is thought to be wise by nature. Our powers correspond to our time of life, and that a particular age brings with it comprehension and judgment; this implies that nature is the cause. [Hence comprehension is both beginning and end; demonstrations are from these and about these.] So we ought to attend to the undemonstrated sayings and opinions of experienced and older people or of people of practical wisdom not less than to demonstrations; because experience has given them an eye they see aright.

VI.12 Problems Raised for Wisdom, Practical Wisdom; But These are Choice Worthy in Themselves, and Wisdom Produces Happiness; Cleverness is the Capacity to Choose the Actions to Carry Out our (Good or Bad) Choice; It is Impossible to be Practically Wise Without Being Good (1143b-1144b).

One might question the utility of these qualities of mind. Wisdom will contemplate none of the things that will make a man happy (it is not concerned with any coming into being), and though practical wisdom has this merit, for what purpose do we need it? Practical wisdom is the quality of mind concerned with things just and noble and good for man, but these are the things which it is the mark of a good man to do, and we are none the more able to act for knowing them if the virtues are dispositions, just as we are none the better able to act for knowing the things that are healthy and sound, in the sense not of producing but of issuing from the state of health; we are none the more able to act for having the art of medicine or of gymnastics [DY OB: Wouldn’t having the art mean that one is in fact able to do these very things, and do them well? What does it mean to possess an art, then?]. If we are to say that it is useful for the sake of becoming good, practical wisdom will be of no use to those who are good; but it is of no use to those who are not good; it will make no difference whether they have practical wisdom themselves or obey others who have it, and it would be enough for us to do what we do in the case of health; though we wish to become healthy, we do not learn the art of medicine. If practical
wisdom, being inferior to wisdom, has authority over wisdom (implied by the fact that the art that produces anything rules and issues commands about that thing), then that is strange too.

These are the questions we must discuss; so far we have only stated the difficulties.

First, these dispositions must be choice worthy in themselves because they are the virtues of the two parts of the soul respectively, even if neither of them produces anything.

Second, they do produce something, not as the art of medicine produces health, but as health produces health; so wisdom produces happiness: being a part of complete virtue, by being possessed and by actualizing itself, it makes a man happy.

The human's function is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral virtue; virtue makes the aim right, and practical wisdom the things leading to it. (Of the fourth part of the soul – the nutritive – there is no such virtue; there is nothing that it is in its power to do or not to do [DY: This is puzzling, since Aristotle said there are two parts of the soul above – rational and irrational, and he didn’t mention the third part that would make the nutritive part the fourth part].)

Re: our being none the more able to do because of our practical wisdom what is noble and just: as some people who do just acts are not necessarily just [EXs: those who obey the law either unwillingly, owing to ignorance, or for some other reason and not for the sake of the acts themselves (though, to be sure, they do what they should and all the things that the good man ought)], so in order to be good one must be in a certain disposition when one does the several acts, i.e., one must do them as a result of choice and for the sake of the acts themselves. Virtue makes the choice right, but the question of the things that should naturally be done to carry out our choice belongs not to virtue but to another capacity. Cleverness is a capacity that enables us to do the things that tend towards our set mark, and to hit it. If the mark is noble, the cleverness is laudable; if bad, the cleverness is mere villainy; so both the practically wise and villains are clever. Practical wisdom is not the capacity, but it does not exist without this capacity. And this eye of the soul acquires its formed disposition not without the aid of virtue as has been said and is plain; inferences which deal with acts to be done are things which involve a starting-point (“since the end – what is best – is of such and such a nature”), whatever it may be; and this is evident only to the good man; wickedness perverts us and causes us to be deceived about the starting-points of action. So it is impossible to be practically wise without being good.

VI.13 Natural Virtue v. Virtue in the Strict Sense (Involving Practical Wisdom); Socrates: Virtues are Forms of Reason; Aristotle: Virtues Involve Reason; Possessing Practical Wisdom Gives One All the Virtues; Practical Wisdom is Not Supreme Over Wisdom (1144b-1145a).

Consider virtue again: As practical wisdom is to cleverness – not the same, but like it – so is natural virtue to virtue in the strict sense. All men think that each type of character belongs to its possessors in some sense by nature; from the very moment of birth we are just, temperate, brave, or have the other moral qualities; but yet we seek something else as that which is good in the strict sense – we seek for the presence of such qualities in another way. Both children and brutes have the natural dispositions to these qualities, but without thought these are evidently hurtful. But while just, temperate, etc. dispositions may lead one astray, as a strong body that moves without sight may stumble badly because of its lack of sight; but if a man once acquires thought that makes a difference in action, his disposition, while still like what it was, will then be virtue in the strict sense. So, as in reason there are two types (cleverness and practical wisdom), so in the moral part there are two types, natural virtue and virtue in the strict sense, and of these the latter involves practical wisdom. This is why some say that all the virtues are forms of practical wisdom, and why Socrates in one respect was on the right track while in another he went astray; in thinking that all the virtues were forms of practical wisdom he was wrong, but in saying they implied practical wisdom he was right. Even now all men, when they define virtue, after naming the disposition and its objects add “that (disposition) which is in accordance with the right reason”; the right reason is that which is in accordance with practical wisdom. So all men divine that this kind of disposition is virtue (that which is in accordance with practical wisdom). But we must go a little further. It is the disposition in accordance with right reason that implies the presence of right reason, that is virtue. Socrates thought the virtues were forms of reason (he thought they were, all of them, forms of knowledge), while we think they involve reason.
It is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral virtue. We refute the dialectical argument that holds that the virtues exist in separation from each other: that is, the same man is not best equipped by nature for all the virtues, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another. This is possible in respect of the natural virtues, but not in respect of those in respect of which a man is called without qualification good; possessing one quality, practical wisdom, gives one all the virtues. Even if practical wisdom were of no practical value, we would need it because it is the virtue of the part of us in question; also the choice will not be right without practical wisdom any more than without virtue; the one determines the end and the other makes us do the things that lead to the end.

But practical wisdom is not supreme over wisdom (over the superior part of us), any more than the art of medicine is over health; it does not use it but provides for its coming into being; it issues orders, then, for its sake, but not to it. Further, to maintain its supremacy would be like saying that the art of politics rules the gods because it issues orders about all the affairs of the state.

BOOK VII:

VII.1 Vice, Incontinence [Akrasia], and Brutishness, and Their Contraries; We will Focus on (In)Continence and (Lack of) Endurance and Try to Prove the Reputable Opinions Thereof; Godlike and Brutish Men are Rare; the Incontinent [Akratic] Man does What He Knows is Bad, from Passion; the Continent Man does Not Follow His Appetites, Knowing They are Bad Due to Reason (1145a-b).

Three moral dispositions are to be avoided: vice, incontinence, and brutishness. The contrary of vice is virtue, of incontinence continence; to brutishness it would be most fitting to oppose superhuman virtue, something heroic and divine. If, as they say, men become gods by excess of virtue, of this kind must evidently be the disposition opposed to the brutish disposition; as a brute has no vice or virtue, so neither has a god; his disposition is higher than virtue, and that of a brute is a different kind of disposition from vice.

It is rarely that a godlike or a brutish is found among men; brutishness is found chiefly among foreigners, but is also produced by disease or deformity; and those who surpass ordinary men in vice are brutish.

We must now discuss incontinence and softness (or effeminacy), and continence and endurance; we must treat each of the two neither as identical with virtue or wickedness, nor as a different genus. [We must, as in all other cases, set the phenomena before us and, after first discussing the difficulties, go on to prove, if possible, the truth of all the reputable opinions about these affections or, failing this, of the greater number and the most authoritative; if we both resolve the difficulties and leave the reputable opinions undisturbed, we shall have proved the case sufficiently.]

Both continence and endurance are good and praiseworthy, and incontinence and softness are bad and blameworthy; and the same man is thought to be continent and ready to abide by the result of his calculations, or incontinent and ready to abandon them. The incontinent man, knowing that what he does is bad, does it as a result of passion, while the continent man, knowing that his appetites are bad, does not follow them because of his reason. [Others’ opinions: The temperate man all men call continent and disposed to endurance, while the continent man some maintain to be always temperate but others do not; and some call the self-indulgent man incontinent and the incontinent man self-indulgent indiscriminately, while others distinguish them. The man of practical wisdom, they sometimes say, cannot be incontinent, while sometimes they say that some who are practically wise and clever are incontinent. Men are said to be incontinent with respect to anger, honor, and gain. – These, then, are the things that are said.]
VII.2 Does the Incontinent Man have Right Belief or Knowledge about Right Action? 
Socrates’ View of Incontinence [Akrasia]; Many Further Questions/Problems Involving Incontinence (1145b-1146b).

What kind of right belief does the incontinent man possess? That he should behave so when he has knowledge, some say is impossible; it would be strange – so Socrates thought – if when knowledge was in a man something else could master it and drag it about like a slave. Socrates was entirely opposed to the view in question, holding that there is no such thing as incontinence; no one, he said, acts against what he believes best – people act so only by reason of ignorance. This view contradicts the plain phenomena, and we must inquire about what happens to such a man; if he acts by reason of ignorance, what is the manner of his ignorance? The man who behaves inconstantly does not, before he gets into this disposition, think he ought to act so. But some concede certain of Socrates’ contentions but not others; they admit that nothing is stronger than knowledge, but not that no one acts contrary to what has seemed to him the better course, and therefore they say that the incontinent man has not knowledge when he is mastered by his pleasures, but opinion. But if it is opinion and not knowledge, if it is not a strong belief that resists but a weak one, as in men who hesitate, we forgive their failure to stand by such convictions against strong appetites; but we do not forgive wickedness, nor any of the other blame worthy dispositions. So is it practical wisdom (the strongest of all dispositions) whose resistance is mastered? It is absurd that the same man will be at once practically wise and incontinent, but no one would say that it is the part of a practically wise man to do willingly the basest acts. Besides, we showed that the man of practical wisdom is one who will act (he is a man concerned with the individual facts) and who has the other virtues.

If incontinence involves having strong and bad appetites, the temperate man will not be continent nor the continent man temperate; a temperate man will have neither excessive nor bad appetites. But the continent man must; if the appetites are good, the disposition that restrains us from following them is bad, so that not all continence will be good; while if they are weak and not bad, there is nothing admirable in resisting them, and if they are weak and bad, there is nothing great in resisting these either.

If incontinence makes a man ready to stand by any and every opinion, it is bad (e.g., if it makes him stand even by a false opinion); and if incontinence makes a man apt to abandon any and every opinion, there will be a good incontinence, (e.g., a certain Sophocles character is to be praised for not standing by what Odysseus persuaded him to do, because he is pained at telling a lie).

The sophistic argument that folly coupled with incontinence is virtue presents a difficulty: A man does the opposite of what he believes owing to incontinence, but believes what is good to be evil and something that he should not do, and in consequence he will do what is good and not what is evil. He who on conviction does, pursues, and chooses what is pleasant would be thought to be better than one who does so as a result not of calculation but of incontinence; he is easier to cure since he may be persuaded to change his mind. But to the incontinent man may be applied the proverb “when water chokes, what is one to wash it down with?” If he had been persuaded of the rightness of what he does, he would have desisted when he was persuaded to change his mind; but now he acts in spite of his being persuaded of something quite different.

If incontinence and continence are concerned with any and every kind of object, who is it that is incontinent in the unqualified sense? No one has all the forms of incontinence, but we say some people are incontinent without qualification.

VII.3 How Incontinent People Act Knowingly (or With True Opinion); Different Senses of “Know” and “Having Knowledge”; the Practical Syllogisms of the Incontinent Person; How Socrates Might be Correct about Incontinence (1146b-1147b).

Such are the difficulties that arise; some of these points must be refuted and the others left in possession of the field; the solution of the difficulty is the discovery of the truth. First, do incontinent people act knowingly or not, and in what sense knowingly? With what sorts of object are the incontinent and the continent man concerned (i.e. whether with any and every pleasure and pain or with certain determinate kinds), and are the continent man and the man of endurance the same?
The starting-point of our investigation is the question: Are the continent man and the incontinent differentiated by their objects or by their attitude (is the continent man is incontinent simply by being concerned with such and such objects, or, instead, by his attitude, or, instead of that, by both these things)? Next: Are incontinence and continence concerned with any and every object or not? The man who is incontinent in the unqualified sense is not concerned with any and every object, but only those of the self-indulgent [=intemperate] man and related to them in a certain way. The self-indulgent man is led on in accordance with his own choice, thinking that he ought always to pursue the present pleasure; while the unqualifiedly incontinent man does not think so, but yet pursues it.

It makes no difference to the argument whether it is true opinion and not knowledge against which we act incontinently; some people when in a state of opinion do not hesitate, but think they know exactly. If it is owing to their weak conviction those who have opinion are more likely to act against their belief than those who know, there will be no difference between knowledge and opinion; some men are no less convinced of what they think than others of what they know. But since we use the word “know” in two senses (both the man who has knowledge but is not using it and he who is using it are said to know), it will make a difference whether, when a man does what he should not, he has the knowledge but not is exercising it [does not seem strange], or is exercising it [seems strange].

Further, since there are two kinds of propositions, there is nothing to prevent a man’s having both and acting against his knowledge, provided that he is using only the universal and not the particular; it is particular acts that have to be done. There are also two kinds of universal; one is predicable of the agent (e.g. “dry food is good for every man”, and “I am a man”), the other of the object (“such and such food is dry”); but whether this food is such and such, of this the incontinent man either has not or is not exercising the knowledge. So there is an enormous difference between these manners of knowing (and knowing in one way does not seem strange, while knowing in the other way would be extraordinary).

There is possession of knowledge in another sense: within the case of having knowledge but not using it, there is the possibility of having knowledge in a sense and yet not having it; EXs: a man asleep, mad, or drunk. This is just the condition of men under the influence of passions; outbursts of anger, sexual appetites, and some other such passions actually alter our bodily condition, and in some men even produce fits of madness. Incontinent people must be in a similar condition to these. The fact that men use the language that flows from knowledge proves nothing; even men under the influence of these passions utter scientific proofs and verses of Empedocles, and those who have just begun to learn can string together words, but do not yet know; it has to become part of themselves, and that takes time; so we must suppose that the use of language by men in an incontinent state means no more than its utterance by actors on the stage.

The one opinion is universal, the other is concerned with the particular facts, and here we come to something within the sphere of perception; when a single opinion results from the two, the soul must in one type of case affirm the conclusion, while in the case of opinions concerned with production it must immediately act (e.g. if everything sweet ought to be tasted, and this is one of the particular sweet things, the man who can act and is not restrained must at the same time actually act accordingly). When the universal opinion is present in us restraining us from tasting, and there is also the opinion that everything sweet is pleasant, and that this is sweet (now this is the opinion that is active), and when appetite happens to be present in us, the one opinion bids us avoid the object, but appetite leads us towards it (it can move each of our bodily parts); so it turns out that a man behaves incontinently under the influence (in a sense) of reason and opinion, and of opinion not contrary in itself, but only incidentally – the appetite is contrary not the opinion – to right reason. It also follows that lower animals are not incontinent, because they have no universal beliefs but only imagination and memory of particulars.

The ignorance is dissolved and the incontinent man regains his knowledge in the same way the man drunk or asleep does; students of natural science can help us here. The last proposition both being an opinion about a perceptible object, and being what determines our actions, this a man either has not when he is in the disposition of passion, or has it in the sense in which having knowledge did not mean knowing but only talking, as a drunken man may utter the verses of Empedocles. Because the last term is not universal nor equally an object of knowledge with the universal term, the position that Socrates sought to establish actually seems to result; it is not what is thought to be knowledge proper that the passion overcomes (nor is it this that is dragged about as a result of the passion), but perceptual knowledge.
This must suffice as our answer to the question of whether men can act incontinently when they know or not, and in what sense they know.

VII.4 Of Necessary, Bodily Pleasures (Food and Sex), One May be Incontinent Without Qualification; of Unnecessary, Choice Worthy Pleasures (Victory, Honor, Wealth), One May be Incontinent in Respect of Gain, Honor or Money (1147b-1148b).

Is there anyone who is incontinent without qualification, are all incontinent men so in a particular sense, and if so, with what sort of objects? That both continent persons and persons of endurance, and incontinent and soft persons, are concerned with pleasures and pains, is evident.

Of the things that produce pleasure some are necessary, while others are worthy of choice in themselves but admit of excess, the bodily causes of pleasure being necessary (both those concerned with food and sex, i.e. the bodily matters with which we defined self-indulgence and temperance as being concerned), while the others are not necessary but choice worthy in themselves (e.g. victory, honor, wealth, and good and pleasant things of this sort). Those who go to excess in unnecessary but choice worthy in themselves pleasures, contrary to the right reason which is in themselves, are incontinent with the qualification “in respect of money, gain, honor, or anger”, – not simply incontinent – on the ground that they are different from incontinent people and are called incontinent by reason of a resemblance.

People who are incontinent with respect to bodily enjoyments and pursue the excesses of things pleasant – and shuns those of things painful, of hunger and thirst and heat and cold and all the objects of touch and taste – not by choice but contrary to his choice and his judgment, are incontinent, not with the qualification “in respect of this or that”, e.g. of anger, but without qualification. Men are called soft with regard to these pleasures, but not with regard to any of the others. [Thus we group together the incontinent and the self-indulgent, the continent and the temperate man – but not any of these other types – because they are concerned somehow with the same pleasures and pains; but although these are concerned with the same objects, they are not similarly related to them, but some of them choose them while the others do not choose them.]

We should describe as self-indulgent the man who without appetite or with but a slight appetite pursues the excesses and avoids moderate pains, rather than the man who does so because of his strong appetites; what would the former do, if he had in addition a vigorous appetite, and a violent pain at the lack of the necessary objects?

Some appetites and pleasures belong to the class of things generically noble and good – some pleasant things are by nature choice worthy – while others are contrary to these, and others are intermediate (e.g. wealth, gain, victory, honor). With reference to all objects, men are blamed for being affected by them, for desiring and loving them in excess. [This is why all those who contrary to reason either are mastered by or pursue one of the objects that are naturally noble and good; EXs: those who busy themselves more than they ought about honor or about children and parents – these too are goods, and those who busy themselves about them are praised; but there is an excess even in these.] There is no wickedness with regard to these objects, because each of them is choice worthy for its own sake by nature; but excesses in respect of them are bad and to be avoided. Similarly there is no incontinence with regard to them; incontinence is not only to be avoided but is also blameworthy; but due to a similarity in the passion, people call it incontinence, adding in each case what it is in respect of, as we may describe a bad doctor or a bad actor. Thus we do not apply the term without qualification because each of these conditions is not badness but only analogous to it, so it is clear that in the other case also that alone must be taken to be incontinence and continence that is concerned with the same objects as temperance and self-indulgence, but we apply the term to anger by virtue of a resemblance; and this is why we say with a qualification ‘incontinent in respect of anger’ as we say ‘incontinent in respect of honor, or of gain’.

