

NICOMACHEAN ETHICS

Book I [Happiness]

1

[Ends and goods]

/ §1 Every craft and every discipline, and likewise action and decision, seems to seek some good¹—that is why some people were right to describe the good as what everything seeks.² §2 But the ends appear to differ; for some are activities, and others are / products 1094a
apart from the activities.³ And where there are ends apart from the actions, the products are by nature better than the activities. 5

§3 Now since there are many actions, crafts, and sciences, the ends turn out to be many as well; for health is the end of medicine, a boat of boat building, victory of generalship, and wealth of household management. §4 But some / of these pursuits are subordinate 10
to some one capacity; for instance, bridle making and every other science producing equipment for horses are subordinate to horsemanship, while this and every action in warfare are in turn subordinate to generalship, and in the same way⁴ other pursuits are subordinate to further ones.⁵

In all such cases, then,⁶ the ends of the ruling sciences are / more 15
choiceworthy than all the ends subordinate to them, since the lower ends are also pursued for the sake of the higher. §5 Here it does not matter whether the ends of the actions are the activities themselves, or something apart from them, as in the sciences we have mentioned.

2

[The highest good and political science]

§1 If, then, the things achievable by action have some end that we wish for because of itself, and we wish for the other things because of this end, and we do not / choose everything because of something 20
else (for if we do, it will go on without limit, so that desire will prove to be empty and futile), it is clear that, this end will be the good, that is to say, the best good.¹

§2 Then surely knowledge of this good also carries great weight for one's way of life, and if we know it, we are more likely, like archers
 25 who have a target to aim at, to hit the right mark.² §3 If / so, we should try to grasp, in outline at any rate, what the good is, and which is its proper science or capacity.³

§4 Now it seems proper to the most controlling <science>—the highest ruling <science>.⁴ §5 And this appears characteristic of political science.⁵ §6 For it prescribes which of the sciences
 1094b1 ought to be studied in cities, / and which ones each class in the city should learn, and how far; indeed we see that even the most honoured capacities—generalship, household management, and rhetoric, for instance—are subordinate to it. §7 And since it uses the other
 5 sciences concerned with action,⁶ / and moreover legislates what must be done and what avoided, its end will include the ends of the other sciences,⁷ and so this will be the human good.

§8 For even if the good is the same for a city as for an individual, still the good of the city is apparently a greater and more complete good to acquire and preserve.⁸ For while it is satisfactory to
 10 acquire and preserve the good even for an individual, / it is finer and more divine to acquire and preserve it for a people and for cities.⁹

And so our discipline aims at these things,¹⁰ being a sort of political science.¹¹

3

[The method of political science]

But our discussion will be adequate if we make things perspicuous enough to accord with the subject matter; for we should not seek the same degree of exactness in all sorts of arguments alike, any more than
 15 in the products of different crafts.¹ §2 Now fine and just things, / which political science examines, differ and vary so much² as to seem to rest on convention only, not on nature.³ §3 But goods also vary in the same way, because they result in harm to many people—for some have been destroyed because of their wealth, others because of their
 20 bravery.⁴ §4 And so, since this is our subject / and these are our premisses, we shall be satisfied to indicate the truth roughly and in outline, and since our subject and our premisses are things that hold good usually, we shall be satisfied to draw conclusions of the same sort.

Each of our claims, then, ought to be accepted in the same way. For the educated person seeks exactness in a given area to the extent

that the / nature of the subject allows; for apparently it is just as mis- 25
 taken to demand demonstrations from a rhetorician as to accept
 <merely> persuasive arguments from a mathematician.⁵ §5 Fur-
 ther, each person judges rightly what he knows, and is / a good judge 1095a
 about that; hence the good judge in a given area is the person edu-
 cated in that area, and the unqualifiedly good judge is the person edu-
 cated in every area.

This is why a youth is not a suitable student of political science;
 for he lacks experience of the actions in life, which are the subject
 and premisses of our arguments. §6 Moreover, since he tends to 5
 follow his feelings, his / study will be futile and useless, since the goal
 is action, not knowledge.⁶ §7 And it does not matter whether he is
 young in years or immature in character, since the deficiency does
 not depend on age, but results from following his feelings in his life
 and in a given pursuit; for an immature person, like an incontinent
 person, gets no benefit from his knowledge. / But for those who fol- 10
 low reason in forming their desires and in their actions, knowledge of
 these things <political science> will be of great benefit.

§8 These are the preliminary points about the student, about the
 way our claims are to be accepted, and about what we propose to do.⁷

4

[Common beliefs]

[c2] Let us, then, begin again.¹ Since every sort of knowledge and
 decision² / pursues some good, what is the good that we say political 15
 science seeks, and what is the highest of all the goods achievable in
 action?

§2 As far as its name goes, most people practically agree; for both
 the many and the cultivated call it happiness, and they suppose that
 living well and doing well are the same as / being happy.³ But about 20
 what happiness is they disagree, and the many do not give the same
 answer as the wise.⁴

§3 For the many think it is one of the obvious and evident things,
 such as pleasure, or wealth, or honour. Some take it to be one thing,
 others another. Indeed, the same person often changes his mind; for
 when he has fallen ill, he thinks happiness is health, and when he has
 fallen into poverty, he thinks it is wealth. And when they are con-
 scious of their own ignorance, / they admire anyone who speaks of 25
 something grand and above their heads.

Some, however, some used to think that besides these many goods there is some other good that exists in its own right and that causes all these goods to be goods.⁵

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

§5 We must notice, however, the difference between arguments from principles and arguments towards principles.⁶ For Plato also
1095b was right to be puzzled about this, when he used to ask if <the argument> set out from the principles or led towards / them⁷—just as on a race course the path may go from the starting line to the far end,⁸ or back again. For we should begin from things known, but things are known in two ways;⁹ for some are known to us, some known without qualification. Presumably, then, *we* ought to begin from things known to *us*.

5 §6 That is why we need to have been brought up in fine habits / if we are to be adequate students of fine and just things, and of political questions generally. §7 For the <belief> that <something is true> is the beginning, and if this is apparent enough to us, we will not need <, at this stage, to know> why <it is true> as well;¹⁰ and someone who is well brought up has the beginnings, or would easily acquire them.¹¹
10 Someone who neither has them nor can acquire them / should listen to Hesiod:¹² ‘He who grasps everything himself is best of all; he is noble also who listens to one who has spoken well; but he who neither grasps it himself nor takes to heart what he hears from another is a useless man.’

5

[The three lives]

[c3] But let us begin again from the point from which we digressed.¹ For, it would seem, people, not unreasonably, reach their concep-
15 tion of the good / and of happiness, from the lives. §2 For there are roughly three most favoured lives—the lives of gratification, of political activity, and, third, of study.²

The many, the most vulgar, would seem to conceive the good and happiness as pleasure, and hence they also like the life of gratifica-
20 tion. §3 In this they appear completely slavish, / since the life they decide on is a life for grazing animals.³ Still, they have some argument in their defence, since many in positions of power feel as Sardanapalus⁴ felt, <and choose this life>.

§4 But the cultivated people, those who are active <in politics>, conceive the good as honour, since this is more or less the end <normally pursued> in the political life. This, however, appears to be too superficial to be what we are seeking;⁵ for it seems to / depend more on those who honour than on the one honoured, whereas we intuitively believe that the good is something of our own and hard to take from us.⁶ §5 Further, it would seem, they pursue honour to convince themselves that they are good; at any rate, they seek to be honoured by prudent people, among people who know them, and for virtue. It is clear, then, that, in / their view at any rate, virtue is superior <to honour>.

§6 Perhaps, indeed, one might conceive virtue more <than honour> to be the end of the political life. However, this also is apparently too incomplete <to be the good>. For it seems possible for someone to possess virtue but be asleep or inactive / throughout his life, and, moreover, to suffer the worst evils and misfortunes, but if this is the sort of life he leads, no one would count him happy, except to defend a philosopher's paradox.⁷ Enough about this, since it has been adequately discussed in the popular works⁸ as well.

§7 The third life is the life of study, which / we shall examine in what follows.⁹

§8 The moneymaker's life is in a way forced on him <not chosen for himself>;¹⁰ and clearly wealth is not the good we are seeking, since it is <merely> useful, <choice-worthy only> for some other end. Hence one would be more inclined to suppose that <any of> the goods mentioned earlier is the end, since they are liked for themselves. But apparently they are / not <the end> either; and many arguments have been presented against them.¹¹ Let us, then, dismiss them.

6

[The Platonic Form of the Good]

[c4] Presumably, though, we had better examine the universal good, and go through the puzzles about what is meant in speaking of it.¹ This sort of inquiry is, to be sure, unwelcome to us, because those who introduced the Forms were friends² of ours; still, it presumably seems better, indeed only right, / to destroy even what is close to us if that is the way to preserve truth. And we must especially do this as philosophers, <lovers of wisdom>; for though we love both the truth and our friends, reverence is due to the truth first.