VII.5 Brutish Dispositions from Deformities/Disease, Habits, or Bad Natures; Every Excessive Disposition is Either Brutish or Morbid (1148b-1149a).

Some things are naturally pleasant, some are so without qualification, and others are so with reference to particular classes either of animals or of men; others are unpleasant by nature, but some of them become so
from [A] deformities, [B] habits, or [C] bad natures. EXs of [A] brutish dispositions from deformities/disease/madness: the man who sacrificed and ate his mother, or the slave who ate the liver of his fellow. EXs of [B] morbid dispositions resulting from habit: the habit of plucking out the hair, gnawing one’s nails, even coals, or earth, and pederasty; these arise in some by nature and in others, as in those who have been the victims of lust from childhood, from habit. EXs of [C] brutish dispositions from bad natures: the female who, they say, rips open pregnant women and devours the infants; the tribes about the Black Sea that have gone savage are said to delight in raw meat or in human flesh, or in lending their children to one another to feast upon; or of the story of Phalaris [DY: Click here for his story].

We should not think that a person who has a brutish disposition due to nature or a morbid disposition from habit incontinent. To have these various types of habit is beyond the limits of vice, as brutishness is too; a man who has them to master or be mastered by them is not simple incontinence but that which is so by analogy, as the man is analogously incontinent in respect of anger, but not incontinent per se.

Every excessive disposition (folly, cowardice, self-indulgence, or bad temper), is either brutish or morbid; EXs: the man who by nature fears everything, even the squeak of a mouse, is cowardly with a brutish cowardice, while the man who fears a weasel does so from disease; some foolish people who by nature are thoughtless and live by their senses alone are brutish (like some races of the distant foreigners), while those foolish from disease (e.g. of epilepsy) or of madness are morbid. It is possible to have some of these excessive dispositions only at times, and not to be mastered by them; EX: Phalaris may have restrained a desire to eat the flesh of a child or an appetite for unnatural sexual pleasure. It is also possible to be mastered, not merely to have the feelings. Thus, as human wickedness is called wickedness simply, while other wickedness comes with the qualification “brutish” or “morbid”; analogously, some incontinence is brutish and some morbid, while only that which corresponds to human self-indulgence is incontinence simply.

Thus, incontinence and continence are concerned with the same objects as self-indulgence and temperance, and we call other things “incontinence” by a metaphor.

VII.6 Incontinence from Anger is Less Disgraceful than That from Appetites; Anger Obeyss Reason in a Sense but Appetite does Not; Anger is More Natural Than Appetites for Excess; Brutishness is Less Evil than Vice, but More Alarming; a Bad Man will do 10,000 Times More Evil than a Brute (1149a-1150a).

Incontinence in respect of anger is less disgraceful than incontinence in appetites. Anger seems to listen to reason to some extent, but to mishear it, as do hasty servants who run out before they have heard the whole of what one says, and then muddle the order, or as dogs bark if there is but a knock at the door, before looking to see if it is a friend; so anger by reason of the warmth and hastiness of its nature, though it hears, does not hear an order, and springs to take revenge. Reason or imagination informs us that we have been insulted or slighted, and anger, reasoning as it were that anything like this must be fought against, boils up immediately; while appetite, if reason or perception merely says that an object is pleasant, springs to the enjoyment of it. So anger obeys reason in a sense, but appetite does not. It is therefore more disgraceful; the man who is incontinent in respect of anger is in a sense conquered by reason, while the other is conquered by appetite and not by reason.

We forgive people more easily for following natural desires and for following such appetites as are common to all men, and insofar as they are common; anger and bad temper are more natural than the appetites for excess, i.e. for unnecessary objects. EXs: the man who defended himself on the charge of striking his father by saying, “Yes, but he struck his father, and he struck his, etc.,” so (pointing to his child) “this boy will strike me when he is a man; it runs in the family”; or the man who when he was being dragged along by his son bade him stop at the doorway, since he himself had dragged his father only as far as that.

Those who are more given to plotting against others are more unjust. A passionate man is not given to plotting, nor is anger itself – it is open; but the nature of appetite is illustrated by what the poets call Aphrodite, “guile-weaving daughter of Cyprus”, and by Homer’s words about her “embroidered girdle”:

And the whisper of wooing is there,
Whose subtlety stealeth the wits of the wise, how prudent soe’er.
So if incontinence in appetites is more unjust and disgraceful than that in anger, it is both incontinence without qualification and in a sense vice.

No one commits wanton outrage with a feeling of pain, but everyone who acts in anger acts with pain, while the man who commits outrage acts with pleasure. So if those acts at which it is most just to be angry are more unjust, the incontinence that is due to appetite is the more unjust, since there is no wanton outrage involved in anger.

Thus the incontinence concerned with appetite is more disgraceful than that concerned with anger, and continence and incontinence are concerned with bodily appetites and pleasures; but we must grasp the differences among the latter themselves. As we said, some pleasures are human and natural both in kind and in magnitude, others are brutish, and others are due to deformities/diseases. Temperance and self-indulgence are only concerned with human, natural pleasures; this is why we call the lower animals neither temperate nor self-indulgent except by a metaphor; and only if some one kind of animals exceeds another as a whole in wantonness, destructiveness, and omnivorous greed; these have no power of choice or calculation, but they are departures from what is natural as, among men, madmen are. Brutishness is less evil than vice, though more alarming; it is not that the better part has been perverted, as in man, – they [lower animals] have no better part. Thus it is like comparing a lifeless thing with a living in respect of badness; the badness of that which has no source of movement is always less hurtful, and thought is a source. Thus it is like comparing injustice with an unjust man. Each is in some sense worse; a bad man will do ten thousand times as much evil as a brute.

VII.7 Self-Indulgence is Pursuing Excesses of Pleasures or Necessary Objects, by Choice, for Their Own Sake; the Self-Indulgent Man is Worse Than the Incontinent; Softness v. Endurance v. Effeminateness; Incontinence Due to Impetuosity v. Weakness (1150a-b).

With regard to the pleasures, pains, appetites, and aversions arising through touch and taste, to which both self-indulgence and temperance were formerly narrowed down, it is possible to be in such a disposition as to be defeated even by those of them which most people master, or to master even those by which most people are defeated; among these possibilities, those relating to pleasures are incontinence and continence, those relating to pains softness and endurance. The disposition of most people is intermediate, even if they lean more towards the worse dispositions.

Since some pleasures are necessary while others are not, and are necessary up to a point while the excesses of them are not, nor the deficiencies, and this is equally true of appetites and pains, the man who pursues the excesses of things pleasant, or pursues to excess necessary objects, and does so by choice, for their own sake and not at all for the sake of any result distinct from them, is self-indulgent; such a man is of necessity without regrets, and therefore incurable, since a man without regrets cannot be cured. The man who is deficient is the opposite; the man who is intermediate is temperate. Similarly, there is the man who avoids bodily pains not because he is defeated by them but by choice. [Of those who do not choose such acts, one kind of man is led to them as a result of the pleasure involved, another because he avoids the pain arising from the appetite, so that these types differ from one another. Anyone would think worse of a man if with no appetite or with weak appetite he were to do something disgraceful, than if he did it under the influence of powerful appetite, and worse of him if he struck a blow not in anger than if he did it in anger; what would he have done if he had been strongly affected? This is why the self-indulgent man is worse than the incontinent.] Of the dispositions named, then, incontinence is rather a kind of softness. The soft man is opposed to the man of endurance; endurance consists in resisting, while continence consists in conquering, and resisting and conquering are different, as not being beaten is different from winning; this is why continence is also more worthy of choice than endurance. The man who is defective in respect of resistance to the things that most men both resist and resist successfully is soft and effeminate; effeminacy too is a kind of softness; such a man trails his cloak to avoid the pain of lifting it, and plays the invalid without thinking himself wretched, though the man he imitates is a wretched man.

The case is similar with regard to continence and incontinence: If a man is defeated by violent and excessive pleasures or pains, there is nothing wonderful in that; indeed we are ready to forgive him if he has resisted, as people who try to restrain their laughter burst out in a guffaw, as happened to Xenophantus. But it is
surprising if a man is defeated by and cannot resist pleasures or pains which most men can hold out against, when this is not due to heredity or disease, like the softness that is hereditary with the kings of the Scythians, or that which distinguishes the female sex from the male.

The lover of amusement is also thought to be self-indulgent, but is really soft. Amusement is a relaxation, since it is a rest; and the lover of amusement is one of the people who go to excess in this.

One kind of incontinence is impetuosity, another is weakness. Some men after deliberating fail, owing to their passion, to stand by the conclusions of their deliberation, others because they have not deliberated are led by their passion; since some men, if they have first perceived and seen what is coming and have first roused their calculative faculty, are not defeated by their passion, whether it be pleasant or painful. It is keen and excitable people that suffer especially from the impetuous form of incontinence; the keen because of their quickness and the excitable because of the violence of their passions do not wait on reason, because they are apt to follow their imagination.

VII.8 The Self-Indulgent Man is Incurable and has No Regrets; the Incontinent Man is Curable and has Regrets; Incontinence v. Vice; Virtue Naturally or by Habit Teaches Right Opinion About First Principles; the Incontinent Man is Carried Away by Passion and Contrary to Right Reason to Pursue Bodily Pleasures Without Reserve (1150b-1151a).

The self-indulgent man, as was said, has no regrets; he stands by his choice; but any incontinent man is subject to regrets. The self-indulgent man is incurable and the incontinent man curable; wickedness is like a permanent disease such as dropsy or consumption, while incontinence is an intermittent badness like epilepsy. Generally incontinence and vice are different in kind; vice is unconscious of itself, incontinence is not (of incontinent men themselves, those who become beside themselves are better than those who possess reason but do not abide by it, since the latter are defeated by a weaker passion, and do not act without previous deliberation like the others); the incontinent man is like the people who get drunk quickly and on little wine, i.e. on less than most people.

So incontinence is not vice (though perhaps it is so in a qualified sense); incontinence is contrary to choice while vice is in accordance with choice; incontinent people are not unjust but they will do unjust acts.

Since the incontinent man is apt to pursue, not on conviction, bodily pleasures that are excessive and contrary to right reason, while the self-indulgent man is convinced because he is the sort of man to pursue them, it is on the contrary the former that is easily persuaded to change his mind, while the latter is not. Virtue and vice respectively preserve and destroy the first principle, and in actions that for the sake of which is the first principle, as the hypotheses are in mathematics; neither in that case is it reason that teaches the first principles, nor is it so here – virtue either natural or produced by habituation is what teaches right opinion about the first principle. This man is temperate; his contrary is the self-indulgent.

There is a sort of man who is carried away as a result of passion and contrary to right reason – a man whom passion masters so that he does not act according to right reason, but does not master to the extent of making him ready to believe that he ought to pursue such pleasures without reserve; this is the incontinent man, who is better than the self-indulgent man, and not bad without qualification; the best thing in him, the first principle, is preserved. Contrary to him is he who abides by his convictions and is not carried away, at least as a result of passion. It is evident from these considerations that the latter is a good disposition and the former a bad one.

VII.9 The Strong-Headed are Like the Continent Men; Some People Fail to Keep Their Resolutions Not from Incontinence; the Temperate Man is Continent Only by Analogy, as the Self-Indulgent is Incontinent (1151a-1152a).

Does the continent man abide by any and every reasoning and choice, or by the right choice; and does the incontinent man abandon any and every choice and reasoning, just false reasoning and the choice? Or is it incidentally any and every choice but per se the true reasoning and the right choice by which the one abides and the other does not? If anyone chooses or pursues this for the sake of that, per se he pursues and chooses the
latter, but incidentally the former (“without qualification” is “per se”). Therefore in a sense the one abides by, and the other abandons, any and every opinion; but without qualification, the true opinion.

The strong-headed are apt to abide by their opinion, and are hard to persuade; these have in them something like the continent man (as the prodigal is in a way like the liberal man and the rash man like the confident man; but they are different in many respects). The continent man will not yield to passion and appetite, since he is easily persuadable; the strong-headed refuse to yield to reason, but form appetites, and many of them are led by their pleasures. The strong-headed are the opinionated, the ignorant, and the boorish – the opinionated are influenced by pleasure and pain, delight in the victory of not being persuaded to change, and are pained if their decisions become null and void as decrees sometimes do; so they are more like the incontinent than the continent man.

But some people fail to abide by their resolutions, not as a result of incontinence, e.g. Neoptolemus in Sophocles’ Philoctetes; it was for the sake of a noble pleasure that he did not stand fast; telling the truth was noble to him, but he had been persuaded by Odysseus to tell the lie. Not everyone who does anything for the sake of pleasure is either self-indulgent or bad or incontinent, but he who does it for a disgraceful pleasure.

Since there is also a sort of man who takes less delight than he should in bodily things, and does not abide by reason, he who is intermediate between him and the incontinent man is the continent man; the incontinent man fails to abide by reason because he delights too much in them, and this man because he delights in them too little; while the continent man abides by it and does not change on either account. If continence is good, both the contrary dispositions must be bad, as they actually appear to be; but because the other extreme is seen in few people and seldom, as temperance is thought to be contrary only to self-indulgence, so is continence to incontinence.

The temperate man is continent only by analogy: both the continent man and the temperate man are such as to do nothing contrary to reason for the sake of the bodily pleasures, but the temperate has and the temperate has not bad appetites and does not feel pleasure contrary to reason; while the continent does feel pleasure but is not led by it. The incontinent and self-indulgent men are also like one another; they are different, but both pursue bodily pleasures – the self-indulgent also thinks that he ought to do so, while the incontinent does not think this.

VII.10 The Same Man Cannot be Practically Wise and Incontinent; the Clever Man can be Incontinent; Psychology of the Incontinent Man; Ease of Changing One’s Habits Compared to One’s Nature (1152a).

The same man cannot be practically wise and incontinent; we showed that a practically wise man is also good in respect of character. Further, a man has practical wisdom not by knowing only but by acting; but the incontinent man is unable to act. Nothing prevents a clever man from being incontinent, though; this is how some people are thought to have practical wisdom but are incontinent. But the incontinent man is not like the man who knows and is contemplating a truth; he is like the man who is asleep or drunk: he acts voluntarily (he acts in a sense with knowledge both of what he does and of that for the sake of which he does it), but is not wicked since his choice is good; so that he is half-wicked. I can see why the incontinent person’s choice is good. I can see why the incontinent person can think that his choice is good, but if he possesses reasoning as to why his choice is bad, which is what incontinence is, I think his choice to continue with the bad action is a bad or wrong choice]. And he is not unjust, since he does not act of malice aforethought; of the two types of incontinent man the one does not abide by the conclusions of his deliberation, while the excitable/impetuous man does not deliberate at all. So the incontinent man is like a city which passes all the right decrees and has good laws, but makes no use of them, but the wicked man is like a city that uses its laws, but has wicked laws to use.

Incontinence and continence are concerned with that which is in excess of the disposition characteristic of most men; the continent man abides by his resolutions more and the incontinent man less than most men can.

Of the forms of incontinence, that of excitable people is more curable than that of those who deliberate but do not abide by their decisions, and those who are incontinent through habituation are more curable than...
some people think that no pleasure is a good either in itself or incidentally, since the good and pleasure are not the same, since: (a) every pleasure is a perceptible process to a natural disposition, and no process is of the same kind as its end (e.g. no process of building is of the same kind as a house). (b) A temperate man avoids pleasures. (c) A man of practical wisdom pursues what is free from pain, not what is pleasant. (d) The pleasures are a hindrance to thought, and the more so the more one delights in them (e.g. in sexual pleasure, since no one could think of anything while absorbed in this). (e) There is no art of pleasure; but every good is the product of some art. (f) Children and the brutes pursue pleasures.

Others think that some pleasures are good but that most are bad, since (a) there are pleasures that are actually base and objects of reproach, and (b) there are harmful pleasures; some pleasant things are unhealthy.

A third view is that even if all pleasures are goods, the best thing cannot be pleasure, since pleasure is not an end but a process.

VII.12 Argument that Pleasure is Some Sort of (or the Chief) Good; Restorative Pleasures are Only Incidentally Good; Pleasures that Involve No Pain or Appetite; Pleasures are Not Processes Nor do They Involve Processes; the Temperate, Practically Wise Man Avoids Bad Pleasures Because He has His Own (1152b).

It does not follow from these grounds [in VII.11] that pleasure is not a good, or even the chief good, given these considerations: First, since that which is good may be so in either of two senses (one thing good simply and another good for a particular person), natural constitutions and dispositions (including movements and processes) will be correspondingly divisible. [DY OBJ: Aristotle states in I.6 that there is no such thing as something Good-In-Itself, there are ten different goods corresponding to the ten categories of being. Here he’s stating that there is a “good simply.” If this is true, then why is Plato’s view wrong, to Aristotle?] Of those which are thought to be bad some will be bad without qualification but not bad for a particular person, but choice worthy, and some will not be choice worthy even for a particular person, but only at a particular time and for a short period, though not without qualification; while others are not even pleasures, but seem to be so, viz. all those which involve pain and whose end is curative (e.g. the processes that go on in sick persons).

Second, since one kind of good is activity and one is disposition, the processes that restore us to our natural disposition are only incidentally pleasant [DY: This agrees with Plato in Republic IX]; and there are actually pleasures that involve no pain or appetite (e.g. those of contemplation), the nature in such a case not being defective at all [DY: This is one of Plato’s examples of these kinds of pleasure in Republic IX; the other is a pleasant smell]. Some pleasures are incidental since men in the neutral state (settled disposition) do not enjoy the same things as they do when appetite is being replenished, but in the neutral state they enjoy the things that are pleasant without qualification, in say, the hungry or thirsty, the contraries of these as well; then they enjoy...
even sharp and bitter things, none of which is pleasant either by nature or without qualification (just like pleasures themselves).

It is not necessary that there should be something else better than pleasure, as some say the end is better than the process; pleasures are not processes nor do they all involve process – they are activities and ends; nor do they arise when we are becoming something, but when we are exercising some capacity; and not all pleasures have an end different from themselves, but only the pleasures of persons who are being led to the completing of their nature. This is why it is not right to say that pleasure is a perceptible process, but it should rather be called activity of the natural disposition, and instead of ‘perceptible’ ‘unimpeded’. It is thought to be a process just because they think it is in the strict sense good; they think that activity is a process that it is not.

The view that pleasures are bad because some pleasant things are unhealthy is like saying that healthy things are bad because some healthy things are bad for the pocket; both are bad in the respect mentioned, but they are not bad for that reason – indeed, contemplation itself is sometimes injurious to health.

Neither practical wisdom or any disposition is impeded by the pleasure arising from it; it is foreign pleasures that impede, for the pleasures arising from contemplation and learning will make us contemplate and learn all the more.

The fact that no pleasure is the product of any art arises naturally enough; there is no art of any other activity either, but only of the capacity; though for that matter the arts of the perfumer and the cook are thought to be arts of pleasure.

The arguments that the temperate man avoids pleasure and that the man of practical wisdom pursues the painless life, and that children and the brutes pursue pleasure, are all refuted by the same consideration. We have pointed out in what sense pleasures are good without qualification and in what sense some are not good: both the brutes and children pursue pleasures of the latter kind (and the man of practical wisdom pursues tranquil freedom from that kind), viz. those which imply appetite and pain, i.e. the bodily pleasures (it is these that are of this nature) and the excesses of them, in respect of which the self-indulgent man is self-indulgent. This is why the temperate man avoids these pleasures: he has pleasures of his own.

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**VII.13 Pain is Bad (Per Se or With Qualification) and to be Avoided; the Chief Good can be Pleasure Because All Brutes and Humans Pursue It; If Pleasure and Activity are Not Goods, the Happy Man will Not Lead a Pleasant Life (1153b-1154a).**

Pain is bad and to be avoided; some pain is without qualification bad, and other pain is bad because it is in some respect an impediment to us. [**DY OB**]: Some pain is good (as Plato argues), since it leads ultimately to happiness; e.g., surgery and rehab. How can Aristotle respond? The contrary of that which is to be avoided (qua something to be avoided and bad) is good. So pleasure is necessarily a good. Speusippus’ answer, that it is just as the greater is contrary both to the less and to the equal, is wrong, since he would not say that pleasure is essentially a species of evil.

If certain pleasures are bad [**DY EX**: contracting an STD from sex, the latter being pleasurable but leading to unhappiness, a lifetime of medicine and no further sex], that does not prevent the best thing from being some pleasure – just as knowledge might be, though certain kinds of knowledge are bad. Perhaps it is even necessary, if each disposition has unimpeded activities, that the unimpeded activity of all our dispositions (or that of some one of them) is happiness, and this should be the most choice worthy thing; and this activity is a pleasure. Thus the chief good would be some pleasure, though most pleasures might perhaps be bad without qualification. This is why all men reasonably think that the happy life is pleasant and weave pleasure into happiness; no activity is complete when it is impeded, and happiness is a complete thing; this is why the happy man needs the goods of the body and external goods (fortune), so as not to be impeded in these ways. Those who say that the victim on the rack or the man who falls into great misfortunes is happy if he is good, are, whether they mean to or not, talking nonsense. [**DY**: This attacks the views of Plato and Plotinus, since they believe that a person who knows the Good is truly happy, and nothing can harm a just person in this life or in the next.] Because we need fortune as well as other things, some people think good fortune the same thing as happiness, but it is not: even good fortune itself (in excess) is an impediment, and perhaps should then be no longer called good fortune; its limit is fixed by reference to happiness.
The fact that all brutes and men pursue pleasure in an indication of its being somehow the chief good. 

But since no one nature or disposition either is or is thought the best for all, neither do all pursue the same pleasure; all pursue pleasure. Perhaps they actually pursue not the pleasure they think they pursue nor that which they would say they pursue, but the same pleasure; all things have by nature something divine in them. But the bodily pleasures have appropriated the name both because we oftentimes steer our course for them and because all men share in them; thus because they alone are familiar, men think there are no others.

If pleasure and activity is not a good, the happy man will not live a pleasant life; to what end should he need pleasure, if it is not a good but the happy man may even live a painful life? Pain is neither an evil nor a good, if pleasure is not; why then should he avoid it?

So the life of the good man will not be pleasanter than that of anyone else, if his activities are not more pleasant.

VII.14 Questions for Those Who Advocate Noble but Not Bodily Pleasures; Why Bodily Pleasures Appear More Choice Worthy; No One Thing is Always Pleasant for Humans; God is Simple and so enjoys a Single/Simple Pleasure (1154a-b).

Some say that noble pleasures are very much to be chosen, but not the bodily pleasures (with which the self-indulgent man is concerned). These people must consider why the contrary pains are bad (since the contrary of bad is good). Are the necessary pleasures good in the sense in which even that which is not bad is good? Or are they good up to a point? Is it that where you have dispositions and processes of which there cannot be too much, there cannot be too much of the corresponding pleasure, and that where there can be too much of the one there can be too much of the other also? There can be too much of bodily goods, and the bad man is bad by virtue of pursuing the excess, not by virtue of pursuing the necessary pleasures (all men enjoy in some way or other both dainty foods, wines, and sexual intercourse, but not all men do so as they ought). The contrary is the case with pain; he does not avoid the excess of it, he avoids it altogether [DY OB: Aristotle is still avoiding the possibility of some good pains]; the alternative to excess of pleasure is not pain, except to the man who pursues this excess.

[Stating the cause of error contributes towards producing conviction, since when a reasonable explanation is given of why the false view appears true, this tends to produce belief in the true view; so: ]We must state why the bodily pleasures appear more choice worthy. First: they expel pain; owing to the excesses of pain men pursue excessive and in general bodily pleasure as being a cure for the pain. Curative agencies produce intense feeling — which is the reason why they are pursued — because they show up against the contrary pain. (Indeed pleasure is thought not to be good for these two reasons: (a) some of them are activities belonging to a bad nature — either congenital, as in brutes, or due to habit, as in bad men; while (b) others are meant to cure a defective nature, and it is better to be in a healthy state than to be getting into it, but these arise during the process of being made complete and so are only incidentally good.) Second, people who cannot enjoy other pleasures pursue bodily pleasures due to their violence. Some people even manufacture thirsts for themselves (which is irreproachable when the thirsts are harmless, but bad when they are harmful). They have nothing else to enjoy, and a neutral state is painful to many people because of their nature. EXs: animals are always toiling, as the students of natural science also testify, saying that sight and hearing are painful; but we have become used to this, as they maintain. Similarly, owing to their growing, young people are in a situation like that of drunken men, and youth is pleasant; people of excitable nature always need relief: even their body is ever in torment owing to its special composition, and they are always under the influence of violent desire. But pain is driven out both by the contrary pleasure, and by any chance pleasure if it is strong; so they become self-indulgent and bad. But the pleasures that do not involve pains do not admit of excess are among the things pleasant by nature (i.e., those that stimulate the action of the healthy nature) and not incidentally [e.g., cures (the process is thought pleasant because as a result people are cured, through some action of the part that remains healthy)].

There is no one thing that is always pleasant, because our nature is not simple but there is another element in us as well, inasmuch as we are perishable creatures, so if the one element does something, this is unnatural to the other nature, and when the two elements are evenly balanced, what is done seems neither painful nor pleasant; if the nature of anything were simple, the same action would always be most pleasant to it.
This is why God always enjoys a single and simple pleasure; there is not only an activity of movement but an activity of immobility, and pleasure is found more in rest than in movement. But “change in all things is sweet”, as the poet says, because of some vice; as it is the vicious man that is changeable, so the nature that needs change is vicious, since it is not simple nor good.

BOOK VIII:

VIII.1 Friendship is a Virtue or Implies Virtue; No One Would Choose to Live Without Friends, Especially the Prosperous; Friendship Benefits Everyone of All Ages; It Holds States Together; It is Necessary and Noble; Questions about Friendship (1155a-b).

Let us discuss friendship, since it is a virtue or implies virtue, and is most necessary with a view to living. Without friends no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods: even rich men, office-holders, and the powerful need friends most of all; what is the use of such prosperity without the opportunity of beneficence, which is exercised chiefly and in its most laudable form towards friends? How can prosperity be guarded and preserved without friends? The greater the prosperity is, the more exposed is it to risk. In poverty and in other misfortunes men think friends are the only refuge. Friendship helps the young keep from error; it aids older people by ministering to their needs and supplementing the activities that are failing from weakness; it stimulates those in the prime of life to noble actions, since with friends men are more able both to think and to act. Parents seem by nature to feel it for offspring and offspring for parents (among humans, birds and most animals); it is felt mutually by members of the same race, and especially by men, whence we praise lovers of their fellow men. We may see even in our travels how near and dear every man is to every other. Friendship seems to hold states together, and lawgivers care more for it than for justice; unanimity seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all, and expel faction as their worst enemy; and when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well, and the truest form of justice is thought to be a friendly quality.

Friendship is not only necessary but also noble; we praise those who love their friends, and it is thought to be a fine thing to have many friends; and it is the same people that are good men and are friends.

Matters of debate about friendship: Some define it as a kind of likeness and say like people are friends, whence come the sayings “like to like”, “birds of a feather flock together”, and so on; but others say “two of a trade never agree”. [On this very question they inquire more deeply and in a more scientific fashion, Euripides saying that “parched earth loves the rain, and stately heaven when filled with rain loves to fall to earth”, and Heraclitus that “it is what opposes that helps” and “from different tones comes the fairest tune” and “all things are produced through strife”; while Empedocles, as well as others, expresses the opposite view that like aims at like.] The scientific problems we may leave alone (they do not belong to the present inquiry); let us examine those which are human and involve character and feeling: EX: whether friendship can arise between any two people or people cannot be friends if they are wicked, and whether there is one species of friendship or more than one. (Those who think there is only one because it admits of degrees have relied on an inadequate indication; even things different in species admit of degree.)

VIII.2 The Lovable (Good, Pleasant, Useful) is Loved; Men Love What Seems Good and Lovable; We Ought to Wish a Friend What is Good for His Sake; Friendship: Mutual Good-Wishes(1155b-1156a).

If we first come to know the object of love, we can determine the kinds of friendship. Not everything seems to be loved but only the lovable, and this is good, pleasant, or useful; but it would seem to be that by which some good or pleasure is produced that is useful, so it is the good and the pleasant that are lovable as ends. Do men love the good, or what is good for them? These sometimes clash. So does the pleasant. Each loves what is good for himself, and the good is without qualification lovable, and what is good for each man is lovable for him; but each man loves not what is good for him but what seems good. [DY: Aristotle states here that each person loves
what seems good, as opposed to what is really good for him or her. This makes no difference, since this is that which seems lovable. There are three grounds on which people love. [DY: I can’t tell what the threegrounds are – one is marked by “(1)” below; perhaps (2) is loving lifeless objects or adding “when it isrecognized” to (1); (3) might be the last sentence of this chapter]: [We do not use the word “friendship” for thelove of lifeless objects (it is not mutual love, nor is there a wishing of good to the other (EX: it would surely berecious to wish wine well; if one wishes anything for it, it is that it may keep, so that one may have it oneself)]; but (1) we ought to wish to a friend what is good for his sake. To those who thus wish good we ascribeonly goodwill, if the wish is not reciprocated; reciprocal goodwill is friendship. Or must we add “when it isrecognized”? Many people have goodwill to those whom they have not seen but judge to be good or useful; andone of these might return this feeling. These people seem to bear goodwill to each other; but how could one callthem friends when they do not know their mutual feelings? To be friends, they must be mutually recognized asbearing goodwill and wishing well to each other for one of the aforesaid reasons.

VIII.3 Three Kinds of Friendship: Utility, Pleasure, and Virtue; Older People Seek UtilityFriendship; the Young Seek Pleasure Friendship; Good People Seek Virtue Friendships, Whichare also Pleasant and Rare (1156a-1157a).

There are three kinds of friendship, equal in number to the things that are lovable; with respect to each there is a mutual and recognized love, and those who love each other wish well to each other in that respect in which they love one another. (1) Those who love each other for their utility do not love each other for themselves but due to some good that they get from each other (they love for the sake of what is good for themselves). (2) Those who love for the sake of pleasure love for the sake of what they find pleasant (EX: it is not for their character that men love ready-witted people, but because they find them pleasant). These people who are loved are loved(for utility or pleasure) insofar as they are useful or pleasant. Thus these friendships are only incidental; it is not as being the man he is that the loved person is loved, but as providing some good or pleasure. Such friendships are easily dissolved if the parties do not remain like themselves; if the one party is no longer pleasant or useful the other ceases to love him.

The useful is not permanent but is always changing. Thus when the motive of the friendship is done away, the friendship is dissolved, inasmuch as it existed only for the ends in question. Utility friendship seems to exist chiefly between old people (at that age people pursue not the pleasant but the useful) and, of those who are in their prime or young, between those who pursue utility, and between host and guest. Such people do not live much with each other either; sometimes they do not even find each other pleasant; so they do not need such companionship unless they are useful to each other; they are pleasant to each other only insofar as they rouse in each other hopes of something good to come. The friendship of young people seems to aim at pleasure; they live under the guidance of emotion, and pursue above all what is pleasant to themselves and what is immediately before them; but with increasing age their pleasures become different. This is why they quickly become friends and quickly cease to be so; their friendship changes with the object that is found pleasant, and such pleasure alters quickly. Young people are amorous too; the greater part of the friendship of love depends on emotion and aims at pleasure; this is why they fall in love and quickly fall out of love, changing often within a single day. But these people do wish to spend their days and lives together; it is thus that they attain the purpose of their friendship.

Perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; these wish well alike to eachother qua good, and they are good in themselves. Those who wish well to their friends for their sake are mosttruly friends; they do this by reason of their own nature and not incidentally; so their friendship lasts as long as they are good – and virtue is an enduring thing. Each is good without qualification and to his friend, for the good are both good without qualification and useful to each other. So too they are pleasant; the good arepleasant both without qualification and to each other, since to each his own activities and others like them arepleasurable, and the actions of the good are the same or like. Such a friendship is as might be expected lastingsince it has all the qualities that friends should have. All friendship is for the sake of good or of pleasure – good or pleasure either in the abstract or such as will be enjoyed by him who has the friendly feeling – and is based onacertain resemblance; and to a friendship of good men all the qualities we have named belong in virtue of the
nature of the friends themselves; in the case of this kind of friendship the other qualities also are alike in both
friends, and that which is good without qualification is also without qualification pleasant, and these are the
most lovable qualities. So love and friendship are found most and in their best form between such men.

But it is natural that such friendships should be infrequent since (1) such men are rare and (2) such
friendship requires time and familiarity; as the proverb says, men cannot know each other till they have “eaten
salt together”; nor can they admit each other to friendship or be friends till each has been found lovable and
been trusted by each. Those who quickly show the marks of friendship to each other wish to be friends, but are
not friends unless they both are lovable and know the fact; a wish for friendship may arise quickly, but friendship
does not.

VIII.4 Virtue Friendship is Complete in Duration and Reciprocity; Bad Men have Pleasure or
Utility Friendships; Good Men have Virtue Friendships (the First and Proper Sense of
Friendship) (1157a-b).

Virtue friendship is complete both in respect of duration and in all other respects, and in it each gets from each
in all respects the same as, or something like what, he gives (reciprocity); which is what ought to happen between
friends. Pleasure friendship bears a resemblance to this kind; good people too are pleasant to each other. So
does utility friendship; the good are also useful to each other; these friendships are most permanent when the
friends get the same thing from each other (e.g. pleasure), and not only that but also from the same source, as
happens between ready-witted people, not as happens between lover and beloved. The lover and beloved do not
take pleasure in the same things, but the one in seeing the beloved and the other in receiving attentions from his
lover; and when the bloom of youth is passing the friendship sometimes passes too (the one finds no pleasure in
the sight of the other, and the other gets no attentions from the first); but many lovers on the other hand are
constant, if familiarity has led them to love each other’s characters, these being alike. But those who exchange
utility in their love are less truly friends and constant. Utility friends part when the advantage is at an end; they
were lovers not of each other but of profit.

For the sake of pleasure or utility, then, even bad men may be friends of each other, or good men of bad,
or one who is neither good nor bad may be a friend to any sort of person, but for their own sake clearly only
good men can be friends; bad men do not delight in each other unless some advantage come of the relation.

The friendship of the good alone is proof against slander; it is not easy to trust anyone’s talk about a man
who has long been tested by oneself; and it is among good men that trust and the feeling that he would never
wrong me and all the other things that are demanded in true friendship are found. In utility and pleasure
friendships, nothing prevents these evils from arising.

Men apply the name of friends even to utility friendships (e.g., states are said to be friendly since they
seem to aim at advantage), and to pleasure friendships (children are called friends). So we ought perhaps to call
such people friends, and say that there are several kinds of friendship – the first and proper sense is that of good
men qua good, and by similarity the other kinds; it is in virtue of something good and something similar that
they are friends, since even the pleasant is good for the lovers of pleasure. But these two kinds of friendship are
not often united, nor do the same people become friends for the sake of utility and of pleasure (things that are
only incidentally connected are not often coupled together).

So bad men will be pleasure or utility friends, being in this respect like each other, but good men will be
friends for their own sake, i.e. in virtue of their goodness. Virtue friends are friends without qualification; the
others are friends incidentally and through a resemblance to these.

VIII.5 The Disposition v. Activity of Friendship; Mutual Love Involves Choice, Which Springs
from a Disposition; Virtue Friends Love What is Good for Himself and Equally for the Friend,
and So Becomes a Good to His Friend (1157b-1158a).

As in virtues some men are called good in respect of a disposition, others in respect of an activity, so too in
friendship; those who live together delight in each other and confer benefits on each other, but those who are
asleep or locally separated are not performing, but are disposed to perform, the activities of friendship; distance
does not break off the friendship absolutely, but only the activity of it. If the absence is lasting, it seems actually to make men forget their friendship; hence the saying, “out of sight, out of mind”. Neither old people nor sour people seem to make friends easily; there is little that is pleasant in them, and no one can spend his days with one whose company is painful, or not pleasant, since nature seems above all to avoid the painful and to aim at the pleasant. Those, however, who approve of each other but do not live together seem to be well-disposed rather than actual friends. There is nothing so characteristic of friends as living together (since while it is people who are in need that desire benefits, even those who are blessed desire to spend their days together; solitude suits such people least of all); but people cannot live together if they are not pleasant and do not enjoy the same things, as friends who are companions seem to do.