§2 Those who introduced this view did not mean to produce an Idea for any <series> in which they spoke of prior and posterior; that was why they did not mean to establish an Idea for numbers either.^{3/} But the good is spoken of both in what-it-is <i.e., substance>, and in quality and relative; and what exists in its own right, i.e., substance, is by nature prior to the relative,⁴ since a relative would seem to be an appendage and coincident of being. And so there is no common Idea over these.

§3 Further, good is spoken of in as many ways as being is spoken of:⁵ in what-it-is, as god and / mind;⁶ in quality, as the virtues; in quantity, as the measured amount; in relative, as the useful; in time, as the opportune moment; in place, as the <right> situation; and so on. Hence it is clear that the good cannot be some common and single universal; for if it were, it would be spoken of in only one of the predications, not in them all.

§4 Further, if a number of things have / one Idea, there is also one science of them; hence <if there were an Idea of Good> there would also be one science of all goods. But in fact there are many sciences even of the goods under one <type of> predication; for the science of the opportune moment, for instance, in war is generalship, in disease medicine. And similarly the science of the measured amount in food is medicine, in exertion gymnastics.⁷

§5 One might be puzzled about what they / really mean in speaking of the So-and-So Itself,⁸ since Man / Itself and man⁹ have one and the same account of man; for insofar as each is man, they will not differ at all. If that is so, then neither will they differ at all insofar as each is good.¹⁰

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

§7 But the Pythagoreans would seem to have a more plausible view about the good, since they place the One in the column of goods. Indeed, Speusippus seems to have followed them.¹¹ §8 But let us leave this for another discussion.

A dispute emerges, however, about what we have said, because the arguments / <for the Idea> are not concerned with every sort of good. Rather, goods pursued and liked in their own right are spoken of as one species of goods, whereas those that in some way tend to produce or preserve these goods, or to prevent their

contraries, are spoken of as goods because of these and in a different way. §9 Clearly, then, goods are spoken of in two ways, and some are goods in their own right, and others goods because of these.¹² Let us, then, separate / the goods in their own right from the <merely> 15 useful goods, and consider whether goods in their own right correspond to a single Idea.

§10 But what sorts of goods would one take to be goods in their own right? Are they the goods that are pursued even on their own—for instance, prudence, seeing, some types of pleasures, and honours?¹³ For even if we also pursue these because of something else, we may nonetheless take them to be goods in their own right. Alternatively, is / nothing except the Idea good in its own right, so that the 20 Form will be futile?¹⁴ §11 But if these other things are also goods in their own right, then the same account of good will have to turn up in all of them, just as the same account of whiteness turns up in snow and in chalk.¹⁵ In fact, however, honour, prudence, and pleasure have 25 different and dissimilar accounts, / in the respect in which they are goods. Hence the good is not something common corresponding to a single Idea.

§12 But how, then, is good spoken of, since it is not like homonyms resulting from chance?¹⁶ Is it spoken of from the fact that goods derive from one thing or all contribute to one thing? Or is it spoken of more by analogy? For as sight is to body, so understanding is to soul, and so on for other cases.¹⁷

§13 / Presumably, though, we should leave these questions for 30 now, since their exact treatment is more appropriate for another <branch of> philosophy.¹⁸ And the same is true about the Idea. For even if there is some one good predicated in common,¹⁹ or some separable good, itself in its own right, clearly that is not the sort of good a human being can achieve in action or possess; but that is the sort / 35 we are looking for now.

§14 Perhaps, however, someone might think it is better to get to know / the Idea with a view to the goods that we can possess and 1097a achieve in action, for if we have this as a sort of pattern, we shall also know better about the goods that are goods for us, and if we know about them, we shall hit on them.²⁰ §15 This argument certainly 5 has some plausibility, but it would seem to clash with the sciences. / For each of these, though it aims at some good and seeks to supply what is lacking, leaves out knowledge of the Idea; but surely it would

not be reasonable for all craftsmen to know nothing about such an important aid, and not even to look for it.

§16 Moreover, it is a puzzle to know what the weaver or carpenter will gain for his own craft from knowing this Good / Itself, or how anyone will be better at medicine or generalship from having viewed the Idea Itself. For what the doctor appears to consider is not even health, but human health, and presumably the health of this human being even more, since he treats one particular patient at a time.²¹

So much, then, for these questions.

7

[An account of the human good]

[c5] / But let us return once again to the good we are looking for, and consider just what it could be. For it is apparently one thing in one action or craft, and another thing in another; for it is one thing in medicine, another in generalship, and so on for the rest. What, then, is the good of each action or craft? Surely it is that for the sake of which the other things are done. In medicine this is health, in generalship / victory, in house building a house, in another case something else, but in every action and decision it is the end, since it is for the sake of the end that everyone does the other actions.¹ And so, if there is some end of everything achievable in action, the good achievable in action will be this end, but if there are more ends than one, it will be these ends.²

§2 Our argument, then, has followed a different route to reach the same conclusion.³ / But we must try to make this still more perspicuous.⁴ §3 Since there are apparently many ends, and we choose some of them (for instance, wealth, flutes, and, in general, instruments) because of something else, it is clear that not all ends are complete.⁵ But the best good is apparently something complete. And so, if only one end is complete, what we are looking for will be this end, but if more ends than one are complete, / it will be the most complete of these.⁶

§4 Now we say that an end pursued in its own right is more complete than an end pursued because of something else, and that an end that is never choiceworthy because of something else is more complete than ends that are choiceworthy both in their own right and because of this end. Hence an end that is always choiceworthy in its own right,⁷ never because of something else, is complete without qualification.

§5 Now happiness, more than anything else, seems complete without qualification.⁸ / For this we choose always because of itself,⁹ never

because of something else. But honour, pleasure, understanding, and every virtue we choose because of themselves also—since we would choose each of them even if it had no further result—but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, / supposing that through them we shall be happy.¹⁰ Happiness, however, no one ever chooses for their sake, or for the sake of anything else at all.

§6 The same conclusion¹¹ also appears to follow from self-sufficiency. For the complete good seems to be self-sufficient.¹² But what we count as self-sufficient is not what suffices for a solitary person by himself, living an isolated life, but what suffices also for / parents, children, wife, and in general for friends and fellow-citizens, since a human being is a naturally political <animal>.¹³ §7 (Here, however, we must impose some limit; for if we extend the good to parents' parents and children's children and to friends of friends, we shall go on without limit; but we must examine this another time.) But we take what is self-sufficient to be whatever all / by itself makes a life choice-worthy and lacking nothing; and that is what we think happiness does.

§8 Moreover, we think happiness is most choiceworthy of all goods, <since> it is not counted as one good among many. <If it were> counted as one among many, then, clearly, we think it <would be> more choiceworthy if the smallest of goods <were> added;¹⁴ for the good that is added becomes an extra quantity of goods, and the larger of two goods is always more choiceworthy. / Happiness, then, is apparently something complete and self-sufficient, since it is the end of the things achievable in action.¹⁵

§9 [c6] But presumably the remark that the best good is happiness is apparently something <generally> agreed, and we still feel the need of a clearer statement of what the best good is.¹⁶ §10 Perhaps, then, we shall find this if we first grasp the function of / a human being. For just as the good, i.e., <doing> well, for a flautist, a sculptor, and every craftsman, and, in general, for whatever has a function and <characteristic> action, seems to depend on its function,¹⁷ the same seems to be true for a human being, if a human being has some function.

§11 Then do the carpenter and the leatherworker have their / functions and actions, but has a human being no function?¹⁸ Is he by nature idle, without any function?¹⁹ Or, just as eye, hand, foot, and, in general, every <bodily> part apparently has its function, may we likewise ascribe to a human being some function apart from all of these?²⁰

§12 What, then, could this be? For living is apparently shared with
 1098a plants, but what we are looking for is the special function / of a human
 being; hence we should set aside the life of nutrition and growth.²¹
 The life next in order is some sort of life of sense perception; but this
 too is apparently shared with horse, ox, and every animal.²²

§13 The remaining possibility, then, is some sort of life of action²³
 of the <part of the soul> that has reason.²⁴ One <part> of it has rea-
 5 son as obeying reason; the other has it as / itself having reason and
 thinking.²⁵ Moreover, life is also spoken of in two ways <as capacity
 and as activity>, and we must take <a human being's special function
 to be> life as activity, since this seems to be called life more fully.²⁶
 We have found, then, that the human function is activity of the soul
 in accord with reason or requiring reason.²⁷

§14 Now we say that the function of a kind of thing, such as a
 harpist, is the same in kind as the function of an excellent individual
 10 of the kind, such as an excellent / harpist. And the same is true with-
 out qualification in every case, if we add to the function the superior
 achievement in accord with the virtue; for the function of a harpist is
 to play the harp, and the function of a good harpist is to play it well.²⁸
 Moreover, we take the human function to be a certain kind of life, and
 take this life to be activity and actions of the soul that involve reason;
 15 hence the function of the excellent man is to do this well and / finely.