So the truest friendship is that of the good, as we have frequently said; that which is without qualification good or pleasant [DY: Again Aristotle is referring to something good without qualification, which he denies the possibility of in NE 1.6] seems to be lovable and desirable, and for each person that which is good or pleasant to him; and the good man is lovable and desirable to the good man for both these reasons. It looks as if love were a passion, friendship a disposition; love may be felt just as much towards lifeless things, but mutual love involves choice and choice springs from a disposition; and men wish well to those whom they love, for their sake, not as a result of passion but as a result of a disposition. In loving a friend men love what is good for themselves; the good man in becoming a friend becomes a good to his friend. Each, then, both loves what is good for himself, and makes an equal return in goodwill and in pleasantness; friendship is said to be equality, and both of these are found most in the friendship of the good.

VIII.6 The Young Gain Friends Quickly; the Old do Not; One Cannot be a Virtue Friend to Many, but May be a Utility or Pleasure Friend to Many; Pleasure Friendship is More like Friendship; Powerful People have Utility and Pleasure Friendships (and Both), but the Latter are Less Truly/Permanently Friends (1158a-b).

Between sour and elderly people friendship arises less readily, inasmuch as they are less good-tempered and enjoy companionship less; these are thought to be the greatest marks of friendship and most productive of it. This is why, while young men become friends quickly, old men do not; it is because men do not become friends with those in whom they do not delight; and similarly sour people do not quickly make friends either. But such men may bear goodwill to each other; they wish one another well and aid one another in need; but they are hardly friends because they do not spend their days together nor delight in each other, and these are thought the greatest marks of friendship.

One cannot be a virtue friend to many people, just as one cannot be in love with many people at once (love is a sort of excess, and it is the nature of such only to be felt towards one person); and it is not easy for many people at the same time to please the same person very greatly, or perhaps even to be good for him. One must, too, acquire some experience of the other person and become familiar with him, and that is very hard. One can have many utility or pleasure friends, since many people can/may please one and/or be useful, and these services take little time.

Of these, pleasure friendship is the more like real friendship, when both parties get the same things from each other and delight in each other or in the same things, as in the friendships of the young; generosity is more found in such friendships. Utility friendship is for the commercially minded. Also, people who are blessed have no need of useful friends, but do need pleasant friends; they wish to live with others, and, though they can endure for a short time what is painful, no one could put up with it continuously, nor even with the Good itself if it were painful to him; this is why they look out for friends who are pleasant. Perhaps they should look out for friends who, being pleasant, are also good, and good for them too; then they will have all the characteristics that friends should have.

People in positions of authority seem to have utility friends, pleasure friends, and rarely both of those; they seek neither those whose pleasantness is accompanied by virtue nor those whose utility is with a view to noble objects, but in their desire for pleasure they seek for ready-witted people, and their other friends they choose as being clever at doing what they are told, and these characteristics are rarely combined. We have said that the good man is at the same time pleasant and useful; but such a man does not become the friend of one
who surpasses him, unless he is surpassed also in virtue; if this is not so, he does not establish equality by being proportionally exceeded. But such men are not so easy to find.

Nonetheless, the aforesaid friendships [where someone is pleasant and virtuous or useful for noble objects] involve equality; the friends get the same things from one another and wish the same things for one another, or exchange one thing for another, e.g. pleasure for utility; but they are both less truly friendships and less permanent: it is from their likeness and their unlikeness to the same thing that they are thought both to be and not to be friendships. It is by their likeness to the friendship of virtue that they seem to be friendships (one of them involves pleasure and the other utility, and these characteristics belong to the friendship of virtue as well); while it is because the friendship of virtue is proof against slander and lasting, while these quickly change (besides differing from the former in many other respects), that they appear not to be friendships; i.e. it is because of their unlikeness to the friendship of virtue.

VIII.7 The Fourth Kind (or Another Dimension) of Friendship: “Inequality” Friendship: Father/Son, Elder/Younger, Man/Wife, and Ruler/Subject; These Friendships Differ, but the Love in Each Should be Proportional/Equal; Each Man Wishes What is Good for Himself Most of All (1158b-1159a).

There is another kind of friendship that involves an inequality: EX: father to son, elder to younger, man to wife, and ruler to subject. These friendships differ also from each other: it is not the same that exists between parents and children and between rulers and subjects, nor is even that of father to son the same as that of son to father, nor that of husband to wife the same as that of wife to husband. The virtue and the function of each of these are different, and so are the reasons for which they love; the love and the friendship are therefore different also. Each party neither gets the same from the other, nor ought to seek it; but when children render to parents what they ought to render to those who brought them into the world, and parents render what they should to their children, the friendship of such persons will be lasting and virtuous. In all friendships implying inequality the love also should be proportional, i.e. the better should be more loved than he loves, and so should the more useful, and similarly in each of the other cases; when the love is in proportion to the merit of the parties, then in a sense arises equality, which is held to be characteristic of friendship.

But equality does not seem to take the same form in acts of justice and in friendship; in acts of justice what is primarily equal is that which is in proportion to merit, while quantitative equality is secondary, but in friendship quantitative equality is primary and proportion to merit secondary. EXs: if there is a great interval in respect of virtue or vice or wealth or anything else between the parties; then they are no longer friends, and do not even expect to be so. This is most manifest in the case of the gods; they surpass us most decisively in all good things. Also in the case of kings: men who are much their inferiors do not expect to be friends with them; nor do men of no account expect to be friends with the best or wisest men. In such cases it is not possible to define exactly up to what point friends can remain friends; much can be taken away and friendship remain, but when one party is removed to a great distance, as God is, the possibility of friendship ceases. This is in fact the origin of the question whether friends really wish for their friends the greatest goods, e.g. that of being gods; since in that case their friends will no longer be friends to them, and so will not be good things for them (for friends are good things). If we were right in saying that friend wishes good to friend for his sake, his friend must remain the sort of being he is, whatever that may be; so it is for him only so long as he remains a man that he will wish the greatest goods. But perhaps not all the greatest goods; it is for himself most of all that each man wishes what is good.

VIII.8 Most People Wish to be Loved Rather than to Love, and so Love Flattery; Most People Enjoy Being Honored too; Friends Who Love Their Friends Have the Characteristic Virtue of Friendship, and Love is What Makes Friendship Last; Unequals can “Equalize” and be Friends (1159b).

Owing to ambition, most people seem to wish to be loved rather than to love; which is why most men love flattery; the flatterer is a friend in an inferior position, or pretends to be such and to love more than he is loved;
and being loved seems to be akin to being honored, and this is what most people aim at. People do not choose honor for its own sake, but incidentally. Most people enjoy being honored by those in positions of authority because of their hopes (they think that if they want anything they will get it from them; and therefore they delight in honor as a token of favor to come); while those who desire honor from good men, and men who know, are aiming at confirming their own opinion of themselves: they believe in their own goodness on the strength of the judgment of those who speak about them. But people delight in being loved for its own sake; so being loved would seem to be better than being honored, and friendship to be desirable in itself. But what is desirable in itself seems to lie in loving rather than in being loved; EX: the delight mothers take in loving; some mothers hand over their children to be brought up, and so long as they know their fate they love them and do not seek to be loved in return (if they cannot have both), but seem to be satisfied if they see them prospering; and they themselves love their children even if these owing to their ignorance give them nothing of a mother’s due. Since friendship depends more on loving, and it is those who love their friends that are praised, loving seems to be the characteristic virtue of friends; these are lasting friends, as only their friendship endures.

Even unequals can be friends; they can be equalized. Equality and likeness are friendship, and especially the likeness of those who are like in virtue; being steadfast in themselves they hold fast to each other, and neither ask nor give base services, but (one may say) even prevent them; it is characteristic of good men neither to go wrong themselves nor to let their friends do so. Wicked men have no steadfastness (they do not even stay similar to themselves), but become friends for a short time because they delight in each other’s wickedness. Useful or pleasant friends last longer (as long as they provide each other with enjoyments or advantages). Utility friendship most easily exists between contraries (e.g. between poor and rich, between ignorant and learned, lover and beloved, beautiful and ugly); what a man actually lacks he aims at, and he gives something else in return. [This is why lovers sometimes seem ridiculous, when they demand to be loved as they love; if they are equally lovely their claim can perhaps be justified, but when they have nothing lovely about them it is ridiculous. Perhaps, however, contrary does not even aim at contrary in its own nature, but only incidentally, the desire being for what is intermediate; that is what is good, e.g. it is good for the dry not to become wet but to come to the intermediate disposition, and similarly with the hot and in all other cases. These subjects we may dismiss; they are indeed somewhat foreign to our inquiry.]

VIII.9 Friendship and Justice are Concerned with the Same Objects Exhibited Between the Same Persons; Friendship Depends upon Community; Injustice Increases When Exhibited Towards Closer Friends; the Just is That Which is to the Common Advantage (1159b-1060a).

Friendship and justice seem (as said) to be concerned with the same objects and exhibited between the same persons. In every community there is thought to be some form of justice, and friendship too; at least men address as friends their fellow-voyagers and fellow-soldiers, and so too those associated with them in any other kind of community. The extent of their association is the extent of their friendship, as it is the extent to which justice exists between them. The proverb “what friends have is common property” expresses the truth: friendship depends on community. Brothers and comrades have all things in common, but the others have definite things in common – some more things, others fewer; of friendships, too, some are more and others less truly friendships. The claims of justice differ too; the duties of parents to children and those of brothers to each other are not the same, nor those of comrades and those of fellow-citizens, and so, too, with the other kinds of friendship. There is a difference, thus, also between the acts that are unjust towards each of these classes of associates, and the injustice increases by being exhibited towards those who are friends in a fuller sense; e.g. it is a more terrible thing to defraud a comrade than a fellow citizen, more terrible not to help a brother than a stranger, and more terrible to wound a father than anyone else. And the demands of justice also naturally increase with the friendship, which implies that friendship and justice exist between the same persons and have an equal extension.

All forms of community are like parts of the political community; men journey together with a view to some particular advantage, and to provide something that they need for the purposes of life; and it is for the sake of advantage that the political community too seems both to have come together originally and to endure, for this is what legislators aim at, and they call just that which is to the common advantage. The other communities
aim at some particular advantage, e.g. sailors at what is advantageous on a voyage with a view to making money or something of the kind, fellow-soldiers at what is advantageous in war, whether it is wealth or victory or the taking of a city that they seek, and members of tribes and demes act similarly. [Some communities seem to arise for the sake of pleasure, viz. religious guilds and social clubs; these exist respectively for the sake of offering sacrifice and of companionship. But all these seem to fall under the political community; for it aims not at present advantage but at what is advantageous for life as a whole, offering sacrifices and arranging gatherings for the purpose, and assigning honors to the gods, and providing pleasant relaxations for themselves.] The ancient sacrificers and gatherings seem to take place after the harvest as a sort of first fruits, because it was at these seasons that people had most leisure. All the communities, then, seem to be parts of the political community; and the particular kinds of friendship will correspond to the particular kinds of community.

VIII.10 Three Kinds of Constitution (Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Timocracy/Polity) and Three Deviations (Tyranny, Oligarchy, and Democracy), Respectively; Monarchy is the Best Constitution, Polity the Worst Constitution; Tyranny (from Monarchy) is the Worst Deviation, and Democracy (from Timocracy) the Least; Each of These Types May be Found in Households as Well (1160a-1161a).

There are three kinds of constitution (monarchy, aristocracy, and timocracy – based on property qualification – though most people usually call it polity), and an equal number of perversions of them. The best of the constitutions is monarchy, the worst timocracy. The deviation from monarchy is tyranny; both are forms of one-man rule, but there is the greatest difference between them; the tyrant looks to his own advantage, the king to that of his subjects. A man is not a king unless he is sufficient to himself and excels his subjects in all good things; and such a man needs nothing further; therefore he will not look to his own interests but to those of his subjects; a king who is not like that would be a mere titular king. Now tyranny is the very contrary of this; the tyrant pursues his own good. Tyranny is clearly the worst deviation-form/perversion. Monarchy passes over into tyranny, since tyranny is the evil form of one-man rule and the bad king becomes a tyrant. Aristocracy passes over into oligarchy by the badness of the rulers, who distribute contrary to merit what belongs to the city – all or most of the good things to themselves, and office always to the same people, paying most regard to wealth; thus the rulers are few and are bad men instead of the most worthy. Timocracy passes over into democracy; these are coterminous, since timocracy too tends to involve a mass of people, and all who have the property qualification count as equal. Democracy is the least bad of the deviations; it is but a slight deviation from timocracy. These then are the changes to which constitutions are most subject; these are the smallest and easiest transitions.

There are resemblances to the constitutions and patterns of them even in households. The association of a father with his sons bears the form of monarchy, since the father cares for his children; EX: Homer calls Zeus “father”; it is the ideal of monarchy to be paternal rule. Among the Persians the rule of the father is tyrannical; they use their sons as slaves. Tyrannical too is the rule of a master over slaves; it is the advantage of the master that is brought about in it. Monarchy seems to be a correct form of government, but the Persian type is perverted; the modes of rule appropriate to different relations are diverse. The association of man and wife seems to be aristocratic; the man rules in accordance with merit, and in those matters in which a man should rule, but the matters that befit a woman, he hands over to her. If the man rules in everything the relation passes over into oligarchy; he does this contrary to merit and not qua better. Sometimes women rule because they are heiresses; their rule is not in virtue of virtue but due to wealth and power, as in oligarchies. The association of brothers is like timocracy; they are equal, except insofar as they differ in age; hence if they differ much in age, the friendship is no longer of the fraternal type. Democracy is found chiefly in masterless dwellings (here everyone is on an equality), and in those in which the ruler is weak and everyone has license to do as he pleases.
VIII.11 Each Constitution (Monarchy, Aristocracy, Timocracy) Involves Friendship to the Extent of Its Justice; But Justice Hardly Exists in the Deviation-Forms (Least in Tyranny and Most in Democracy) (I161a-b).

Each of the constitutions involves friendship just insofar as it involves justice. The friendship between a king and his subjects depends on an excess of benefits conferred; he confers benefits on his subjects if being a good man he cares for them with a view to their well-being, as a shepherd does for his sheep (e.g., Homer called Agamemnon “shepherd of the peoples”). So too is the friendship of a father, though this exceeds the other in the greatness of the benefits conferred; he is responsible for the existence of his children, which is thought the greatest good, and for their nurture and upbringing. These things are ascribed to ancestors as well. Further, by nature a father tends to rule over his sons, ancestors over descendants, a king over his subjects. These friendships imply superiority of one party over the other, which is why parents are honored. So the justice that exists between persons so related is not the same but proportioned to merit; that is true of the friendship as well. The friendship of man and wife, again, is the same that is found in an aristocracy: it is in accordance with virtue—the better gets more of what is good, and each gets what befits him; and so, too, with the justice in these relations. The friendship of brothers is like that of comrades; they are equal and of like age, and such persons are for the most part like in their feelings and their character. Like this, too, is the friendship appropriate to timocratic government; the citizens tend to be equal and fair; so rule is taken in turn, and on equal terms; and the friendship appropriate here will correspond.

But as justice hardly exists in the deviation-forms, friendship hardly exists in them as well. Friendship exists least in the worst form; in tyranny there is little or no friendship. Where there is nothing common to ruler and ruled, there is not friendship either, since there is not justice; e.g. between craftsman and tool, soul and body, master and slave; the latter in each case is benefited by that which uses it, but there is no friendship nor justice towards lifeless things. But neither is there friendship towards a horse or an ox, nor to a slave qua slave, since there is nothing common to the two parties; the slave is a living tool and the tool a lifeless slave. Qua slave then, one cannot be friends with him. But qua man one can; there seems to be some justice between any man and any other who can share in a system of law or be a party to an agreement; so there can also be friendship with him insofar as he is a man. So while in tyrannies friendship and justice hardly exist, in democracies they exist more fully; for where the citizens are equal they have much in common.

VIII.12 Friendships of Kin and Comrades are Unique and Depend on Paternal Friendship; Parents Love Their Children as Part of Themselves; the Friendship of Man and Wife Exists by Nature; Children Bond a Family Together (I161b-I162a).

Every form of friendship (as said) involves association. But one might mark off the friendship of kin and comrades from the rest. Those of fellow-citizens, fellow-tribesmen, fellow-voyagers, host and guest, and the like are more like mere friendships of association and rest on a sort of compact.

The friendship of kinsmen itself, while it seems to be of many kinds, appears to depend in every case on paternal friendship; parents love their children as being a part of themselves, and children their parents as being something originating from them. Parents know their offspring better than their children know that they are their children, and the originator is more attached to his offspring than the offspring to their begetter; the product belongs to the producer (e.g. a tooth or hair or anything else to him whose it is), but the producer does not belong to the product, or belongs in a less degree. The length of time produces the same result; parents love their children as soon as they are born, but children love their parents only after time has elapsed and they have acquired understanding or perception. Thus, mothers love more than fathers do. Parents love their children as themselves (their issue are by virtue of their separate existence a sort of other selves), while children love their parents as being born of them, and brothers love each other as being born of the same parents; their identity with them makes them identical with each other (which is the reason why people talk of “the same blood”, “the same stock”, and so on). They are, therefore, in a sense the same thing, though in separate individuals. Two things that contribute greatly to friendship are a common upbringing and similarity of age: “two of an age take to each other”, and familiarity makes for comradeship; whence the friendship of brothers is akin to that of
comrades. Cousins and other kinsmen are attached by derivation from brothers, by being derived from the same parents.

The friendship of children to parents, and of men to gods, is a relation to them as to something good and superior; they have conferred the greatest benefits, since they are the causes of their being and of their nourishment, and of their education from their birth; and this kind of friendship possesses pleasantness and utility also, more than that of strangers, inasmuch as their life is lived more in common. The friendship of brothers has the characteristics found in that of comrades (and especially when these are good), and in general between people who are like each other, inasmuch as they belong more to each other and start with a love for each other from their very birth, and inasmuch as those born of the same parents and brought up together and similarly educated are more akin in character; and the test of time has been applied most fully and convincingly in their case.