§15 Now each function is completed well by being completed in
 accord with the virtue proper <to that kind of thing>. And so the
 human good proves to be activity of the soul in accord with virtue,²⁹
 and indeed in accord with the best and most complete virtue, if there
 are more virtues than one,³⁰ and, further, §16 in a complete life³¹—
 for one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one day, nor, simi-
 20 larly, does / one day or a short time make us blessed and happy.

§17 [c7] Let this, then, be our sketch of the good; for, presumably,
 we must draw the outline first, and fill it in later.³² If the sketch is
 good, it would seem to be everyone's task³³ to advance and articulate
 it, and in such cases time discovers more, or is a good partner in dis-
 25 covery. That is also how the crafts / have improved; for it is everyone's
 task to supply what is lacking.

§18 But we ought also to remember our previous remarks, and not
 to look for the same degree of exactness in all areas, but the degree

that accords with a given subject matter and is proper to a given discipline.³⁴ §19 For the inquiries of the carpenter and of the geometer / about the right angle are also different; for the carpenter restricts himself to what helps his work, but the geometer inquires into what, or what sort³⁵ of thing, the right angle is, since he studies the truth. We must do the same, then, in other areas too,³⁶ so that digressions do not overwhelm our main task. 30

§20 Nor should we make the same demand for / an explanation in all cases. On the contrary, in some cases it is enough to prove rightly that <something is true>. This is so, for instance, with principles, where the fact that <something is true> is the first thing and the principle.³⁷ 1098b

§21 Now among principles some are studied by means of induction, some by means of perception, some by means of some sort of habituation, and others by other means.³⁸ §22 And in each case / we should try to find them out by means suited to their nature, and work hard to define them rightly. 5 §23 For they carry great weight³⁹ for what follows; for the principle seems to be more than half the whole,⁴⁰ and makes evident the answer to many of our questions.

8

[Defence of the account of the good]

[c8] We should examine the principle, however, not only from the conclusion and / premisses, but also from the things said about it;¹ for all the facts harmonize with a true account, whereas the truth soon clashes with a false one. 10

§2 Goods are divided, then, into three types, one type called external, another goods of the soul, and another goods of the body.² We say that the goods of the soul are goods most fully, and / more than the others, and we take actions and activities of the soul to be <goods> of the soul. And so our account <of the good> is right, to judge by this belief anyhow—and it is an ancient belief, and accepted by philosophers. 15

§3 Our account is also correct in saying that some sort of actions and activities are the end; for in that way the end turns out to be a good of the soul, / not an external good. 20

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

§5 [c9] Further, all the features that people look for in happiness appear to belong to the good we have described.³ §6 For to some
 25 people happiness seems to be virtue; to others prudence;⁴ / to others some sort of wisdom; to others again it seems to be these, or one of these, including pleasure or requiring it;⁵ others add in external prosperity as well. §7 Some of these views are traditional, held by many, while others are held by a few men who are widely esteemed. It is reasonable for each group not to be completely wrong, but to be correct on one point at least, or even on most points.

30 §8 / First, our account agrees with those who say happiness is virtue or some type of virtue; for activity in accord with virtue is proper to virtue. §9 Presumably, though, it matters quite a bit whether we suppose that the best good consists in possessing or in using—that is to say, in a state or in its activity.⁶ For someone may be in a state that
 1099a / achieves no good—if, for instance, he is asleep or inactive in some other way—but this cannot be true of the activity; for it will necessarily act and act well. And just as Olympic prizes are not for the finest and strongest, but for / the contestants—since it is only these who win—the same is true in life; among the fine and good people, only
 5 those who act correctly⁷ win the prize.

§10 Moreover, the life of these active people is also pleasant in itself.⁸ For being pleased is a condition of the soul, Further, each type of person finds pleasure in whatever he is called a lover of; a horse, for
 10 instance, pleases the horse lover, a spectacle the / lover of spectacles. Similarly, what is just pleases the lover of justice, and in general what accords with virtue pleases the lover of virtue.

§11 Now the things that please most people conflict,⁹ because these things are not pleasant by nature, whereas the things that please lovers of the fine are pleasant by nature. Actions in accord with virtue are pleasant by nature, so that they are pleasant both to lovers of
 15 the fine and / in their own right.

§12 Hence these people's life does not need pleasure to be added <to virtuous activity> as some sort of extra decoration; rather, it has its pleasure within itself.¹⁰ For besides the reasons already given, someone who does not enjoy fine actions is not good; for no one would call a person just, for instance, if he did not enjoy doing just
 20 actions, or generous if he did not enjoy / generous actions, and similarly for the other virtues.

§13 If this is so, actions in accord with the virtues are pleasant in their own right. Moreover, these actions are good and fine as well as pleasant; indeed, they are good, fine, and pleasant more than anything else is, since on this question the excellent person judges rightly, and his judgment agrees with what we have said.

§14 Happiness, then, is best, finest, and most pleasant, and / these things are not distinguished, as the Delian inscription says they are: ‘What is most just is finest; being healthy is most beneficial; but it is most pleasant to win our heart’s desire.’¹¹ For all three features are found in the best activities, and we say happiness is these activities, or <rather> one of them, the best one.¹² 25

§15 Nonetheless, happiness evidently also needs external goods to be added, as we said; for we cannot, or cannot easily, do fine actions if we lack the resources.¹³ For, first of all, in many actions / we use friends, wealth, and political power just as we use instruments. §16 Further, deprivation of certain <externals>—for instance, good birth, good children, beauty—mars our blessedness. For we do not altogether have the character of happiness¹⁴ if we look utterly repulsive or are ill-born, solitary, or childless; and we have it / even less, presumably, if our children or friends are totally bad, or were good but have died. 5 1099b

§17 As we have said, therefore, happiness would seem to need this sort of prosperity added also. That is why some people identify happiness with good fortune, and others identify it with virtue.

9

[How is happiness achieved?]

[c10] This also leads to a puzzle: Is happiness acquired by learning, or habituation, or by some / other type of cultivation? Or is it the result of some divine fate, or even of fortune?¹ 10

§2 First, then, if the gods give any gift at all to human beings, it is reasonable for them to give us happiness more than any other human good, insofar as it is the best of human goods. §3 Presumably, however, this question is more suitable for a different inquiry.

But even if it is / not sent by the gods, but instead results from virtue and some sort of learning or cultivation, happiness appears to be one of the most divine things, since the prize and goal of virtue appears to be the best good, something divine and blessed. §4 Moreover <if happiness comes in this way> it will be widely shared; for anyone who 15

is not deformed <in his capacity> for virtue will be able to achieve
 20 happiness through some sort of learning / and attention.

§5 And since it is better to be happy in this way than because of
 fortune, it is reasonable for this to be the way we become happy. For
 whatever is natural is naturally in the finest state possible. §6 The
 same is true of the products of crafts and of every other cause, espe-
 cially the best cause; and it would be seriously inappropriate to entrust
 what is greatest and finest to fortune.²

25 §7 / The answer to our question is also evident from our account.
 For we have said that happiness is a certain sort of activity of the soul
 in accord with virtue.³ Of the other goods, some are necessary condi-
 tions of happiness, while others are naturally useful and co-operative
 as instruments.

§8 Further, this conclusion agrees with our opening remarks. For
 30 we took / the goal of political science to be the best good; and most of
 its attention is devoted to the character of the citizens, to make them
 good people who do fine actions.⁴

§9 It is not surprising, then, that we regard neither ox nor horse
 1100a nor any other kind of animal as happy; for none of / them can share
 in this sort of activity. §10 For the same reason a child is not happy
 either, since his age prevents him from doing these sorts of actions.
 If he is called happy, he is being congratulated <simply> because of
 anticipated blessedness; for, as we have said, happiness requires both
 5 complete virtue / and a complete life.⁵

§11 It needs a complete life because life includes many reversals
 of fortune, good and bad, and the most prosperous person may fall
 into a terrible disaster in old age, as the Trojan stories tell us about
 Priam.⁶ If someone has suffered these sorts of misfortunes and comes
 to a miserable end, no one counts him happy.

10

[Can we be happy during our lifetime?]

10 [c11] / Then should we count no human being happy during his life-
 time, but follow Solon's advice to wait to see the end?¹ §2 But if we
 agree with Solon, can someone really be happy during the time after
 he has died? Surely that is altogether strange, especially when we say
 happiness is an activity.