Between other kinsmen friendly relations are found in due proportion. Between man and wife friendship seems to exist by nature; man is naturally inclined to form couples—even more than to form cities, inasmuch as the household is earlier and more necessary than the city, and reproduction is more common to man than with the animals. With the other animals the union extends only to this point, but human beings live together not only for the sake of reproduction but also for the various purposes of life; from the start the functions are divided, and those of man and woman are different; so they help each other by throwing their peculiar gifts into the common stock. It is for these reasons that both utility and pleasure seem to be found in this kind of friendship. But this friendship may be based also on virtue, if the parties are good; each has its own virtue and they will delight in the fact. Children seem to be a bond of union (which is the reason why childless people part more easily); children are a good common to both and what is common holds them together.

How man and wife and in general friend and friend ought mutually to behave seems to be the same question as how it is just for them to behave; a man does not seem to have the same duties to a friend, a stranger, a comrade, and a schoolfellow.

VIII.13 Complaints Arise in Utility (Not Virtue) Friendships; Two Kinds of Utility Friendships (Legal and Moral); We Should Return What We Receive (or More); in Utility Friendships, the Measure is the Advantage to the Receiver; in Virtue Friendships, the Choice of the Doer is the Measure (1162a-1163a).

There are three kinds of friendship: utility, pleasure, virtue, and what I refer to as “unequal” friendships; Perhaps we should think of the equality or inequality of a friendship as a dimension of friendship, as opposed to another kind?—hence I changed the heading for VIII.7 above., as said; for each kind, some friends are equal and others are unequal (not only can equally good men become friends but a better man can make friends with a worse, and similarly in friendships of pleasure or utility the friends may be equal or unequal in the benefits they confer). Equals must effect the required equalization on a basis of equality in love and in all other respects, while unequal must render what is in proportion to their superiority or inferiority.

Complaints and reproaches arise, as expected, either only or chiefly in the friendship of utility. Those who are friends on the ground of virtue are anxious to do well by each other (since that is a mark of virtue and of friendship), and between men who are emulating each other in this there cannot be complaints or quarrels; no one is offended by a man who loves him and does well by him— if he is a person of nice feeling he takes his revenge by doing well by the other. And the man who excels will not complain of his friend, since he gets what he aims at; each man desires what is good. Nor do complaints arise much even in friendships of pleasure; both get at the same time what they desire, if they enjoy spending their time together; and even a man who complained of another for not affording him pleasure would seem ridiculous, since it is in his power not to spend his days with him.

But the friendship of utility is full of complaints; as they use each other for their own interests they always want to get the better of the bargain, and think they have got less than they should, and blame their partners because they do not get all they want and deserve; and those who do well by others cannot help them as much as those whom they benefit want.
As justice is of two kinds (unwritten and legal), one kind of utility friendship is moral and the other legal. Complaints arise most of all when men do not dissolve the relation in the spirit of the same type of friendship in which they contracted it. The legal type has fixed terms; its purely commercial variety is on the basis of immediate payment, while the more liberal variety allows time but stipulates for a definite quid pro quo. Here the debt is clear and not ambiguous, but in the postponement it contains an element of friendliness; and so some dispositions do not allow suits arising out of such agreements, but think men who have bargained on a basis of credit ought to be content. The moral type is not on fixed terms; it makes a gift, or does whatever it does, as to a friend; but one expects to receive as much or more, as having not given but lent; and if a man is worse off when the relation is dissolved than he was when it was contracted, he will complain. This happens because all or most men, while they wish for what is noble, choose what is advantageous; it is noble to do well by another without a view to repayment, but it is the receiving of benefits that is advantageous.

So if we can we should return the equivalent of what we have received (we must not make a man our friend against his will; we must recognize that we were mistaken at the first and took a benefit from a person we should not have taken it from – since it was not from a friend, nor from one who did it just for the sake of acting so – and we must settle up just as if we had been benefited on fixed terms). Indeed, one would agree to repay if one could (if one could not, even the giver would not have expected one to do so); so if it is possible we must repay. But at the outset we must consider the man by whom we are being benefited and on what terms he is acting, in order that we may accept the benefit on these terms, or else decline it.

Ought we to measure a service by its utility to the receiver and make the return with a view to that, or by the beneficence of the giver? Receivers say they have received from their benefactors what meant little to the latter and what they might have got from others – minimizing the service; but the givers say it was the biggest thing they had, and what could not have been got from others, and that it was given in times of danger or similar need. If it’s a utility friendship, surely the advantage to the receiver is the measure. It is he that asks for the service, and the other man helps him on the assumption that he will receive the equivalent; so the assistance has been precisely as great as the advantage to the receiver, so he must return as much as he has received, or even more (that would be nobler). But in virtue friendships, complaints do not arise, but the choice of the doer is a sort of measure; in choice lies the essential element of virtue and character.

VIII.14 Unequal Friendships Dissolve When Each Party Believes It Should be Getting the Better End of the Deal; This is True of Constitutional Arrangements as Well; We Should Repay our Debts in Unequal Friendships to the Extent Possible (it is Not Possible to Repay Debts to the Gods or One’s Parents); a Man Should Not Disown his Father, but a Father May Disown a Wicked Son (1163a-b).

Differences arise also in friendship based on superiority since each expects to get more out of them, but when this happens the friendship is dissolved. Not only does the better man think he ought to get more, since more should be assigned to a good man, but the more useful similarly expects this; they say a useless man should not get as much as they should, since it becomes an act of public service and not a friendship if the proceeds of the friendship do not answer to the worth of the benefits conferred. They think that, as in a commercial partnership those who put more in get more out, so it should be in friendship. But the man who is in a state of need and inferiority makes the opposite claim; they think it is the part of a good friend to help those who are in need; what, they say, is the use of being the friend of a good man or a powerful man, if one is to get nothing out of it?

Each party is justified in his claim: each should get more out of the friendship than the other – not more of the same thing, but the superior more honor and the inferior more gain; honor is the prize of virtue and of beneficence, while gain is the assistance required by inferiority.

This is also true in constitutional arrangements: the man who contributes nothing good to the common stock is not honored; what belongs to the public is given to the man who benefits the public, and honor does belong to the public. It is not possible to get wealth from the common stock and at the same time honor. No one puts up with the smaller share in all things; so to the man who loses in wealth they assign honor and to the man who is willing to be paid, wealth, since the proportion to merit equalizes the parties and preserves the friendship, as said.
So this is how we should associate with unequals: the man who is benefited in respect of wealth or virtue must give honor in return, repaying what he can. Friendship asks a man to do what he can, not what is proportional to the merits of the case; since that cannot always be done, e.g. in honors paid to the gods or to parents; no one could ever return to them the equivalent of what he gets, but the man who serves them to the utmost of his power is thought to be a good man.

Thus, a man should not disown his father (though a father may disown his son); being in debt, he should repay, but there is nothing by doing which a son will have done the equivalent of what he has received, so he is always in debt. But creditors can remit a debt; and a father can therefore do so too. Presumably no one would repudiate a son who was not extremely wicked; apart from the natural friendship it is human nature not to reject assistance. But a wicked son will naturally avoid aiding his father, or not be zealous about it: most people wish to get benefits, but avoid doing them, as a thing unprofitable.

BOOK IX:

IX.1 Resolving Friendship Disputes; Love of Character Endures Because it is Self-Dependent; the Receiver Should (and by Law does) Set the Value of the Benefit, Not the One Offering; When There is No Contract, the One Offering cannot be Complained about; One cannot Sufficiently Pay or Honor One’s Philosophy Teacher, but One Must Give What One Can; the Receiver of Some Benefit Should Set the Value Thereof Before One Receives it (1163b-1164b).

In all unequal friendships, as said, proportion equalizes the parties and preserves the friendship; e.g. in political friendship the shoemaker gets a return for his shoes in proportion to his worth, and the weaver and the rest do the same. Here a common measure has been provided in the form of money, and so everything is referred to and measured by this; but in the friendship of lovers sometimes the lover complains that his excess of love is not met by love in return (though perhaps there is nothing lovable about him), while often the beloved complains that the lover who formerly promised everything now performs nothing. Such incidents happen when the lover loves the beloved for the sake of pleasure while the beloved loves the lover for the sake of utility, and they do not both possess the qualities expected of them. This friendship dissolves when they do not get the things that formed the motives of their love; each did not love the other person himself but the qualities he had, and these were not enduring; that is why the friendships also are transient. But the love of characters, as said, endures because it is self-dependent. Differences arise when what they get is something different and not what they desire; it is like getting nothing at all when we do not get what we want at; Ex: a person made promises to a lyre-player, promising him the more, the better he sang, but in the morning, when the other demanded the fulfillment of his promises, said that he had given pleasure for pleasure. If this had been what each wanted, all would have been well; but if the one wanted enjoyment but the other gain, and the one has what he wants while the other has not, the terms of the association will not have been properly fulfilled; what each in fact wants is what he attends to, and it is for the sake of that that he will give what he has.

But who is to fix the worth of the service: he who makes the offer or he who has got the advantage? The one who offers seems to leave it to the benefactor. EX: whenever Protagoras taught anything whatsoever, he bade the learner assess the value of the knowledge, and accepted the amount so fixed. But in such matters some men approve of the saying “let a man have his fixed reward”.

Those who get the money first and then do none of the things they said they would, owing to the extravagance of their promises, naturally find themselves the objects of complaint; they do not fulfill what they agreed to. The sophists are perhaps compelled to do this because no one would give money for the things they do know [DY: Aristotle slams the sophists!]. These people then, if they do not do what they have been paid for, are naturally made the objects of complaint.

Where there is no contract of service, those who offer something for the sake of the other party cannot (as said) be complained about (that is the nature of the friendship of virtue), and the return to them must be made on the basis of their choice (since that is characteristic of friends and virtue). So one should make a return to those with whom one has studied philosophy; their worth cannot be measured against money, and they can
get no honor which will balance their services, but still it is perhaps enough, as it is with the gods and with one’s parents, to give them what one can. [DY: Aristotle says that one can never pay back one’s philosophy teacher enough, but should give whatever one can.]

If the gift was not of this sort, but was made on conditions, it is no doubt preferable that the return made should be one that seems fair to both parties, but if this cannot be achieved, it is necessary and just that the person who gets the first service should fix the reward; if the other gets in return the equivalent of the advantage the beneficiary has received, or the price he would have paid for the pleasure, he will have got what is fair as from the other.

This is true with things put up for sale, and in some places there are laws providing that no actions shall arise out of voluntary contracts, on the assumption that one should settle with a person whom one has trusted, in the spirit in which one bargained with him. The law holds that it is more just that the person to whom credit was given should fix the terms than that the person who gave credit should do so. Most things are not assessed at the same value by those who have them and those who want them; each class values highly what is its own and what it is offering; yet the return is made on the terms fixed by the receiver. But no doubt the receiver should assess a thing not at what it seems worth when he has it, but at what he assessed it at before he had it.

IX.2 Questions about Obeying One’s Father or Trusting Experts, Returning a Favor to a Benefactor v. Doing a Favor for a Friend; We Ought to Render to Each Class What is Appropriate/Becoming (1164b-1165a).

Should one in all things give the preference to one’s father and obey him? When one is ill, should one trust a doctor? When one has to elect a general, should one elect a man of military skill? Should one render a service by preference to a friend or to a good man? Should one return a favor to a benefactor or do a favor for a friend, if one cannot do both?

These questions are hard to decide with precision. They admit of many variations of all sorts in respect both of the magnitude of the service and of its nobility and necessity. We clearly should not give the preference in all things to the same person; and we must for the most part return benefits rather than do a favor for friends, as we must pay back a loan to a creditor rather than make one to a friend. But perhaps even this is not always true; EX: should a man who has been ransomed out of the hands of brigands ransom his ransomer in return, whoever he may be (or pay him if he has not been captured but requests payment), or should he ransom his father? He should ransom his father in preference even to himself. As said, generally the debt should be paid, but if the gift is exceedingly noble or exceedingly necessary, one should defer to these considerations. Sometimes it is not even fair to return the equivalent of what one has received, when the one man has done a service to one whom he knows to be good, while the other makes a return to one whom he believes to be bad. One should sometimes not lend in return to one who has lent to oneself; the one person lent to a good man, expecting to recover his loan, while the other has no hope of recovering from one who is believed to be bad. So if the facts really are so, the demand is not fair; and if they are not, but people think they are, they would be held to be doing nothing strange in refusing. As often said, discussions about feelings and actions have just as much definiteness as their subject matter.

We clearly should not make the same return to every one, nor give a father the preference in everything, as one does not sacrifice everything to Zeus; but since we ought to render different things to parents, brothers, comrades, and benefactors, we ought to render to each class what is appropriate and becoming. And this is what people seem in fact to do; to marriages and at funerals they invite their kinsfolk; these have a part in the family and so in family matters. In food matters, we should help our parents before all others, since we owe our own nourishment to them, and it is more noble to help in this respect the authors of our being even before ourselves; and one should give honor to one’s parents as one does to the gods, but not any and every honor; one should not give the same honor to one’s father and one’s mother, nor again should one give them the honor due to a wise man or to a general, but the honor due to a father, or again to a mother. One should give honor appropriate to older persons’ age, by rising to receive them and finding seats for them and so on; while to comrades and brothers one should allow freedom of speech and common use of all things. To kinsmen, fellow-
tribesmen, fellow-citizens, and to every other class one should always try to assign what is appropriate, and to compare the claims of each class with respect to nearness of relation and to virtue or usefulness. The comparison is easier when the persons belong to the same class, and more laborious when they are different. Yet we must not on that account shrink from the task, but decide the question as best we can.

**IX.3 Breaking Off Friendships When the Parties are Not the Same Anymore; If One Friend Becomes Evil in a Virtue Friendship, or Another Friend Becomes Much Better than the Other (Who Remains the Same), One May Break Off the Friendship (1165a-1166a).**

Should friendships be broken off when the other party does not remain the same, or not? There is nothing strange in breaking off a friendship based on utility or pleasure, when our friends no longer have these attributes: it was of these attributes that we were the friends; and when these have failed it is reasonable to love no longer. But one might complain if, when he loved us for our usefulness or pleasantness, he pretended to love us for our character. As said, most differences arise between friends when they are not friends in the spirit in which they think they are. EX: when a man thought he was being loved for his character, when the other person was doing nothing of the kind, he must blame himself; but when he has been deceived by the pretenses of the other person, it is just that he should complain against his deceiver—and with more justice than one does against people who counterfeit the currency, inasmuch as the wrongdoing is concerned with something more valuable.

If one accepts another man as good, and he becomes bad and is seen to do so, must one still love him? Surely it is impossible, since not everything can be loved, but only what is good. What is evil neither can nor should be loved; one should not be a lover of evil, nor become like what is bad; and we have said that like is dear to like. Must the friendship be forthwith broken off? If they are capable of being reformed, one should come to the assistance of their character or their property, inasmuch as this is better and more characteristic of friendship. But a man who breaks off such a friendship would seem to be doing nothing strange; it was not to a man of this sort that he was a friend; so when his friend has changed and he is unable to save him, he gives him up.

If one friend remained the same while the other became better and far outstripped him in virtue, should the latter treat the former as a friend? Surely he cannot. When the interval is great this becomes most plain, e.g. in the case of childish friendships; if one friend remained a child in intellect while the other became a fully developed man, how could they be friends when they neither approved of the same things nor delighted in and were pained by the same things? Not even with regard to each other will their tastes agree, and without this (as we saw) they cannot be friends; they cannot live together. Should he behave no otherwise towards him than he would if he had never been his friend? Surely he should keep a remembrance of their former intimacy, and as we think we ought to oblige friends rather than strangers, so to those who have been our friends we ought to make some allowance for our former friendship, when the breach has not been due to excess of wickedness.

**IX.4 A Virtue Friend Wishes and Does What is Best for the Sake of His Friend, and Grieves/Rejoices With Him, and These Traits are True of the Good Man’s Relation to Himself; Many Characteristics of the Good Man; a Virtue Friend is Another Self; the Wicked Man does Not Love Himself Because There’s Nothing Lovable in Him, so We Should Strive to be Good (1166a-b).**

Friendly relations with one’s neighbors, and the marks by which friendships are defined, seem to have proceeded from a man’s relations to himself. A friend is one who wishes and does what is good, or seems so, for the sake of his friend, or one who wishes his friend to exist and live, for his sake; which mothers do to their children, and friends do who have come into conflict. A friend is also one who lives with and has the same tastes as another, or one who grieves and rejoices with his friend; and this too is found in mothers most of all. It is by one of these characteristics that friendship too is defined.

Each of these is true of the good man’s relation to himself (and of all other men insofar as they think themselves good; virtue and the good man seem, as said, to be the measure of every class of things): his opinions
are harmonious, he desires the same things with all his soul, so he wishes for himself what is good and what seems so, and does it (it is characteristic of the good man to exert himself for the good), does so for his own sake (he does it for the sake of the intellectual element in him, which is thought to be the man himself); and he wishes himself to live and be preserved (especially his reason). Existence is good to the good man, and each man wishes himself what is good, while no one chooses to possess the whole world if he has first to become someone else (for that matter, even now God possesses the good); he wishes for this only on condition of being whatever he is; and reason would seem to be the individual man, or to be so more than any other element in him. Such a man wishes to live with himself; he does so with pleasure, since the memories of his past acts are delightful and his hopes for the future are good, and therefore pleasant. His mind is well stored too with subjects of contemplation. And he grieves and rejoices, more than any other, with himself; the same thing is always painful, and the same thing always pleasant, and not one thing at one time and another at another; he has, so to speak, nothing to regret.

So, since each of these characteristics belongs to the good man in relation to himself, and he is related to his friend as to himself (his friend is another self), friendship too is thought to be one of these attributes, and those who have these attributes to be virtue friends. Whether there is or is not friendship between a man and himself is a question we may dismiss for the present; there would seem to be friendship insofar as he is two or more, to judge from what has been said, and from the fact that the extreme of friendship is likened to one’s love for oneself.

The attributes named seem to belong even to the majority of men, poor creatures though they may be. Are we to say then that insofar as they are satisfied with themselves and think they are good, they share in these attributes? Certainly no one who is thoroughly bad and impious has these attributes, or even seems to do so. They hardly belong even to inferior people: EX: incontinent people are at variance with themselves, and have appetites for some things and wishes for others; they choose, instead of the things they themselves think good, things that are pleasant but hurtful; while others again, through cowardice and laziness, shrink from doing what they think best for themselves. Those who have done many terrible deeds and are hated for their wickedness even shrink from life and destroy themselves. And wicked men seek for people with whom to spend their days, and shun themselves; they remember many a grievous deed, and anticipate others like them, when they are by themselves, but when they are with others they forget. Having nothing lovable in them they have no feeling of love to themselves. So such men do not rejoice or grieve with themselves; their soul is rent by faction, and one element in it by reason of its wickedness grieves when it abstains from certain acts, while the other part is pleased, and one draws them this way and the other that, as if they were pulling them in pieces. If a man cannot at the same time be pained and pleased, after a short time he is pained because he was pleased, and he could have wished that these things had not been pleasant to him; bad men are laden with regrets.

So the bad man does not seem to be amicably disposed even to himself, because there is nothing in him to love; so if to be thus is the height of wretchedness, we should strain every nerve to avoid wickedness and should endeavor to be good; so one may be both friendly to oneself and a friend to another.

IX.5 Goodwill v. Friendship; Goodwill Lacks (but Friendly Feeling has) Intensity and Desire; Goodwill is (but Friendly Feeling is Not) Sudden and Superficial; Goodwill is the Beginning of, but Insufficient for, Friendship; X Who Wishes Y to Prosper for X’s Benefit has Goodwill to X but Not to Y (1166b-1167a).

Goodwill is a friendly sort of relation, but is not identical with friendship: one may have goodwill both towards people whom one does not know, and without their knowing it, but not friendship. Goodwill is not even friendly feeling: it does not involve intensity or desire, whereas these accompany friendly feeling, which implies intimacy while goodwill may arise of a sudden, as it does towards competitors in a contest; we come to feel goodwill for them and to share in their wishes, but we would not do anything with them; as said, we feel goodwill suddenly and love them only superficially.

Goodwill is a beginning of friendship, as the pleasure of the eye is the beginning of love. No one loves if he has not first been delighted by the form of the beloved, but he who delights in the form of another does not, for all that, love him, but only does so when he also longs for him when absent and craves for his presence; so
too it is not possible for people to be friends if they have not come to feel goodwill for each other, but those who feel goodwill are not for all that friends; they only wish well to those for whom they feel goodwill, and would not do anything with them nor take trouble for them. So goodwill is inactive friendship, though when it is prolonged and reaches the point of intimacy it becomes virtue (not utility or pleasure) friendship; goodwill too does not arise on those terms. The man who has received a benefit justly bestows goodwill in return for what has been done to him; but he who wishes someone to prosper because he hopes for enrichment through him seems to have goodwill not to him but rather to himself, just as a man is not a friend to another if he cherishes him for the sake of some use to be made of him. In general, goodwill arises on account of some virtue and worth, when one man seems to another beautiful or brave or something of the sort, as we pointed out in the case of competitors in a contest.

IX.6 Unanimity is a Friendly Relation, Not Identity of Opinion; Unanimity Deals with Things to be Done in Matters of Consequence, Where Both Parties Can Get What They Want; Unanimity is Political Friendship, and is Found Among Good Men; Bad Men Cannot be Very Unanimous or Friendly, Because They Want More Than Their Share and are Not Willing to Pay Their Share (1167a-b).

Unanimity is a friendly relation, but it is not identity of opinion; that might occur even with people who do not know each other; nor do we say that people who have the same views on any and every subject are unanimous, e.g. agreeing about the heavenly bodies (unanimity about these is not a friendly relation), but a city is unanimous when men have the same opinion about what is to their interest, and choose the same actions, and do what they have resolved in common. So people are unanimous about things to be done in matters of consequence, where it is possible for both or all parties to get what they want; EXs: a city is unanimous when all its citizens think that the offices in it should be elective, or that they should form an alliance with Sparta, or that Pittacus should be their ruler (and he himself was willing to rule). But when each of two people wishes himself to have the thing in question, like the captains in the Phoenissai, they are in a state of faction; it is not unanimity when each of two parties thinks of the same thing, whatever that may be, but only when they think of the same thing in relation to the same person, e.g. when both the common people and those of the better class wish the best men to rule; thus do all get what they aim at. Unanimity is political friendship; it is concerned with things that are to our interest and have an influence on our life.

Political unanimity is found among good men: they are unanimous both in themselves and with one another, being “of one mind” (the wishes of such men are constant and not at the mercy of opposing currents like a strait of the sea), and they wish for what is just/advantageous, and these are the objects of their common endeavor. Bad men cannot be unanimous except to a small extent, nor can than they be friends, since they aim at getting more than their share of advantages, while in labor and public service they fall short of their share; and each man wishing for advantage to himself criticizes his neighbor and stands in his way; if people do not watch it carefully the common interest is soon destroyed. The result is that they are in a state of faction, putting compulsion on each other but unwilling themselves to do what is just.

IX.7 Benefactors Love Those They Benefit More Than Vice Versa, as Craftsmen Love Their Crafts and Poets Love Their Poems More than Either Could Love Them in Return; This is Not Paradoxical, but Human Nature; All Men Love More What They have Won By Labor; Being Well-Treated Involves No Labor, While Treating Others Well is Laborious, Explaining Benefactors’ Love (1167b-1168a).

Benefactors are thought to love those they have benefited, more than those who have been well-treated love their benefactor; and some find this paradoxical. As in loans, where debtors wish their creditors did not exist, while creditors actually take care of the safety of their debtors, so it is thought that benefactors wish the objects of their action to exist since they will then get their gratitude, while the beneficiaries take no interest in making this return. It is quite like human nature: most people are forgetful, and are more anxious to be well treated than to treat others well. But the cause is more deeply rooted in the nature of things; the money-lender case is not
even analogous: they have no friendly feeling to their debtors, but only a wish that they may be kept safe with a view to what is to be got from them; while those who have done a service to others feel friendship and love for those they have served (even if these are not of any use to them and never will be). This is true of craftsmen too: every man loves his own handiwork better than he would be loved by it if it came alive; and this is most of all true with poets; they have an excessive love for their own poems, doting on them as if they were their children. This is what the position of benefactors is like; that which they have treated well is their handiwork, and therefore they love this more than the handiwork does its maker. The cause of this is that existence is to all men a thing to be chosen and loved, and that we exist by virtue of activity (i.e. by living and acting), and that the handiwork is in a sense, the producer in activity; he loves his handiwork, therefore, because he loves existence. This is rooted in the nature of things; what he is in potentiality, his handiwork manifests in activity. To the benefactor, that is noble which depends on his action (so he delights in the object of his action), whereas to the patient there is nothing noble in the agent, but at most something advantageous, and this is less pleasant and lovable. What is pleasant is the activity of the present, the hope of the future, the memory of the past; but most pleasant is that which depends on activity, and similarly this is most lovable. For a man who has made something his work remains (the noble is lasting), but for the person acted on, the utility passes away. The memory of noble things is pleasant, but that of useful things is not likely to be pleasant, or is less so; though the reverse seems true of expectation. Love is like activity, being loved like passivity; and loving and its concomitants are attributes of those who are the more active.

All men love more what they have won by labor (e.g. those who have made their money love it more than those who have inherited it); and to be well treated seems to involve no labor, while to treat others well is a laborious task. This is why mothers are fonder of their children than fathers; bringing them into the world costs them more pains, and they know better that the children are their own. So with benefactors.

**IX.8 Self-Love with Respect to Wealth, Honors, and Bodily Pleasures is Reproachable; Self-Love with Respect to Virtue is Laudable and Should be Pursued (Aristotle’s Argument for Ethical Egoism); the Good Man will Relinquish Wealth, Honor, and Other Goods to His Friend, for the Sake of Gaining Nobility (1168a-1169b).**

Should a man love himself most, or someone else? People criticize those who love themselves most, calling them self-lovers (as an epithet of disgrace), and a bad man seems to do everything for his own sake (the more so the more wicked he is) – so men reproach him with doing nothing of his own accord. But the good man acts for honor’s and his friend’s sake (the more so the better he is), sacrificing his own interest.

The facts unsurprisingly clash with these arguments: One ought to love best one’s best friend, and a man’s best friend is one who wishes well to the object of his wish for his sake, even if no one is to know of it; but these attributes are found most of all in a man’s attitude towards himself, and so are all the other attributes by which a friend is defined; as said, it is from this relation that all the characteristics of friendship have extended to others. All the proverbs agree (e.g. “a single soul”, “what friends have is common property”, “friendship is equality”, and “charity begins at home”); all these marks are found most in a man’s relation to himself; he is his own best friend and so ought to love himself best. So which of the two views we should follow, since both are plausible?

On one hand, those who use the phrase “lover of self” in reproach ascribe self-love to people who assign to themselves the greater share of wealth, honors, and bodily pleasures (these are what most people desire, and busy themselves about as if they were the best of all things, which is why they become objects of competition). These people gratify their appetites, their feelings, and the irrational element of the soul; and most men are of this nature thus the epithet has taken its meaning from the prevailing type of self-love, which is a bad one); so it is just that self-lovers of this type are reproached for being so. Most people use “self-lovers” this way. On the other hand, if a man were always anxious that he himself, above all things, should act justly, temperately, or in accordance with any other of the virtues, and in general were always to try to secure for himself the honorable course, no one will call such a man a lover of self or blame him.
The virtuous man is more than the other a lover of self; he assigns to himself the things that are noblest and best, and gratifies the most authoritative element in himself and in all things obeys this; and just as a city is most properly identified with its most authoritative element, so is a man; so the man who loves his intellect and gratifies it is most of all a lover of self. Moreover, a man is said to have or not to have self-control according as his intellect has or has not the control, on the assumption that this is the man himself; and the things men have done from reason are thought most properly their own acts and voluntary acts. So those who busy themselves in an exceptional degree with noble actions all men approve and praise; and if all were to strive towards what is noble and strain every nerve to do the noblest deeds, everything would be as it should be for the common good, and everyone would secure for himself the goods that are greatest, since virtue is the greatest of goods.

So the good man should be a lover of self (he will benefit himself and others by doing noble acts), but the wicked man should not (he will hurt both himself and his neighbors, following evil passions). What the wicked man does clashes with what he ought to do, but what the good man ought to do he does: the intellect always chooses what is best for itself, and the good man obeys his intellect. The good man does many acts for the sake of his friends and country, and if necessary dies for them; he will throw away both wealth and honors and in general the goods that are objects of competition, gaining for himself nobility; since he would prefer a short period of intense pleasure to a long one of mild enjoyment, a year of noble life to many years of humdrum existence, and one great and noble action to many trivial ones. Those who die for others doubtless gain nobility, so they choose a great prize for themselves. They will throw away wealth too on condition that their friends will gain more; while a man’s friend gains wealth he himself achieves nobility; he is therefore assigning the greater good to himself. The same too is true of honor and office; all these things he will sacrifice to his friend; this is noble and laudable for himself. So he is rightly thought to be good, since he chooses nobility before all else. He may even give up actions to his friend; it may be nobler to become the cause of his friend’s acting than to act himself. Thus, in all praiseworthy actions, the good man assigns to himself the greater share in what is noble. In this sense, then, a man should be a lover of self; but in the sense in which most men are so, he ought not.

IX.9 The Happy Man Needs Friends to do Well by, to Contemplate With, to Live Pleasantly, and to Have What is Desirable (a Good Friend); Aristotle’s Similar Statement to Descartes’ “I Think, Therefore I Am” (1169b-1170b).

Will the happy man need friends or not? The first party says the blessed and self-sufficient have no need of friends; they have the things that are good, and so being self-sufficient they need nothing further while a friend, being another self, furnishes what a man cannot provide by his own effort; whence the saying “when fortune is kind, what need of friends?” But we say that it seems strange, when one assigns all good things to the happy man, not to assign friends (the greatest of external goods). If it is more characteristic of a friend to do well by another than to be well done by, and to confer benefits is characteristic of the good man and of virtue, and it is nobler to do well by friends than by strangers, the good man will need people to do well by. Hence the question whether we need friends more in prosperity or in adversity: not only does a man in adversity need people to confer benefits on him, but also those who are prospering need people to do well by. Surely it is also strange to make the blessed man a solitary: no one would choose to possess all good things on condition of being alone, since man is a political creature and one whose nature is to live with others. So even the happy man lives with others; he has the things that are by nature good. And plainly it is better to spend his days with friends and good men than with strangers or any chance persons. So the happy man needs friends.

How is the first party right, then? It is true that the blessed man has no need of utility friends, since he already has the things that are good; nor will he need pleasure friends, or he will need them only to a small extent (his life, being pleasant, has no need of adventitious pleasure); and because he does not need such friends he is thought not to need friends.

But that is surely not true: We said that happiness is an activity; and activity plainly comes into being and is not present at the start like a piece of property. If happiness lies in living and being active, and the good man’s activity is virtuous and pleasant in itself, as said, and if a thing’s being one’s own is one of the attributes that make it pleasant, and if we can contemplate our neighbors (and their actions) better than ourselves (or our
own), and if the actions of virtuous men who are their friends are pleasant to good men (since these have both the attributes that are naturally pleasant) – if this be so, the blessed man will need friends of this sort, since he chooses to contemplate worthy actions and actions that are his own, and the actions of a good man who is his friend have both these qualities.

Further, the happy man ought to live pleasantly. If he were a solitary, life would be hard for him; it is not easy to be continuously active by oneself; but with others and towards others it is easier. With others therefore his activity will be more continuous, being in itself pleasant, as it ought to be for the man who is blessed; a good man qua good delights in virtuous actions and is vexed at vicious ones, as a musical man enjoys beautiful tunes but is pained at bad ones. A certain training in virtue arises also from the company of the good, as Theognis remarks.

A virtuous friend seems to be naturally desirable for a virtuous man. That which is good by nature, as said, is for the virtuous man good and pleasant in itself. Life is defined in the case of animals by the power of perception, in that of man by the power of perception or thought; and a power is referred to the corresponding activity, which is the essential thing; so life seems to be essentially perceiving or thinking. Life is among the things that are good and pleasant in themselves, since it is determinate and the determinate is of the nature of the good; and that which is good by nature is also good for the virtuous man (which is the reason why life seems pleasant to all men); but we must not apply this to a wicked and corrupt life nor to a life spent in pain; such a life is indeterminate, as are its attributes. If (a) life itself is good and pleasant [which it seems to be, from the very fact that all men desire it, and particularly those who are good and blessed; for to such men life is most desirable, and their existence is the most blessed]; and if (b) he who sees perceives that he sees (and in the other senses and activities), so that if we perceive, we perceive that we perceive, and if we think, that we think; and if to perceive that we perceive or think is to perceive that we exist (existence was defined as perceiving or thinking) \[DY: Cf. Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am”\]; and if (c) perceiving that one lives is one of the things that are pleasant in themselves (life is by nature good, and to perceive what is good present in oneself is pleasant); and if (d) life is desirable, and particularly so for good men, because to them existence is good and pleasant (they are pleased at the consciousness of what is in itself good); and if (e) as the virtuous man is to himself, he is to his friend also (his friend is another self): – then as his own existence is desirable for each man, so, or almost so, is that of his friend. His existence was seen to be desirable because he perceived his own goodness, and such perception is pleasant in itself. So he needs to be conscious of the existence of his friend as well, and this will be realized in their living together and sharing in discussion and thought; this is what living together would seem to mean in the case of man, and not, as in the case of cattle, feeding in the same place.

If existence is in itself desirable for the blessed man (since it is by its nature good and pleasant), and that of his friend is very much the same, a friend will be one of the things that are desirable. The blessed man must have that which is desirable to him, or he will be deficient in this respect. Thus the man who is to be happy will need virtuous friends.

**IX.10 A Good Man Should Have as Many Friends as the Number of Them Who can Live Together; It is Impossible to be a Great Friend to Many People; We Should be Content if We Find a Few Good/Virtue Friends (1170b-1171a).**

Should a man neither be friendless nor have an excessive number of friends?

This applies well to utility friends; to do services to many people in return is a laborious task and life is not long enough for its performance. So friends in excess of those who are sufficient for our own life are superfluous, and hindrances to the noble life: we have no need of them. A few pleasure friends are sufficient, as a little seasoning in food is enough.

But as regards good friends, should we have as many as possible, or is there a limit to the number of one's friends, as there is to the size of a city? You cannot make a city of ten men, and if there are a hundred thousand it is a city no longer. But the proper number is presumably not a single number, but anything that falls between certain fixed points. So for friends too there is a fixed number – perhaps the largest number with whom one can live together (for that, we found, is thought to be most characteristic of friendship); and that one cannot live with many people and divide oneself up among them is plain. Further, they too must be friends of one
another, if they are all to spend their days together; and it is a hard business for this condition to be fulfilled with a large number. It is difficult to rejoice and to grieve in an intimate way with many people (it may likely happen that one has at once to be merry with one friend and to mourn with another). So we should not seek to have as many friends as possible, but as many as are enough for the purpose of living together; it would seem actually impossible to be a great friend to many people. This is why one cannot love several people; love tends to be a sort of excess friendship, and that can only be felt towards one person; so great friendship can only be felt towards a few people. This seems to be confirmed in practice; we do not find many people who are friends in the comradely way of friendship, and the famous friendships of this sort are always between two people. Those who have many friends and mix intimately with them all are thought to be no one’s friend, except in the way proper to fellow-citizens, and such people are also called obsequious. In the way proper to fellow-citizens, indeed, it is possible to be the friend of many and yet not be obsequious but a genuinely good man; but one cannot have a virtue friendship with many people’s characters, and we must be content if we find even a few such.

IX.11 Friendship is More Necessary in Bad Fortune, but Nobler in Good Fortune; Just Seeing One’s Friends is Pleasant (Especially in Prosperity, but can be in Adversity); We Should Help Our Friends in Adversity Unasked and Readily; the Presence of Friends is Desirable in all Circumstances (1171a-b).

Do we need friends more in good fortune or in bad? They are sought after in both; while men in adversity need help, in prosperity they need people to live with and to make the objects of their beneficence; they wish to do well by others. Friendship is more necessary in bad fortune, and so it is useful friends that one wants in this case; but it is nobler in good fortune, and so we also seek for good men as our friends, since it is more desirable to confer benefits on these and to live with these. The very presence of friends is pleasant both in good fortune and also in bad, since grief is lightened when friends sorrow with us. Hence one might ask (but we’ll leave it aside) whether they share as it were our burden, or – without that happening – their presence by its pleasantness, and the thought of their grieving with us, make our pain less.