15 §3 / We do not say, then, that someone is happy during the time he
 is dead, and Solon's point is not this, but rather that when a human

being has died, we can safely pronounce <that he was> blessed, on the assumption that he is now finally beyond evils and misfortunes.² But this claim is also disputable. For if a living person has good or evil of which he is not aware, a dead person also, it seems, has good or evil, if, / for instance, he receives honours or dishonours, and his children, and descendants in general, do well or suffer misfortune.³ 20

§4 However, this conclusion also raises a puzzle. For even if someone has lived in blessedness until old age, and has died appropriately, many fluctuations of his descendants' fortunes may still happen to him; for some may be / good people and get the life they deserve, while the contrary may be true of others, and clearly they may be as distantly related to their ancestor as you please. Surely, then, it would be a strange result if the dead person's condition changed along with the fortunes of his descendants, so that at one time he would turn out to have been happy <in his lifetime> and at another time he would turn out to have been miserable.⁴ §5 But / it would also be strange if the condition of descendants did not affect their ancestors at all or for any length of time. 25 30

§6 But we must return to the previous puzzle, since that will perhaps also show us the answer to our present question. §7 Let us grant that we must wait to see the end, and must then count someone blessed, not as now being blessed <during the time he is dead> but because he previously was blessed. Would it not be strange, then, if, at the very time when he is happy, / we refused to ascribe truly to him the happiness he has?⁵ Such refusal results from / reluctance to call him happy during his lifetime, because of its ups and downs; for we suppose happiness is enduring and definitely not prone to fluctuate, but the same person's fortunes often turn to and / fro.⁶ §8 For clearly, if we take our cue from his fortunes, we shall often call him happy and then miserable again, thereby representing the happy person as a kind of chameleon, insecurely based. 35 1100b 5

§9 But surely it is quite wrong to take our cue from someone's fortunes. For his doing well or badly does not rest on them.⁷ A human life, as we said, needs these added, but / activities in accord with virtue control happiness, and the contrary activities control its contrary. §10 Indeed, the present puzzle is further evidence for our account <of happiness>. For no human achievement has the stability of activities in accord with virtue, since these seem to be more enduring even than our knowledge of the sciences.⁸ / Indeed, the most honourable among the virtues themselves are more enduring than the 10 15

other virtues, because blessed people devote their lives to them more fully and more continually than to anything else—for this continual activity would seem to be the reason we do not forget them.

§11 It follows, then, that the happy person has the <stability> we are looking for and keeps the character he has throughout his life. For
 20 always, or more than anything else, he will do / and study the actions in accord with virtue, and will bear fortunes most finely, in every way and in all conditions appropriately, since he is truly ‘good, four-square, and blameless’.⁹

§12 Many events, however, are subject to fortune; some are minor, some major. Hence, minor strokes of good or ill fortune clearly will
 25 not carry any / weight for his life. But many major strokes of good fortune will make it more blessed; for in themselves they naturally add adornment to it, and his use of them proves to be fine and excellent.¹⁰ Conversely, if he suffers many major misfortunes, they oppress and
 30 spoil his blessedness, since they involve pain and impede / many activities. And yet, even here what is fine shines through, whenever someone bears many severe misfortunes with good temper, not because he feels no distress, but because he is noble and magnanimous.¹¹

§13 And since it is activities that control life, as we said, no blessed
 35 person could ever become miserable, since he will / never do hateful and base actions. For a truly / good and prudent person,¹² we suppose,
 1101a will bear strokes of fortune suitably, and from his resources at any time will do the finest actions, just as a good general will make the best use of the forces available to him in war, and a good shoemaker
 5 / will make the finest shoe from the hides given to him, and similarly for all other craftsmen.

§14 If this is so, the happy person could never become miserable. Nor will he be blessed if he falls into misfortunes as bad as Priam’s.¹³ Nor, however, will he be inconstant and prone to fluctuate, since he will
 10 neither be easily shaken from his happiness / nor shaken by just any misfortunes.¹⁴ But he will be shaken from it by many serious misfortunes, and from these a return to happiness will take no short time. At best, it will take a long and complete length of time that includes great and fine successes.

§15 Then why not say that the happy person is the one whose
 15 / activities accord with complete virtue, with an adequate supply of external goods, not for just any time but for a complete life? Or should we add that he will also go on living this way and will come

to an appropriate end, since the future is not apparent to us, and we take happiness to be the end, and altogether complete in every way? §16 Given these facts, we shall say that / a living person who has, and will keep, the goods we mentioned is blessed, but blessed as a human being is.¹⁵ So much for a determination of this question. 20

11

[How happiness can be affected after one's death]

Still, it is apparently rather unfriendly and contrary to the <common> beliefs to claim that the fortunes of our descendants and all our friends contribute nothing. §2 But since they can find themselves in many and various circumstances, some / of which affect us more, some less, it is apparently a long, indeed endless, task to differentiate all the particular cases. Perhaps a general outline will be enough of an answer. 25

§3 Misfortunes, then, even to the person himself, differ, and some have a certain gravity and weight for his life, whereas others / would seem to be lighter. The same is true for the misfortunes of his friends; §4 and it matters whether they happen to living or to dead people—much more than it matters whether lawless and terrible crimes are committed before a tragic drama begins or in the course of it.¹ 30

§5 In our reasoning, then, we should also take account of this difference, / but even more account, presumably, of the puzzle about whether / the dead share in any good or evil. For if we consider this, anything good or evil penetrating to the dead would seem to be weak and unimportant, either without qualification or for them. Even if the good or evil is not so weak and unimportant, still its importance and character are not enough to make people happy who / are not already happy, or to take away the blessedness of those who are happy. §6 And so, when friends do well, and likewise when they do badly, it appears to contribute something to the dead, but of a character and size that neither makes happy people not happy nor anything of this sort. 35 1101b 5

12

[Praise and honour]

[c12] / Now that we have determined these points, let us consider whether happiness is something praiseworthy, or instead something honourable; for clearly it is not a capacity.¹ 10

§2 Whatever is praiseworthy appears to be praised for its character and its state in relation to something.² We praise the just and the
 15 brave person, for instance, and in general the good / person and virtue, because of their actions and achievements; and we praise the strong person, the good runner, and each of the others because he naturally has a certain character and is in a certain state in relation to something good and excellent. §3 This is clear also from praises of the gods; for
 20 these praises appear ridiculous because they are referred to us, but / they are referred to us because, as we said, praise depends on such a reference.

§4 If praise is for these sorts of things, then clearly for the best things there is no praise, but something greater and better. And indeed this is how it appears. For the gods and the most godlike³ of
 25 men are <not praised, but> congratulated for / their blessedness and happiness. The same is true of goods; for we never praise happiness, as we praise justice, but we count it blessed, as something better and more godlike <than anything that is praised>.

§5 Indeed, Eudoxus seems to have used the right sort of argument in defending the supremacy of pleasure.⁴ By not praising pleasure though it is a good, we indicate—so he thought—that it is superior / to everything praiseworthy; <only> the god and the good have
 30 this superiority since the other goods are <praised> by reference to them. §6 For praise is given to virtue, since it makes us do fine actions; but celebrations are for achievements, either of body or of
 35 soul. §7 But an exact treatment of this is presumably more proper / for specialists in celebrations. For us, anyhow, it is clear / from what
 1102a has been said that happiness is something honourable and complete.

§8 A further reason why this would seem to be correct is that happiness is a principle; for <the principle> is what we all aim at in all our other actions;⁵ and we take the principle and cause of goods to be something honourable and divine.

13

[Introduction to the virtues]

5 [c13] / Since happiness is a certain sort of activity of the soul in accord with complete virtue, we must examine virtue; for that will perhaps also be a way to study happiness better.¹ §2 Moreover, the true politician² seems to have put more effort into virtue
 10 than into anything else, since he wants to make / the citizens good

and law-abiding. §3 And we find an example of this in the Spartan and Cretan legislators³ and in any others who share their concerns. §4 Since, then, the examination of virtue is proper for political science, the inquiry clearly fits our decision at the beginning.⁴

§5 Now it is clear that the virtue we must examine is human virtue, since we are also seeking the human good and human / happiness. 15
 §6 Now by human virtue we mean virtue of the soul, not of the body, since we also say that happiness is an activity of the soul. §7 If this is so, it is clear that the politician must in some way know about the soul, just as / someone setting out to heal the eyes 20
 must know about the whole body as well.⁵ This is all the more true to the extent that political science is better and more honourable than medicine; even among doctors, the cultivated ones devote a lot of effort to finding out about the body. Hence the politician as well <as the student of nature> must study the soul.⁶ §8 But he must study it for his specific purpose, / far enough for his inquiry <into virtue>; 25
 for a more exact treatment would presumably take more effort than his purpose requires.⁷

§9 <We> have discussed the soul sufficiently in <our> popular works as well <as our less popular>,⁸ and we should use this discussion. We have said, for instance, that one <part> of the soul is non-rational, while one has reason. §10 But are these distinguished 30
 as parts / of a body and of everything divisible into parts are? Or are they two <only> in definition, and inseparable by nature, as the convex and the concave are in a surface? It does not matter for present purposes.⁹

§11 Consider the non-rational <part>. One <part> of it, i.e., the cause of nutrition and growth, would seem to be plantlike and / 1102b
 shared <with all living things>: for we can ascribe this capacity of the soul to everything that is nourished, including embryos, and the same capacity to full-grown living things, since this is more reasonable than to ascribe another capacity to them.¹⁰ §12 Hence the virtue of this capacity is apparently shared, not <specifically> human. For this part and this capacity more than / others seem to be active in sleep, and 5
 here the good and the bad person are least distinct; hence happy people are said to be no better off than miserable people for half their lives. §13 This <lack of distinction> is not surprising, since sleep is inactivity of the soul insofar as it is called excellent or base, unless to some small extent some movements penetrate / <to our awareness>, 10

and in this way the decent person comes to have better images <in dreams> than just any random person has. §14 Enough about this, however, and let us leave aside the nutritive part, since by nature it has no share in human virtue.

§15 Another nature in the soul would also seem to be non-rational, though in a way it shares in reason. For in the / continent and the incontinent person we praise their reason and the <part> of the soul that has reason, because it exhorts them correctly and towards whatever is best; but they evidently also have in them some other <part> that is by nature something apart from reason, clashing and struggling with reason. For just as uncontrolled¹¹ parts of a body, when we decide to / move them to the right, do the contrary and move off to the left, the same is true of the soul; for incontinent people have impulses in contrary directions. §16 In bodies, admittedly, we see the part go astray, whereas we do not see it in the soul; nonetheless, presumably, we should suppose that the soul also has something apart from reason, countering and opposing / reason. The <precise> way it is different does not matter. §17 However, this <part> as well <as the rational part> appears, as we said, to share in reason. At any rate, in the continent person it obeys reason; and in the temperate and the brave person it presumably listens still better to reason, since there it agrees with reason in everything.¹²

§18 The non-rational <part>, then, as well <as the whole soul> apparently has two parts. For while the plantlike <part> shares / in reason not at all, the <part> that has appetites and in general desires¹³ shares in reason in a way, insofar as it both listens to reason and obeys it. This is the way in which we are said to ‘listen to reason’ from father or friends, as opposed to the way in which <we ‘give the reason’> in mathematics.¹⁴ The non-rational part also <obeys and> is persuaded in some way by reason, as is shown by correction, and by every sort / of reproof and exhortation.

§19 If, then, we ought to say that this <part> also has reason, then the <part> that has reason, as well <as the non-rational part>, will have two parts. One will have reason fully, by having it within itself; the other will have reason by listening to reason as to a father.¹⁵

The division between virtues accords with this difference. / For some virtues are called virtues of thought, others virtues of character. Wisdom, comprehension, and prudence are called virtues of thought, generosity and temperance virtues of character.¹⁶ For when we speak

of someone's character we do not say that he is wise or has good comprehension, but that he is gentle or temperate. And yet, we also praise the wise person for his state, / and those states that are praiseworthy 10 we call virtues.

NOTES

Book I

1

1. §1–5. *Lower and higher ends and goods.*

(a) §1–2. Goods are found in the ends of different activities; some, but not all of these ends, are results distinct from the activities themselves.

1. §1 1094a1–2 **Every craft . . . some good:** CRAFTS are types of PRODUCTION, aimed at some goal beyond their own exercise. DISCIPLINES are theoretical, insofar as they do not produce a product such as a house. ACTION includes ACTIVITY that does not aim at any end beyond itself. In including action and decision as well as craft and inquiry among goal-directed pursuits, Aristotle makes it clear from the beginning that actions chosen for their own sakes are among the things chosen for the sake of some end, and hence (as he will go on to argue) for the sake of some ultimate end. The rest of the *Ethics* seeks to explain how this is possible, and why it matters. In ‘seems to aim’ Aristotle points out that he begins with an APPEARANCE.

If ‘action and decision’ refers to action on a decision, it does not follow that every single thing we do aims at some good; for some of the things we do are not ACTIONS on a DECISION (cf. 1111b9–15).

2. 1094a2–3 **that is . . . right:** ‘THAT IS WHY’ refers, as usual, to a familiar fact that is explained by what has preceded. This parenthetical remark refers to the view of EUDOXUS; see 1172b9.

the good as what everything seeks: I.e., If A seeks x, A seeks x as good (i.e., taking x to be good).

[Less probably, Aristotle means to endorse Eudoxus’ view that there is some one end that everything seeks, and this is the ultimate good.]

3. §2 1094a3–5 **But the ends . . . from the activities:** Cf. *Met.* 1050a21–b2. Here and in a16 the difference between ACTIVITIES with and without further products (see FUNCTION) corresponds to the later distinction between PRODUCTION and ACTION. In a5 ‘action’ has the sense noted in ACTION #2.

(b) §3–5. Disciplines and activities are subordinate to higher disciplines and higher ends. In these cases the higher ends are higher goods.

4. 1094a13 **in the same way:** Read *ton auton de tropou*.

5. §4 1094a9–14 **But some of . . . further ones:** ‘Sciences’ is supplied except in ‘sciences we have mentioned’, a18. Aristotle refers to all the ‘actions, crafts, and sciences’ of a7. None of these disciplines meets his most stringent conditions for a SCIENCE.

6. 1094a14 **In all such cases, then:** Read *en hapasais de*.

2

2. §1–8. *The highest good.*

(a) §1–3. If there is a highest end, and therefore a highest good, this will be a goal to guide our life as a whole.

1. §1 1094a18–22 **If, then . . . best good:** This conditional says that if there is some *x* such that (1) *x* is an end, (2) we WISH for *x* for its own sake, (3) if there is any other good *y* that we wish for, we wish for *y* for the sake of *x*, then (4) *x* is the ultimate (highest, final) good.

So far Aristotle has shown that some goods satisfy (1), and that some ends, the ends of the ruling sciences, are higher than others. He now introduces (2), and mentions an end that is chosen ‘because of itself’, not only for the sake of some further end. (3) says that this is the good to which all other goods are subordinate. From this he infers (4). In 1097b1–6 he argues more directly for a highest end, and considers the possibility of several ends pursued for their own sakes. Cf. *EE* i 2.

(for if we do, . . . and futile): This parenthesis explains why we cannot choose everything for the sake of something else.

[Less probably, Aristotle intends this clause to be part of an argument for the existence of one ultimate good. (It would argue that if we must choose something (i.e., at least one thing) for its own sake, there must be some one thing (i.e., exactly one thing) that we choose for its own sake. The argument is fallacious; for, though all roads end somewhere, there may not be some one place where they all end.) The text, however, does not justify the attribution of this fallacious argument to Aristotle. He does not say that he has proved the existence of a highest good.]

2. §2 1094a22–4 **Then surely . . . right mark:** I.e., if we know about the highest good, we will have a target to aim at. Cf. *EE* 1214b6–15†; Plato, *Rep.* 519c2.

3. 1094a25–6 **what the good . . . capacity:** Aristotle begins his answer to the first question in 4.1. He answers the second question first, in the next sentence.

(b) §4–8. The highest end is the concern of political science, which studies the overall good for the city and for the individual.

4. §4 1094a26–7 **the most controlling <science>—the highest ruling <science>:** No noun is provided with these adjectives. We might supply ‘science’ or ‘science or capacity’. Aristotle has said in 1094a14–16 that the higher ends are the objects of the ruling sciences. He infers that the highest end is the concern of the highest ruling science.

5. 1094a27 **political science:** Aristotle uses the adjective ‘political’ without a noun. He argues: (1) The highest good is the all-inclusive end. (2) The all-inclusive end is the end of political science. (3) Therefore the highest good is the end of political science.

6. §7 1094b4 **the other sciences concerned with action:** Retain *praktikais*.

7. 1094b5 **will include . . . sciences:** The highest good is an ordered compound of non-instrumental goods; see 7. §1–5.

8. §8 1094b7–9 **For even if the good . . . and preserve:** §8 defends the conclusion reached in §7 about the scope of political science. Even if we are initially concerned about the good for an individual, this is also the foundation of the good society.

9. **1094b10 for a people and for cities:** ‘People’ (*ethnos*) is used to refer to (i) a nation, either the Greek people or (more often) a non-Greek nation (e.g., the Persians, the Scythians), or to (ii) a national group—for instance, Greeks living in several contiguous cities or villages sharing common traditions (e.g., the Arcadians). The Macedonians, Aristotle’s own people (see Intro. §1), were an *ethnos* rather than a *polis*, whereas Athens (including the whole territory of Attica) was a *polis*, a CITY. Perhaps Aristotle uses the singular ‘people’ and plural ‘cities’ because he is thinking of the Greek people in the various Greek cities. In that case, he might refer to the ambitions of Philip and Alexander of Macedon.

10. **1094b10–11 And so . . . these things:** This sentence concludes the answer to the question asked in §3, about which science studies the highest good.

11. **1094b11 a sort of political science:** The discipline in the *Ethics* is sometimes called ‘ETHICS’ (*êthika*). On political science, see vi 8. §1–2, *EE* 1218b12–16. It is ‘a sort of political science’ because it is concerned with basic political principles (cf. 1152b2). It seeks an account of the highest good for individuals and for communities (cf. *Pol.* vii 1–2), but it does not discuss constitutions, government, and other more narrowly political questions (which are taken up in the *Pol.*). Cf. 1181b12–23.