Friends’ presence contains various factors: The very seeing of one’s friends is pleasant, especially if one is in adversity, and becomes a safeguard against grief (a friend tends to comfort us both by the sight of him and by his words, if he is tactful, since he knows our character and the things that please or pain us); but to see him pained at our misfortunes is painful; every one shuns being a cause of pain to his friends. Thus manly men guard against making their friends grieve with them, and, unless he be exceptionally insensible to pain, such a man cannot stand the pain that ensues for his friends, and in general does not admit fellow-mourners because he is not himself given to mourning; but women and womanly men enjoy sympathizers in their grief, and love them as friends and companions in sorrow. But in all things one obviously ought to imitate the better type of person.

On the other hand, the presence of friends in our prosperity implies both a pleasant passing of our time and the thought of their pleasure at our own good fortune. For this cause it would seem that we ought to summon our friends readily to share our good fortunes (the beneficent character is a noble one), but summon them to our bad fortunes with hesitation; we ought to give them as little a share as possible in our evils – whence the saying “enough is my misfortune”. We should summon friends to us most of all when they are likely by suffering a few inconveniences to do us a great service.

Conversely, it is fitting to go unasked and readily to the aid of those in adversity (it is characteristic of a friend to render services, and especially to those who are in need and have not demanded them; such action is nobler and pleasanter for both persons); but when our friends are prosperous we should join readily in their activities (they need friends for these too), but be tardy in coming forward to be the objects of their kindness; for it is not noble to be keen to receive benefits. Still, we must no doubt avoid getting the reputation of kill-joys by repulsing them (as sometimes happens).

Thus, the presence of friends seems desirable in all circumstances.
IX.12 The Most Desirable Thing for Friends is to Live Together; Friends Do What They Value Most with Friends; Friendship with Bad Men is Evil; Friendship with Good Men is Good (1171b-1172a).

Is the most desirable thing for friends living together? (This might follow from this case: for lovers, the sight of the beloved is the thing they love most, and on this love depends most for its being and origin.) Friendship is a partnership, and as a man is to himself, so is he to his friend; the perception of his (and his friend’s) existence is desirable, and the activity of this perception is produced when they live together, so that it is natural that they aim at this. Whatever it is for whose sake people value life, in that they wish to occupy themselves with their friends; and so some drink together, others dice together, others join in athletic exercises and hunting, or in the study of philosophy, each class spending their days together in whatever they love most in life; since they wish to live with their friends, they do and share in those things as far as they can. Thus the friendship of bad men turns out an evil thing (because of their instability they unite in bad pursuits, and besides they become evil by becoming like each other), while the friendship of good men is good, being augmented by their companionship; and they are thought to become better too by their activities and by improving each other; from each other they take the mold of the characteristics they approve — whence the saying “noble deeds from noble men.”

BOOK X:

X.1 It is Important to Discuss Pleasure Because it is Most Intimately Connected to Human Nature; We Educate Children with Pleasure and Pain; Some Say Rightly (in Some Sense) Pleasure is the Good; Others Say Wrongly that Pleasure is Thoroughly Bad (1172a-b).

We ought next to discuss pleasure, because it is most intimately connected with our human nature, and so why we educate the young by steering them with the rudders of pleasure and pain. Moreover, to enjoy and hate the things we ought has the greatest bearing on virtue of character. These things extend right through life, with a weight and power of their own in respect both to virtue and to the happy life, since men choose what is pleasant and avoid what is painful; so we should discuss these things, especially since they admit of much dispute. Some [A] say pleasure is the good; others [B] say it is thoroughly bad — some no doubt being persuaded that the facts are so, and others thinking it has a better effect on our life to exhibit pleasure as a bad thing even if it is not; [B] think that most people incline towards it and are the slaves of their pleasures, for which reason they ought to lead them in the opposite direction, since thus they will reach the middle state. But surely [B] are wrong; arguments about matters concerned with feelings and actions are less reliable than facts: so when they clash with the facts of perception they are despised, and discredit the truth as well; if a man who runs down pleasure is once seen to be aiming at it, his inclining towards it is thought to imply that it is all worthy of being aimed at. True arguments are most useful, with a view to both knowledge and life; since they harmonize with the facts they are believed, and so they stimulate those who understand them to live according to them.

X.2 Eudoxus Argued that Pleasure is the Good; Plato Argued that Pleasure is Not the Good Because Pleasure with Wisdom is More Desirable Than Either by Themselves; Two Objections (That at Which All Things Aim is Not Necessarily Good, and Evils as Contraries to Pleasures) Considered and Refuted (1172b-1173a).

Eudoxus thought pleasure was the good because he saw all things, both rational and irrational, aiming at it, and because in all things which is the object of choice is what is virtuous, and that which is most the object of choice the greatest good; thus the fact that all things moved towards the same object indicated that this was for all things the chief good (each thing, he argued, finds its own good, as it finds its own nourishment); and that which is good for all things and at which all aim was the good. His arguments were credited more because of the virtue of his remarkably temperate character than for their own sake (it was thought that he was not saying what he did say as a friend of pleasure, but that the facts really were so). He believed that the same conclusion followed no less plainly from a study of the contrariety of pleasure: pain was in itself an object of aversion to all
things, and therefore its contrary must be similarly an object of choice. That is most an object of choice that we choose not because or for the sake of something else, and pleasure is admittedly of this nature; no one asks to what end he is pleased, thus implying that pleasure is in itself an object of choice. Further, Eudoxus argued that pleasure when added to any good (e.g., to just or temperate action), makes it more choice worthy, and that it is only by itself that the good can be increased.

These arguments show that pleasure is one of the goods, and no more a good than any other; every good is more choice worthy along with another good than taken alone. Similarly, Plato proved the good is not pleasure because the pleasant life is more desirable with wisdom than without, and that if the mixture is better, pleasure is not the good; the good cannot become more desirable by the addition of anything to it. It is clear that nothing else either can be the good if it is made more desirable by the addition of any of the things that are good in themselves. What satisfies this criterion and at the same time is something in which we can participate? It is something of this sort that we are looking for.

OBJ: That at which all things aim is not necessarily good. REP: Nonsense: we say that that which everyone thinks really is so [DY OBJ: Argumentum Ad Populum]; the man who attacks this belief will hardly have anything more credible to maintain instead. If both senseless and intelligent creatures desire the things in question, what sense can there be in this view? Perhaps even in inferior creatures there is some natural good stronger than themselves which aims at their proper good.

OBJ: The argument about the contrary of pleasure: if pain is an evil it does not follow that pleasure is a good; evil is opposed to evil and at the same time both are opposed to the neutral state. REP: This is correct enough but does not apply to the things in question. If both belonged to the class of evils they ought both to be objects of aversion, while if they belonged to the class of neutrals they shouldn’t be evil or equally evil; but in fact people evidently avoid the one class (the evil) as evil and choose the other (neutral state) as good; that then must be the nature of the opposition between them.

X.3 If Pleasure is Not a Quality, It can Still be a Good; Pleasure is Not a Movement or a Replenishment; Disgraceful Pleasures are Not Pleasant; No One Would Choose to Live with a Child’s Intellect for His Whole Life; We Would Still Value Seeing, Knowing, Remembering, and the Virtues, even if They Brought No Pleasure (1173a-1174a).

If pleasure is not a quality, it does not follow that it is not a good; the activities of virtue are not qualities either, nor is happiness.

It is said that the good is determinate, while pleasure is indeterminate, because it admits of degrees. Now if it is from the feeling of pleasure that they judge thus, the same will be true of virtues where people have more or less of a certain character are or act so more or less (e.g., people may be more or just or brave, or to act more or less justly or temperately). But if their judgment is based on the various pleasures, surely they are not stating the cause, if in fact some pleasures are unmixed and others mixed. Just as health admits of degrees without being indeterminate, why shouldn’t pleasure? The same proportion is not found in all things, nor a single proportion always in the same thing, but it may be relaxed and yet persist up to a point, and it may differ in degree. Pleasure might be of this kind.

My opponents assume that the good is complete while movements and comings into being are incomplete and try to exhibit pleasure as being a movement and a coming into being. But they are wrong: pleasure is not a movement. Speed and slowness are thought to be proper to every movement, if not in itself (as e.g. that of the heavens) then in relation to something else; but of pleasure neither of these things is true. While we may become pleased or angry quickly, we cannot be pleased quickly, not even in relation to someone else, while we can walk, or grow, or the like, quickly. So while we can change quickly or slowly into a state of pleasure, we cannot quickly exhibit the activity of pleasure, i.e. be pleased. How can it be a coming into being? Any chance thing cannot come out of any chance thing; a thing is dissolved into that out of which it comes into being; so pain would be the destruction of that of which pleasure is the coming into being. [DY: Here, Aristotle is denying that Plato is correct that pleasure is a movement from the neutral state to the state of pleasure (see next paragraph for Plato’s true pleasures – learning, pleasant smells). But Aristotle isn’t telling us why these
kinds of pleasures can’t be movements in any sense, despite his points here against one sense of movement. But see the next chapter for further Aristotelian arguments against pleasure being movement.

My opponents also say that pain is the lack of that which is according to nature, and pleasure is replenishment. But these experiences are bodily. If pleasure is replenishment with that which is according to nature, that which feels pleasure will be that in which the replenishment takes place, i.e. the body; but that is not thought to be the case; so the replenishment is not pleasure, though one might be pleased when replenishment was taking place, just as one would be pained if one was being operated on. This opinion seems to be based on the pains and pleasures connected with nutrition; on the fact that when people have been short of food and have felt pain beforehand they are pleased by the replenishment. But this does not happen with all pleasures; the pleasures of learning and, among the sensuous pleasures, those of smell, and also many sounds and sights, and memories and hopes, do not presuppose pain. [DY: Many of Plato’s examples of true pleasures from Republic IX and Philebus.] These will not be the coming into being of anything, because there has not been lack of anything of which they could be the replenishment.

In reply to those who mention the disgraceful pleasures, these are not unpleasant; if things are pleasant to people of vicious constitution, we must not suppose that they are also pleasant to others than these, just as we do not reason so about the things that are wholesome or sweet or bitter to sick people, or ascribe whiteness to the things that seem white to those suffering from a disease of the eye. Or one might answer that the pleasures are desirable, but not from these sources, as wealth is desirable, but not as the reward of betrayal, and health, but not at the cost of eating anything and everything. Or perhaps pleasures differ in kind; those derived from noble sources are different from those derived from base sources, and one cannot get the pleasure of the just man without being just, nor that of the musical man without being musical, and so on.

The fact that a friend is different from a flatterer makes it plain that pleasure is not a good or that pleasures are different in kind; friends consort with us with a view to the good and are praised therefor; flatterers with a view to our pleasure, and is reproached. No one would choose to live with a child’s intellect throughout his life, however much he were to be pleased at the things that children are pleased at, nor to get enjoyment by doing some most disgraceful deed, though he were never to feel any pain in consequence. There are many things we should be keen about even if they brought no pleasure, e.g. seeing, remembering, knowing, and possessing the virtues. If pleasures necessarily do accompany these, that makes no odds; we should choose these even if no pleasure resulted. Thus, pleasure is not the good nor is all pleasure desirable, and some pleasures are desirable in themselves, differing in kind or in their sources from the others.

X.4 Pleasure is Complete and Whole; Further Arguments that Pleasure is Not a Movement (Building, Walking, Flying, Leaping) Nor a Coming into Being; Each Sense Causes Pleasure; We Cannot be Continuously Pleased; All Men Desire Pleasure Because They Aim at Life (1174a-1175a).

Let us take up what (kind of thing) pleasure is from the beginning. Seeing is at any moment complete: it does not lack anything which coming into being later will complete its form; pleasure is of this nature. Pleasure is a whole, and at no time can one find a pleasure whose form will be completed if the pleasure lasts longer. So pleasure is not a movement. Every movement (e.g. building) takes time and is for the sake of an end, and is complete when it has made what it aims at. So it is complete only in the whole time or at the final moment. In their parts and during the time they occupy, all movements are incomplete, and are different in kind from the whole movement and from each other. EX: in building, the fitting together of the stones is different from the fluting of the column, and these from the making of the temple; and the making of the temple is complete (it lacks nothing with a view to the end proposed), but the making of the base or of the triglyph is incomplete (each is the making of a part). So they differ in kind, and it is not possible to find at any and every time a movement complete in form, but if at all, only in the whole time. Other EXs: walking and all other movements. If locomotion is a movement from here to there, it, too, has differences in kind – flying, walking, leaping, and so on. Even in walking itself there are such differences: the whence and whither are not the same in the whole racecourse and in a part of it, nor in one part and in another, nor is it the same thing to traverse this line and that; one traverses not only a line but one which is in a place, and this one is in a different place from that. Movement is not complete at any and every time: the many movements are incomplete and different in kind, since the whence
and whither give them their form. But the form of pleasure is complete at any and every time. So pleasure and movement must be different from each other, and pleasure must be one of the things that are whole and complete. This also follows from the fact that it is not possible to move otherwise than in time, but it is possible to be pleased (that which takes place in a moment is a whole).

Thus, there is neither a movement nor a coming into being of pleasure. Movement/coming into being can only be ascribed to divisible things that are not wholes; there is no coming into being or movement of seeing, of a point, or of a unit, so there is none of pleasure either; it is a whole.

Since every sense is active in relation to its object, and a sense which is in good condition acts completely in relation to the most beautiful of its objects (complete activity seems to be especially of this nature; whether we say that it or the organ in which it resides is active is immaterial), so in each sense, the best activity is that of the best-conditioned organ in relation to the finest of its objects. This activity will be the most complete and pleasant. While there is pleasure in respect of any sense, and in respect of thought and contemplation no less, the most complete is pleasantest, and that of a well-conditioned organ in relation to the worthiest of its objects is the most complete; and the pleasure completes the activity. But pleasure does not complete it in the same way as the object perceived and the faculty of perception, if they are good, do—just as health and the doctor are not in the same way the cause of a man’s being healthy. (Pleasures are produced in respect to each sense.)

Pleasure arises most of all when the sense and object it is active in reference to are at their best (when both object and perceiver are of the best there will always be pleasure, since the requisite agent and patient are both present.) Pleasure completes the activity not as the inherent disposition does, but as an end which supervenes as the bloom of youth does on those in the flower of their age. So long as both the intelligible or sensible object and the discriminating or contemplative faculty are as they should be, the pleasure will be involved in the activity; when both the passive and the active factor are unchanged and are related to each other in the same way, the same result naturally follows.

How is it that no one is continuously pleased? Is it that we grow weary? All humans are incapable of continuous activity. So pleasure also is not continuous because it accompanies activity. Some things delight us when they are new, but later do so less, for the same reason; at first the mind is in a state of stimulation and intensely active about them, as people are with respect to their vision when they look hard at a thing, but afterwards our activity is not of this kind, but has grown relaxed; analogously pleasure is dulled.

Arguably, all men desire pleasure because they all aim at life; (1) life is an activity; (2) each man is active about those things and with those capacities that he loves most (e.g. the musician is active with his hearing in reference to tunes, the student with his mind in reference to theoretical questions, and so on in each case); (3) pleasure completes the activities, and therefore life, which they desire. Thus, (4) they aim at pleasure too, since for everyone it completes life, which is desirable. [Here we dismiss the question whether we choose life for the sake of pleasure or pleasure for the sake of life (they seem to be bound up together and not to admit of separation, since without activity pleasure does not arise, and every activity is completed by pleasure).]
in their proper function by enjoying it; and the pleasures intensify the activities, and what intensifies a thing is proper to it, but things different in kind have properties different in kind.

In addition, activities are hindered by pleasures arising from other sources. People who are fond of playing the flute are incapable of attending to arguments if they overhear some one playing the flute, since they enjoy flute-playing more than the activity in hand; so the pleasure connected with flute-playing destroys the activity concerned with argument. When one is active with two things at once, the more pleasant activity drives out the other, and if it is much more pleasant, it does so all the more, so that one even ceases from the other. This is why when we enjoy anything very much we do not throw ourselves into anything else, and do one thing only when we are not much pleased by another; EX: in the theatre the people who eat sweets do so most when the actors are poor. Since activities are made precise, more enduring, and better by their proper pleasure, and injured by alien pleasures, evidently the two kinds of pleasure are far apart. Alien pleasures do pretty much what proper pains do, since activities are destroyed by their proper pains; EX: if a man finds writing or doing sums unpleasant and painful, he does not write, or does not do sums, because the activity is painful. So an activity suffers contrary effects from its proper pleasures and pains (i.e. from those that supervene on it in virtue of its own nature). Alien pleasures have been stated to do much the same as pain; they destroy the activity, only not to the same degree.

Since activities differ in respect of goodness and badness, and some are choice worthy, to be avoided, or neutral, so, too, are the pleasures: to each activity there is a proper pleasure. The pleasure proper to a worthy activity is good and that proper to an unworthy activity bad; just as the appetites for noble objects are laudable, those for base objects culpable. The pleasures involved in activities are more proper to them than the desires, since desires are separated both in time and in nature, while the pleasures are close to the activities, and so hard to distinguish from them that it admits of dispute whether the activity is not the same as the pleasure. (Still, pleasure does not seem to be thought or perception – that would be strange; but because they are not found apart they appear to some people the same.) As activities are different, so are the corresponding pleasures. Sight is superior to touch in purity, and hearing and smell to taste; the pleasures, therefore, are similarly superior, and those of thought superior to these, and within each of the two kinds some are superior to others.

Each animal has a proper pleasure, as it has a proper function (that which corresponds to its activity). EXs: horse, dog, and man have different pleasures, Heraclitus: “asses would prefer sweepings to gold” (food is pleasanter than gold to asses). So the pleasures of creatures different in kind differ in kind, and it is plausible to suppose that those of a single species do not differ. But they vary widely, in the case of men at least; the same things delight some people and pain others, and are painful and odious to some, and pleasant to and liked by others. Ex: sweet things; the same things do not seem sweet to a man in a fever and a healthy man – nor hot to a weak man and one in good condition. In all such matters, that which appears to the good man is thought to be really so. If virtue and the good man as such are the measure of each thing, those also will be pleasures that appear so to him, and those things pleasant that he enjoys. If the things he finds tiresome seem pleasant to some one, that is nothing surprising; men may be ruined and spoilt in many ways; but the things are not pleasant, but only pleasant to these people and to people in this condition. Those that are admittedly disgraceful plainly should not be said to be pleasures, except to a perverted taste; but of those that are thought to be good what kind of pleasure or what pleasure should be said to be that proper to man? Is it not plain from the corresponding activities? The pleasures follow these. Whether the complete and blessed man has one or more activities, the pleasures that complete these will be said in the strict sense to be pleasures proper to man, and the rest will be so in a secondary and fractional way, as are the activities.