3

3. §1–8. *The method of political science.*

(a) §1–4. We must approach political science with realistic expectations, since its subject matter does not allow the highest degree of exactness.

1. **§1 1094b11–14 our discussion . . . different crafts:** Having introduced political science and set himself the task (1094a22, ‘Then surely . . .’) of saying what its end is, Aristotle explains how he will proceed, and how he expects his success to be judged. Hence he now describes the method of ETHICS, and the limitations of the method. On fitting the subject matter, cf. 1098a28, 1137b19.

2. **§2 1094b15–16 differ and vary so much:** Or ‘involve so much difference and variation of opinion’.

3. **1094b16 convention . . . nature:** People see that what is JUST and FINE depends on circumstances; for instance, it is USUALLY but not always just to pay your debts (Plato, *Rep.* 331a). (Less probably, ‘difference and variation’ might be taken to refer to differences of opinion about what things are just and fine.) These people (see PROTAGORAS) infer that there is no objective truth about what is just and fine. They think that these rest on convention (lit. ‘are by convention’, *nomos*; see LAW), and not on NATURE.

4. **§3 1094b16–19 But . . . their bravery:** [Or ‘And goods also very . . .’]. These facts about goods are Aristotle’s answer to the argument from variation to convention. We find variations in goods, no less than in just and fine things, but we do not infer that goods are merely conventional. Aspirin, for instance, is not always good for relieving a headache, but it is not a matter of convention that it sometimes relieves headaches. Hence we should reject the argument from variation to convention in the case of just and fine things. See Plato, *Pr.* 334a–c, *Tht.* 172a, 177a–179b, and notes to iii 4. §4, v 7. §2–6.

5. §4 1094b22–7 **Each of our claims, . . . mathematician:** Aristotle turns from a comment on the method of ETHICS to a comment on the sort of education required to appreciate the difference between ethical argument and the sort of argument that might provide a demonstration (see SCIENCE).

Aristotle does not mean that all ethical principles are USUAL rather than universal, but he argues that many of those that give practical guidance are usual.

(b) §5–8. Since political science is inexact, we appreciate its conclusions properly only if we have the appropriate experience and maturity.

6. §5 1095a2–6 **This is why a youth . . . not knowledge:** Two reasons are given for excluding a YOUTH from these lectures ('student' lit. = 'hearer') on ethics:

1. **for he lacks . . . :** This is closely connected with the remarks about the EDUCATED person.

2. **Moreover . . . :** This relies more generally on the practical character of ETHICS #1, which has also been assumed in the restriction of ethics to USUAL truths. Upbringing: 1095b4, 1179b25.

7. §8 1095a11–13 **These are . . . propose to do:** This sentence summarizes c3 [less probably, c1–3] in reverse order.

4

4. §1–7. *Ethical arguments must begin from common beliefs.*

(a) §1–3. What is the highest good? Common beliefs agree that it is happiness, but disagree about what happiness is.

1. §1 1095a14 **Let us, then, begin again:** Aristotle returns to the question raised in c2, and asks what the good pursued by political science might be. As usual, we begin with APPEARANCES. Cf. EE i 6.

2. 1095a14 **knowledge and decision:** The four items mentioned in 1094a1–2 are reduced to two.

3. §2 1095a17–20 **As far . . . being happy:** Everyone thinks the good is HAPPINESS, *eudaimonia*; Aristotle argues for this in 1097a34–b21. In identifying *eudaimonia* with 'living well' (or 'having a good life', *eu zên*) and 'doing well' (or 'acting well' or 'far-ing well', *eu prattein*; see ACTION), he suggests that *eudaimonia* (a) involves one's life as a whole, and (b) consists in action. He examines both (a) and (b) further in i.9–10.

4. 1095a20–2 **But they disagree . . . as the wise:** We need some clearer account (see REASON) and DEFINITION of happiness—of the types of states and activities it consists in; and we begin with a survey of some common views.

5. §3 1095a26–8 **Some, however . . . to be goods:** These are some of the wise, rather than the many. Aristotle refers to PLATO's Form of the Good, discussed in c6.

(b) §4–7. In examining these common beliefs we must begin from starting points that are familiar to us, and argue from these to ethical principles. To be familiar with the appropriate starting points, we need a good upbringing.

6. §5 1095a30–2 **We must . . . towards principles:** To justify beginning with appearances Aristotle adds a further remark on method. He distinguishes arguments from PRINCIPLES from arguments towards principles.

7. 1095a32–3 **For Plato . . . towards them:** In ‘used to ask’ (the Greek imperfect tense) Aristotle indicates a recollection of what the historical PLATO said. See SOCRATES. Plato’s question reminds us of *Rep.* 510bc, 533cd. The metaphor of the stadium suggests argument to and from a single set of principles.

8. 1095b1 **far end:** Lit. ‘limit’. In a Greek stadium the midpoint of the race is at the end farthest from the starting line.

9. 1095b2 **For we should . . . two ways:** Having distinguished two directions of argument in relation to the same *archai*, Aristotle distinguishes two sorts of *archai*. One sort is ‘known to us’, one sort ‘known WITHOUT QUALIFICATION’ (see SCIENCE §5). Aristotle answers Plato’s question: we are going from the *archai* known to us (the beginnings) on the way to *archai* known by nature (the theoretical principles).

10. §7 1095b6–7 **For the <belief> . . . is true> as well:** Lit. ‘For the *archê* is the that, and if this appears adequately, he will not at all need in addition the because.’ This *archê* is the beginning that is ‘known to us’. We start from the ‘that’, accepted moral beliefs. These include (if we may judge from examples given in c5) not only particular beliefs such as ‘I ought to keep this promise’, but also general claims such as ‘Honour is worth having only from the right people’. These beliefs are true or nearly true, but they need defence and justification from the ‘why’, a more theoretical principle that explains why they are true. We do not begin our inquiry with the ‘why’, because we reach it only after inquiry.

[Alternative paraphrase: ‘In ethics, there is no because. Our only *archê* is the “that” and we do not look for any “why”.’ This is less probable, because it would be surprising if Aristotle had introduced his standard distinction between ‘known to us’ and ‘known without qualification’ without meaning to suggest, as he normally does, that we ought to be looking for principles that are known without qualification. Cf. 1098a33–b8.]

11. 1095b7–8 **someone who . . . acquire them:** The ‘beginnings’ that we have or can easily acquire from good upbringing are (on the interpretation preferred so far) the starting points of our inquiry, not the theoretical principles we are seeking. See 1095a2, 1179b25, EDUCATION.

Aristotle has so far given two reasons why we need a good upbringing: (1) In 1095a2–11: we need to learn to control our feelings and impulses, so that we can benefit from instruction about morality. (2) In our present passage, he takes good upbringing to be necessary for the appropriate stock of moral beliefs that are necessary for moral inquiry.

12. 1095b9 **Hesiod:** *Works and Days* 293, 295–7. ‘Listens to one . . .’ perhaps suggests what Aristotle has in mind in saying we can acquire the starting points.

5

5.§1–8. *The ‘three lives’ embody common beliefs about the highest good.*

1. **§1 1095b14 But let us begin . . . digressed:** Three traditional ways of life: *EE* 1214a31†, 1215a32–b14†. The criticisms of the three lives reflect Aristotle's criteria for the good: (1) The good involves distinctively human activities, not those of 'grazing animals', b20. (2) It must be our own, not heavily dependent on external conditions. (3) It must be complete ('However, this also . . .', §6). For defence of these criteria, see (1) 1097b33, 1118b1, 1170b12, 1174a1; (2) 1099b13; (3) 1097a28.

2. **§1–2 1095b14–19 For there are . . . of study:** Aristotle's sentences have been rearranged. Lit. 'For they would seem to conceive, not unreasonably, the good and happiness from the lives, the many and most vulgar as pleasure, whence they also like the life of gratification. For the most favoured lives are roughly three, the one just mentioned, the political life, and, third, the life of study. Now the many appear completely slavish . . .'

the lives: I.e., the three lives that are now described. These provide the patterns that people think of when they consider what the good is. [Or 'the lives <they lead>', i.e., people's practice determines their conception of the good.]

(a) §3. The life of gratification allows no scope for distinctively human activities.

3. **§3 1095b19–20 In this they appear . . . grazing animals:** The life of pleasure is dismissed as SLAVISH. Aristotle discusses it when he has examined pleasure, 1176b9–24.

4. **1095b22 Sardanapallus:** An Assyrian king (669–626) who lived in legendary luxury. Cf. Aristotle, *Protrepticus* fr. 16 (Ross). *EE* 1216a16–19†.

(b) §4–5. One form of the life of political activity aims at honour. Its conception of the good is superficial.

5. **§4 1095b23–4 This, however, . . . we are seeking:** The value of HONOUR: 1123b20, 1159a22. On the political life, cf. *EE* 1216a19–27†.

6. **1095b25–6 whereas we . . . from us:** What is 'our own' (or 'PROPER to us') must be some intrinsic feature of ourselves, not simply the product of other people's attitudes towards us. In saying that we 'intuitively believe' this (lit. 'divine'; cf. Plato, *Rep.* 505a1). Aristotle implies that we have not yet given a reason for our conviction; it is a 'that' without a 'why' (cf. 1095b6).

(c) §6. A superior form of the life of political activity aims at virtue. It overlooks the place of other goods in happiness.

7. **§6 1096a1–2 if this is the sort . . . philosopher's paradox:** The 'philosopher's paradox' (lit. 'thesis' or 'position', a term in DIALECTIC; *Top.* 104b18). Aristotle may allude to SOCRATES and the CYNICS. Cf. 1104b24, 1153b19–21. In Aristotle's view (i 10; cf. Plato, *Rep.* 361d), virtue makes us happier than we would be by living any other way, but virtue alone does not make us happy.

8. **1096a3 popular works:** Perhaps the *Protrepticus*, which may have been alluded to in §3; see POPULAR.

(d) §7. Consideration of the third life, the life of study, is postponed.

9. §7 1096a4–5 **The third . . . follows:** See x 6–8.

(e) §8. Footnote: The life of moneymaking is not parallel to the ‘three lives’.

10. §8 1096a5–6 **The moneymaker’s . . . forced . . . itself>:** If the supplement gives the right sense for ‘forced’, it is used in a broader sense than at 1110a1; cf. *EE* 1215a25–37†.

11. 1096a9–10 **and many . . . against them:** Perhaps yet another reference to Aristotle’s own POPULAR works. In a9 read *kai*.

6

6. §1–16. *A philosophical conception of the good: the Platonic conception of the Form (Idea) of the Good.*

1. §1 1096a11–12 **Presumably, though, . . . speaking of it:** Aristotle mentioned the Platonic belief in a universal and separated Form of the Good at 1095a26, and now proceeds to criticize it at length (cf. *EE* i 8, *MM* i 1). Much of the discussion is important for Aristotle’s general criticism of Plato (cf. esp. *Met.* i 9), but less important for ethics. Aristotle is primarily concerned to argue against the view that goodness is a single property. If it were one, then knowledge of what is good for human beings would ultimately rest on knowledge of the single type of goodness found throughout the universe, such as is expressed in Plato’s Form of the Good (*Rep.* 508–9, 517c, 534bc). The effect of Aristotle’s claim that goods are HOMONYMOUS is to sever ethical argument from general cosmological theories about goodness (cf. 1155b1–10).

In §2–4 (a)–(c) Aristotle discusses the Form as a universal. In §5–7 (d)–(f) he discusses the separation of the Form. In §8–12 (g)–(h) he argues that the evident diversity of goods precludes any universal Form of the Good. In §13–16 (i)–(k) he argues that the Form is in any case irrelevant to ethics.

Aristotle states his objections briefly. A full understanding of this chapter (in contrast to the rest of the *Ethics*) requires a grasp of some of his major metaphysical doctrines.

2. 1096a13 **friends:** Cf. 1164b2.

(a) §2. There is no universal for an ordered series.

3. §2 1096a17–19 **Those who . . . either:** Aristotle may argue: (1) The common property of being a member of some numerical series (i.e., one with relations of prior and posterior among its members) is the property of having some place within the series. (2) A Form for such a series would therefore have to be (i) the property of having a place within a series, and (ii) independent of, and hence prior to, the series. (3) But (i) and (ii) are inconsistent. (4) But the categories (see §3) form a numerical series. (5) Hence there cannot be any Form common to the categories.

4. 1096a19–20 **But the good . . . relative:** SUBSTANCE (‘what-it-is’) and relative (e.g., double, half) are two of the categories, discussed more fully in the next argument.

(b) §3. There is no universal good across the categories.

5. §3 1096a23–4 **Further, good . . . spoken of:** Aristotle evaluates the Platonic claims in the light of his doctrine of the CATEGORIES. He relies on the claim that the categories reveal irreducibly different ways of being. Since being is not a single property, but is HOMONYMOUS, and since the goodness of any thing depends on the kind of thing it is, goodness is not a single property either (cf. *Top.* 107a3), contrary to the Platonist view.

6. 1096a24–5 **in what-it-is . . . mind:** God and mind (or ‘UNDERSTANDING’, *nous*) are not merely examples of goods that are SUBSTANCES. They are what it is to be good in the category of substance.

(c) §4. There is no single Idea across different sciences.

7. 1096a32–3 **And similarly . . . gymnastics:** From these cases in which there is no one science of goods even within a single category, Aristotle infers that there is no one science of the good across the categories, and hence no one Idea of good in all the categories.

(d) §5. It is useless for understanding goodness.

8. §5 1096a34–5 **One might be . . . So-and-So Itself:** Aristotle denies that separated Forms are both paradigms and instances of the properties to which they correspond. In the Platonic view, the Form of the Just is perfectly just and is separable from sensible just things. See *Met.* 987a32, 1078b9–1079a4, 1086a24–b13; Plato, *Phd.* 74.

9. 1096a35–b1 **Man Itself and man:** The second ‘man’ here probably refers to the universal that is immanent in particulars. [Less probably, ‘a man’, i.e., a particular man.] Aristotle accuses Plato of pointlessly introducing separated, independent Forms. According to Aristotle, immanent universals (good, man, etc.) are all that we need for understanding the natures of things.

10. 1096b2–3 **If that is so . . . is good:** Since Good Itself and good have the same account of good, it is no help to appeal to Good itself if one wants to understand the nature of good things as good; one should concentrate on the immanent good.

(e) §6. The eternity of the Form is irrelevant.

(f) §7 Even the Pythagorean view is more plausible.

11. 1096b5–7 **But the Pythagoreans . . . followed them:** The PYTHAGOREANS and SPEUSIPPUS try to describe the natures of things in numerical terms.

(g) §8–11. There is no Form even for intrinsic goods.

12. §9 1096b13–14 **Clearly, then, . . . because of these:** At this stage Aristotle takes the defender of Forms to claim only that there is a single Form for all intrinsic goods (i.e., things that are good IN THEIR OWN RIGHT).

13. §10 1096b17–18 **for instance, prudence, . . . honours:** ‘PRUDENCE’ here may have the more general sense of ‘rational awareness’ (characteristic of, e.g., Plato’s *Phil.*; cf. *EE* 1214a32†). On the different species of pleasure, see x 5.

14. **1096b19–20 Alternatively, . . . the Form will be futile:** The Form will be useless for its intended explanatory role, since it will not explain the goodness of anything else besides itself.

15. **§11 1096b21–2 then the same . . . all of them:** On the assumption that there is an Idea of good.

chalk: Lit. ‘white lead’, i.e., lead carbonate, produced from lead and used for whitening.

(h) §12. Goods are not homonymous by chance, but their connexions do not require the existence of a Form.

16. **§12 1096b26–7 But how . . . homonyms resulting from chance:** See HOMONYMOUS.

17. **1096b27–9 Is it spoken of from . . . other cases:** On the first suggestion (‘all referring . . .’), cf. *Met.* 1003a27; *EE* 1236a14, b20. On analogy, cf. 1097b25, *Phys.* 191a8; *Met.* 1048a37. Reference to one thing is illustrated by instrumental goods and the goods to which they are means. Analogy is illustrated by intrinsic goods; sight is intrinsically good for the eye, and so on. Cases of analogy also support Aristotle’s contention that goods differ ‘in the respect in which they are goods’; seeing is the good of the eye because the eye’s function is to see, cutting is the good of a knife because the knife’s function is to cut, and so on.

(i) §13. The Form is irrelevant to action.

18. **§13 1096b30–1 Presumably, . . . <branch of> philosophy:** Aristotle tries to keep non-ethical discussions out of ethics. Cf. viii 1. §6. The discipline alluded to here is ‘first philosophy’, the subject matter of the *Metaphysics*, which studies ‘being insofar as it is being’ (see *Met.* iv 1). In that work Aristotle discusses homonymy (iv 2) and also criticizes Plato’s theory of Ideas at length (e.g., in i 6, 9, vii 13–16, xiii 4–5).

19. **1096b32 some one good predicated in common:** Read *hen ti kai*.

(j) §14–15. The sciences do not appeal to the Form.

20. **§14 1097a1–3 for if we have . . . hit on them:** This whole ‘for . . .’ clause is an argument offered by a believer in Forms.

(k) §16. The Form does not help the practice of the sciences.

21. **§16 1097a11–13 not even health, . . . at a time:** A doctor does not ask what promotes health universally, let alone what is good universally. On the role of UNIVERSAL and PARTICULAR in CRAFTS, cf. 1141b15, 1181a19; *Met.* 981a1–b20.

7

7. §1–8. A new approach to the good should avoid these objections to other views. We begin from plausible criteria for the good, and we find that happiness meets these criteria.

(a) §1. The good is the ultimate end.