X.6 Happiness Review: It is Not a Disposition but an Activity, Desirable in Itself, Not for the Sake of Something Else, and is Self-Sufficient; Happiness does Not Lie in Amusement; Relaxation is Not an End, but it is Taken for the Sake of Activity; the Happy Life is One of Virtue, Which Requires Exertion (1176a-1177a).

Let us discuss the nature of happiness, the end of human nature. Let us review first: Happiness is not a disposition; if so, it might belong to someone who was asleep throughout his life, living the life of a plant, or, someone suffering the greatest misfortunes. These implications are unacceptable, so we must class happiness as
an activity, and since some activities are necessary and desirable for the sake of something else, while others are so in themselves, happiness must be placed among those desirable in themselves, not among those desirable for the sake of something else; happiness does not lack anything, but is self-sufficient. Those activities are desirable in themselves from which nothing is sought beyond the activity; EX: virtuous actions are of this nature: to do noble and good deeds is a thing desirable for its own sake.

Pleasant amusements also are of this nature (we choose them not for the sake of other things); we are injured rather than benefited by them, since we are led to neglect our bodies and our property. Most of the people who are deemed happy take refuge in such pastimes, which is the reason why those who are ready-witted at them are highly esteemed at the courts of tyrants; they make themselves pleasant companions in the tyrant’s favorite pursuits, and that is the sort of man they want. These things are thought to be of the nature of happiness because people in despot positions spend their leisure in them, but perhaps such people prove nothing; virtue and thought, from which good activities flow, do not depend on despotic position; nor, if these people, who have never tasted pure and generous pleasure, take refuge in the bodily pleasures, should these for that reason be thought more desirable (boys also think the things that are valued among themselves are the best). As different things seem valuable to boys and to men, so they should to bad men and to good. As we have often maintained, those things are both valuable and pleasant which are such to the good man; and to each man the activity in accordance with his own disposition is most desirable, and, therefore, to the good man that which is in accordance with virtue. So happiness does not lie in amusement; it would be strange if the end were amusement, and one were to take trouble and suffer hardship all one’s life in order to amuse oneself. Everything that we choose we choose for the sake of something else – except happiness, which is an end. But to exert oneself and work for the sake of amusement seems silly and utterly childish. To amuse oneself in order that one may exert oneself, as Anacharsis puts it, seems right; amusement is a sort of relaxation, and we need relaxation because we cannot work continuously. Relaxation is not an end; it is taken for the sake of activity.

The happy life is one of virtue: a virtuous life requires exertion, and does not consist in amusement. We say that serious things are better than laughable things and those connected with amusement, and that the activity of the better of any two things – whether two parts or two men – is the better; but the activity of the better is ipso facto superior and more of the nature of happiness. Any chance person can enjoy the bodily pleasures no less than the best man; but no one assigns to a slave a share in happiness – unless he assigns to him also a share in human life. Happiness does not lie in such occupations, but in virtuous activities.

X.7 Happiness is in Accordance with the Highest Virtue, Which is Contemplative Activity; Contemplative Activity is Best, Most Continuous, Pleasant, and Self-Sufficient; the Wise can Contemplate Alone; Contemplation is Loved for Its Own Sake; Complete Happiness; Intellect is Divine and What Man is, so the Life of Intellect is Most Divine, Best, Most Pleasant, and Happiest; We Should Make Ourselves as Immortal as Possible (1177a-1178a).

If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be that of the best thing in us. Whether it be intellect or something else that is this element which is thought to be our natural ruler and guide and to take thought of things noble and divine, whether it be itself also divine or only the most divine element in us, the activity of this in accordance with its proper virtue will be complete happiness. As said, this activity is contemplative.

This is in agreement both with what we said before and with the truth: (1) this activity is the best (intellect the best thing in us and the objects of intellect are the best knowable objects); (2) it is the most continuous (we can contemplate truth more continuously than we can do anything). Happiness has pleasure mingled with it, but the activity of wisdom is admittedly the pleasantest of virtuous activities; philosophy offers pleasures marvelous for their purity and their enduringness, and those who know will pass their time more pleasantly than those who inquire. Self-sufficiency must belong most to the contemplative activity. A wise man (and a just man and the rest) needs the necessaries of life; EXs: the just man needs people towards whom and with whom he shall act justly, as does the temperate, brave man, and so on. But the wise man can contemplate truth by himself, and the better the wiser he is; perhaps he can do so better if he has fellow-workers, but still he is the most self-sufficient. Only contemplation would seem to be loved for its own sake; nothing arises from it apart
from the contemplating, while from practical activities we gain more or less apart from the action. Happiness depends on leisure; we are busy that we may have leisure, and make war that we may live in peace. The activity of the practical virtues is exhibited in political or military affairs, but the actions concerned with these seem to be un leisurely. Warlike actions are completely so (no one chooses to be at war, or provokes war, for the sake of being at war; anyone would seem absolutely murderous if he were to make enemies of his friends in order to bring about battle and slaughter); but the action of the statesman is also un leisurely, and – apart from the political action itself – aims at despotic power and honors, or at all events happiness, for him and his fellow citizens – a happiness different from political action, and evidently sought as being different. So if among virtuous actions political and military actions are distinguished by nobility and greatness, and these are un leisurely and aim at an end and are not desirable for their own sake, but the activity of intellect, which is contemplative, seems both to be superior in worth and to aim at no end beyond itself, and to have its pleasure proper to itself (and this augments the activity), and the self-sufficiency, leisureliness, un weariedness (so far as this is possible for man), and all the other attributes ascribed to the blessed man are evidently those connected with this activity, it follows that this will be the complete happiness of man, if it be allowed a complete term of life (for none of the attributes of happiness is incomplete).

But such a life would be too high for man: it is not insofar as he is man that he will live so, but insofar as something divine is present in him; contemplative activity is so superior to our composite nature and to practical/moral virtue. If intellect is divine in comparison with man, then the life according to it is divine in comparison with human life. We must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything. Intellect is each man himself, since it is the authoritative and better part of him. It would be strange, then, if he were to choose not the life of himself but that of something else. As said, that which is proper to each thing is by nature best and most pleasant for each thing; so the life for man according to intellect is best and pleasantest, since intellect more than anything else is man, and therefore the happiest.

X.8 Practical/Moral Virtue is Secondarily Happy; Intellectual Virtue/the Contemplator Needs Few Externals; Complete Happiness is a Contemplative Activity; the Activity of God, Being Most Blessed, is Contemplation, Which is Therefore Divine for Humans; Animals Cannot be Happy Because They Cannot Contemplate; the Wise Man Honors his Intellect Most, and so is Most Dear to the Gods and the Happiest (1178a-1179a).

But in a secondary degree the life in accordance with practical/moral virtue is happy; the activities in accordance with this befit our human estate. We do just, brave, and other virtuous acts in relation to each other, observing what is proper to each with regard to contracts, services, all manner of actions, and with regard to passions; all of these seem to be human. Some of them seem even to arise from the body, and virtue of character to be in many ways bound up with the passions. Practical wisdom is linked to virtue of character, and this to practical wisdom, since the principles of practical wisdom are in accordance with the moral virtues and rightness in the moral virtues is in accordance with practical wisdom. Being connected with the passions, the moral virtues must belong to our composite nature; and the virtues of our composite nature are human; so, therefore, are the life and the happiness that correspond to these. The virtue of the intellect is a thing apart (to describe it more precisely is a task greater than our purpose requires).

Intellectual virtue needs little external equipment (or less than moral virtue). Grant that both need the necessaries, and do so equally: in what they need for the exercise of their activities there will be much difference. Exs: the liberal man will need money for the doing of his liberal deeds, and the just man too will need it for the returning of services (wishes are hard to discern, and even people who are not just pretend to wish to act justly); and the brave man will need power if he is to accomplish any of the acts that correspond to his virtue, and the temperate man will need opportunity (how else is either he or any of the others to be recognized?). It is debated whether the choice or the deed is more essential to virtue, which is assumed to involve both; surely virtue’s completion involves choice and deed; but for deeds many things are needed, and more, the greater and nobler the deeds are. But the contemplator of the truth needs no such thing to exercise his activity; indeed they are
even hindrances to his contemplation; but insofar as he is a man and lives with a number of people, he chooses to do virtuous acts and so will need such aids to living a human life.

Complete happiness is a contemplative activity: The gods are above all other beings blessed and happy; but what sort of actions must we assign to them? Acts of justice? Will not the gods seem absurd if they make contracts and return deposits, and so on? Acts of a brave man, then, confronting dangers and running risks because it is noble to do so? Or liberal acts? To whom will they give? It will be strange if they are really to have money or anything of the kind. What would their temperate acts be? Is not such praise tasteless, since they have no bad appetites? If we were to run through them all, the circumstances of action would be found trivial and unworthy of gods. Still, everyone supposes that they live and therefore that they are active; we cannot suppose that they sleep. If you take away from a living being action, and still more production, what is left but contemplation? Therefore the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative; so whatever is most akin to this in human activities (contemplation) must be most of the nature of happiness.

Other animals have no share in happiness, being completely deprived of contemplative activity. While the whole life of the gods is blessed, and that of men too insofar as some likeness of such activity belongs to them, none of the other animals is happy, since they in no way share in contemplation. Happiness extends just so far as contemplation does, and those to whom contemplation more fully belongs are more truly happy, not accidentally, but in virtue of the contemplation; this is in itself precious. So happiness must be some form of contemplation.

But, being a man, one will also need external prosperity: our nature is not self-sufficient for the purpose of contemplation, but our body also must be healthy and must have food and other attention. However, the man who is to be happy will not need many things or great things, merely because he cannot be blessed without external goods; self-sufficiency and action do not depend on excess, and we can do noble acts without ruling earth and sea; even with moderate advantages one can act virtuously (e.g., private persons are thought to do worthy acts no less than despots – indeed even more); and it is enough that we should have so much as that; the life of the man who is active in accordance with virtue will be happy. Solon perhaps sketched well the happy man when he described him as moderately furnished with externals but as having done (as Solon thought) the noblest acts, and lived temperately; one can with but moderate possessions do what one ought. Anaxagoras also supposed the happy man not to be rich nor a despot, when he said that he would not be surprised if the happy man were to seem to most people a strange person; they judge by externals, since these are all they perceive. The opinions of the wise harmonize with our arguments. But while even such things carry some conviction, the truth in practical matters is discerned from the facts of life; these are the decisive factor. We must therefore survey what we have already said, bringing it to the test of the facts of life, and if it harmonizes with the facts we must accept it, but if it clashes with them we must suppose it to be mere theory. He who exercises his intellect and cultivates it seems to be both in the best state and most dear to the gods. If the gods have any care for human affairs, as they are thought to have, it would be reasonable both that they should delight in that which was best and most akin to them (i.e. intellect) and that they should reward those who love and honor this most, as caring for the things that are dear to them and acting both rightly and nobly.

X.9 It is Not Enough to Know Virtue, We Must Become Good; Arguments May Convince Some Good Young People, but Not the Many; One Needs to be Raised Under Good Laws and Good Habits in Order to be Virtuous; Legislation/the Legislator is Important; the Sophist Wrongly Claims that he Teaches Politics; We Should Study Constitutions and Legislation to Complete the Philosophy of Human Nature (1179a-1181b).

Where there are things to be done, the end is not to survey and recognize the various things, but rather to do them; so with regard to virtue, it is not enough to know, but we must try to have and use it, or try any other way there may be of becoming good. If arguments were in themselves enough to make men good, they would justly, as Theognis says, have won very great rewards, and such rewards should have been provided; but as things are, while arguments seem to have power to encourage and stimulate the generous-minded among the young, and to make a character which is gently born, and a true lover of what is noble, ready to be possessed by virtue, they
are not able to encourage the many to nobility and goodness. The many do not by nature obey the sense of shame, but only fear, and do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment; living by passion they pursue their own pleasures and the means to them, and avoid the opposite pains, and have not even a conception of what is noble and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it. What argument would remold such people? It is hard, if not impossible, to remove by argument the traits that have long since been incorporated in the character; perhaps we must be content if, when all the influences by which we become good are present, we get some tincture of virtue.

Some think that we are made good by nature, habituation, or teaching. Nature’s part evidently does not depend on us, but as a result of some divine causes is present in those who are truly fortunate; argument and teaching are not powerful with all men: the soul of the student must first have been cultivated by means of habits for noble joy and noble hatred, like earth which is to nourish the seed. He who lives as passion directs will not hear argument that dissuades him, nor understand it if he does; how can we persuade one in such a state to change his ways? In general, passion seems to yield not to argument but to force. The character must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue, loving what is noble and hating what is base.

But it is difficult to get right training for virtue if one has not been brought up under right laws; to live temperately and hardily is not pleasant to most people, especially when they are young. Thus, their nurture and occupations should be fixed by law; they will not be painful when they have become customary. It is not enough that the young should get the right nurture and attention; they must (even when they are grown up) practice and be habituated to them, we shall need laws for this as well and generally speaking to cover the whole of life; most people obey necessity rather than argument, and punishments rather than what is noble.

This is why some think that legislators ought to stimulate men to virtue and urge them forward by the motive of the noble, on the assumption that those who have been well advanced by the formation of habits will attend to such influences; and that punishments and penalties should be imposed on those who disobey and are of inferior nature, while the incurably bad should be completely banished. A good man (they think), since he lives with his mind fixed on what is noble, will submit to argument, while a bad man, whose desire is for pleasure, is corrected by pain like a beast of burden. So they say the pains inflicted should be those that are most opposed to the pleasures such men love.

However that may be, if (as we have said) the man who is to be good must be well trained and habituated, and go on to spend his time in worthy occupations and neither willingly nor unwillingly do bad actions, and if this can be brought about if men live in accordance with a sort of intellect and right order, provided this has force, – if this be so, the paternal command indeed has not the required force or compulsive power (nor in general has the command of one man, unless he be a king or something similar), but the law has compulsive power and is an account proceeding from a sort of practical wisdom and intellect. While people hate men who oppose their impulses, even if they oppose them rightly, the law in its ordaining of what is good is not burdensome.

In the Spartan state alone, or almost alone, the legislator seems to have paid attention to questions of nurture and occupations; in most states such matters have been neglected, and each man lives as he pleases. It is best that there should be a public and proper care for such matters; but if they are neglected by the community it is right for each man to help his children and friends towards virtue, and that they should be able (or at least choose) to do this.

The legislator can do this better if he makes himself capable of legislating. Public care is plainly effected by laws, and good care by good laws; whether written or unwritten makes no difference, nor whether they are laws providing for the education of individuals or of groups (any more than in music, gymnastics, and other such pursuits). As laws and character have force in cities, so in households do the injunctions and the habits of the father, and these have even more because of blood ties and the benefits he confers; the children start with a natural affection and disposition to obey. Further, individual education has an advantage over education in common, as individual medical treatment has; while in general rest and abstinence from food are good for a man in a fever, for a particular man they may not be; and a boxer presumably does not prescribe the same style of fighting to all his pupils. The detail is worked out with more precision if the care is particular to individuals; each person is more likely to get what suits his case.
But individuals can be best cared for by a doctor or gymnastic instructor or anyone else who has the universal knowledge of what is good for every one or for people of a certain kind (the sciences both are said to be, and are, concerned with what is common); not but what some particular detail may perhaps be well looked after by an unscientific person, if he has studied accurately in the light of experience what happens in each case, just as some people seem to be their own best doctors, though they could give no help to any one else. Nonetheless, it will perhaps be agreed that if a man does wish to become master of an art or science he must go to the universal, and come to know it as well as possible; as said, sciences are concerned with this.

He who wants to make (many or few) men better by his care must try to become capable of legislating, if it is through laws that we can become good. To get anyone who is put before us into the right condition is not for the first chance comer; if anyone can do it, it is the man who knows, just as in medicine and all other matters which give scope for care and practical wisdom.

Must we not next examine whence or how one can learn how to legislate? Is it from statesmen? Certainly legislating is a part of statesmanship. Or is a difference apparent between statesmanship and the other sciences and faculties? In the others the same people are found offering to teach the faculties and practicing them, e.g. doctors or painters; but while the sophists profess to teach politics, it is practiced not by any of them but by the politicians, who would seem to do so by dint of a certain faculty and experience rather than of thought; politicians are not found either writing or speaking about such matters (though it would be a nobler occupation than composing speeches for the law-courts and friends. But they should teach politics if they could; there is nothing better than such a skill that they could have left to their cities, or could choose to have for themselves, or for those dearest to them. Still, experience seems to contribute not a little; else they could not have become politicians by familiarity with politics; and so those who aim at knowing about the art of politics need experience as well.

Sophists who profess the political art are very far from teaching it; they do not even know what kind of thing it is nor what kinds of things it is about; otherwise they would not have classed it as identical with rhetoric or even inferior to it, nor have thought it easy to legislate by collecting the laws that are thought well of [DY OB]: This seems hypocritical of Aristotle, who very often states that the reason why something is true about virtues, say, is that most men say or think it’s true.]; they say it is possible to select the best laws, as though even the selection did not demand intelligence and as though right judgment were not the greatest thing, as in matters of music. While people experienced in any department judge rightly the works produced in it, and understand by what means or how they are achieved, and what harmonizes with what, the inexperienced must be content if they do not fail to see whether the work has been well or ill made – as in the case of painting. Laws are as it were the works of the political art; how then can one learn from them to be a legislator, or judge which are best? Doctors do not seem to be made by a study of textbooks. Yet people try to state not only the treatments, but also how particular classes of people can be cured and should be treated – distinguishing the various states; but while this seems useful to experienced people, to the ignorant it is valueless. So while collections of laws and constitutions may be serviceable to those who can study them and judge what is good or bad and what enactments suit what circumstances, those who go through such collections without a practiced faculty will not have right judgment (unless it be spontaneous), though they may perhaps become more intelligent in such matters.

Our predecessors have left the subject of legislation to us unexamined [DY: Plato wrote the Laws!]; so it is best that we should study legislation and the constitution, in order to complete to the best of our ability the philosophy of human nature. First, then, let us review what has been said well in detail by earlier thinkers; then in the light of the collected constitutions, let us study what sorts of influence preserve and destroy states and particular kinds of constitution, and what causes some constitutions to be well or ill administered. When these have been studied we shall perhaps be more likely to see which constitution is best, and how each must be ordered, and what laws and customs it must use. [DY: To the Politics, Batman!].