1. **§1 1097a15–22 But let us return . . . other actions:** Aristotle begins from the diversity of goods that we must recognize if we reject the Platonic attempt to find unity in goods. The description of different goods recalls the reference to analogy in 1096b28. After these illustrations of diversity in goodness, Aristotle attends to (in ‘but in every action and decision . . .’) the unity in the different cases.

2. **1097a22–4 And so, . . . these ends:** The first part of this sentence repeats the conclusion drawn at the beginning of c2 above. The second part, allowing the possibility of many goods constituting the end, helps to explain why the beginning of c2 was a conditional claim. Aristotle now makes it clear that he has not proved that there is just one end of human action.

(b) §2–5. The good is complete.

3. **§2 1097a24 Our argument, . . . conclusion:** Aristotle reaches the conclusion he reached in 1094a18–26, by an argument that relies on the connexion between ends and goods (beginning from the points about analogy in c6). He has said nothing about the hierarchy of ends that he introduced in c1. So far he has not chosen between the two possibilities mentioned at the end of §1.

4. **1097a24–5 But we must . . . perspicuous:** More perspicuity is needed because c2 did not explain why we must recognize a single end. In §3–8 Aristotle argues that (1) the good satisfies some formal criteria (i 5. §1) and (2) happiness is the good (1095a17) because it satisfies these criteria. They are formal criteria because Aristotle thinks (cf. Plato, *Phil.* 20d, and x 2. §3) they are reasonable conditions for us to apply to the good even before we consider the claims of specific candidates claiming to be the good.

The formal criteria require the good to be (a) complete (§3–5), (b) self-sufficient (§6–7), and (c) most choiceworthy (§8), not counted as simply one good among many. Here (a) follows from our choosing the good only for its own sake and not also for the sake of something else; if there were some more complete end than the good, we would choose the good for the sake of that. The other two criteria explain completeness.

5. **§3 1097a25–8 Since there are . . . ends are complete:** See HAPPINESS #4; COMPLETE.

6. **1097a30 the most complete of these:** Cf. 1098a17, 1099a30, *EE* 1219a35. Alternatives: (1) Inclusive: we do pursue an unordered collection of ends, but the complete single end that is the whole formed by them. (2) Exclusive: we look for the single most complete end, excluding the other ends that are less complete.

Aristotle’s previous remarks support (1), not (2). (2) may be held to support the view that Aristotle eventually (in x 6–8) identifies happiness with STUDY.

7. **§4 1097a33 always choiceworthy in its own right:** This probably means (a) ‘both always choiceworthy, and also choiceworthy in its own right’. If it meant (b) ‘choiceworthy in itself on those occasions when we choose it’, this case would not be different (as Aristotle intends it to be) from the previous case (‘and an end that is never . . .’).

8. **§5 1097a34 Now happiness . . . qualification:** Aristotle has said (1095a18) that everyone agrees that the highest good is happiness. He now supports this agreed view. Our views about happiness, and especially about its relation to other

non-instrumental goods, suggest that it plays the role in practical thought that is appropriate for the highest good.

9. **1097b1 we choose always because of itself:** Probably this means (cf. §4) ‘we always choose it, and always because of itself’.

10. **1097b2–5 Honour, pleasure, . . . shall be happy:** The highest good, chosen only for its own sake, is composed of the non-instrumental goods that are chosen both for their own sakes and for the sake of the highest good. Cf. 1174a4. To choose them for the sake of happiness is not to choose them purely as instrumental means, since the ‘for the sake of’ relation, as Aristotle understands it, includes the relation of part to whole. See DECISION #2. Aristotle develops the conception he introduced in 1094a27, when he described the end of political science as including the ends of other sciences concerned with actions.

[Or: Every good that is chosen both for itself and for the sake of the highest good is separate from (not a part of), and purely instrumental to, the highest good, even though it is also chosen for its own sake, and hence not for the sake of happiness. This interpretation might be defended from the discussion of happiness and theoretical study in x 6–8. But even if it fits Book x, it is not clearly intended in the present passage.]

(c) §6–7. The good is self-sufficient.

11. **§6 1097b6–7 The same conclusion:** That happiness is complete. See the last sentence of this paragraph.

12. **1097b7–8 For the complete . . . self-sufficient:** See HAPPINESS #4, 1177a27. The good is self-sufficient because it includes all choiceworthy non-instrumental goods.

[Or: It is self-sufficient because it includes everything needed for the single best non-instrumental good (happiness), even though it does not include other choiceworthy non-instrumental goods. This interpretation fits the view that happiness is eventually identified with study.]

13. **1097b8–11 What we count . . . political <animal>:** The social character of human beings and of human happiness: 1142a9, 1157b18, 1158a23, 1169b16, 1170b12, 1172a6, 1178b5; *Pol.* 1253a7†, 1280b33. In saying that the highest good must be sufficient for other people as well as the individual happy person, Aristotle implies that a person’s good is social not only because (i) it requires some contribution by other people, but also because (ii) it includes the happiness of these other people. Aristotle defends (ii) in his account of friendship in *EN* viii–ix and in his account (in the *Pol.*) of the city (*polis*) as the community that fulfils human nature.

(d) §8. The good is most choiceworthy, not being counted as one good among many.

14. **§8 1097b17–18 <since> it is not counted . . . <If it were> counted . . . it <would be> more choiceworthy . . . <were> added:** Happiness is comprehensive (including all choiceworthy non-instrumental goods) because, if it were not comprehensive, we would face the absurd consequences that there could be a greater good

(i.e., the combination of happiness with some other non-instrumental good) than happiness itself. Cf. 1170b17, 1172b26, *MM* 1184a8–30†.

[Or '<if it is> not counted . . . <If it is> counted . . . it <is> more choiceworthy . . . <is> added.' Happiness does not embrace all choiceworthy non-instrumental goods, because we can identify a greater good than happiness (i.e., the combination of happiness with some other choiceworthy non-instrumental good). This interpretation might be held to anticipate the identification of happiness with STUDY.]

15. **1097b20–1 Happiness, then, . . . action:** This sentence shows that the previous argument about addition was intended to show that happiness is self-sufficient.

The demand for completeness does not demand the maximum quantity of each non-instrumental good; 1100b22–8, 1101b1–9.

7. §9–16. *The good is the excellent fulfilment of the human function, and hence it is activity of the soul in accord with complete virtue in a complete life.*

(a) §9–10. The good of F depends on the function of F.

16. §9 **1097b22–4 But presumably . . . best good is:** Aristotle now begins an account of the good, conforming to the formal criteria just presented. So far the statement of the formal criteria has not made it clear what sort of life satisfies them (though Aristotle has implied that the 'three lives' of c5 do not satisfy them).

17. §10 **1097b26–7 seems to depend on its function:** Lit. 'seems to be in its function'. 'In' (sometimes 'consists in', but sometimes 'depends on'): *Phys.* 210a14–24.

The examples from crafts suggest that the FUNCTION of F things is the goal-directed activity that is essential to F; a sculptor, e.g., essentially aims at sculpting the relevant material into a specific shape.

Aristotle appeals to the function of F to identify what is good for F. (Contrast *EE* 1218b37–1219a6, Plato, *Rep.* 352d–353b, which explain the virtue, i.e., the goodness, of F by reference to the function of F.) What is good for Pheidias, insofar as he is a sculptor, is the sculpting activity.

(b) §11–13. The distinctive human function.

18. §11 **1097b28–30 Then do . . . no function:** Aristotle intends this to be a genuine question, which he answers in 12–13 by reference to different types of SOUL.

[Or: This is a rhetorical question that marks an inductive argument: since these human beings have functions, a human being, as such, has a FUNCTION. This is a feeble argument.]

19. **1097b30 idle, without any function:** Just one Greek word, *argon* (i.e., 'without *ergon*').

20. **Or, just as . . . of these:** The previous question is repeated with different examples.

[Or: A rhetorical question that marks an implicit argument: since the parts of a human being have functions, the whole must have a function too.]

21. **§12 1097b1098a1 What, then, . . . and growth:** Aristotle assumes that (i) a human being is essentially a living being, and (ii) a living being is essentially organized for goal-directed activities. Because of (ii), living beings have functions, according to the conception of function applied to craftsmen and organs in §10–11. The examples in §11 show that Aristotle does not take intention to be necessary for the goal-directed activity that he identifies with a function.

The different kinds of life that Aristotle describes here correspond to the different kinds of SOUL distinguished in *DA* ii 1–3. Soul, as Aristotle conceives it, is relevant here because a creature's soul is its essence.

22. **1098a1–3 The life . . . every animal:** In attributing a life of sense PERCEPTION to non-rational animals, Aristotle does not deny that they are also essentially living creatures that engage in nutrition and growth. He means that the activities in their life—including those relevant to nutrition and growth—are controlled by their sensory states, and therefore by their desire (see *DA* 414b1–6†, 433b31–434a10†).

23. **§13 1098a3 life of action:** This life of ACTION includes other activities besides reasoning (just as a non-rational animal's life includes more than just perception). But it is essentially guided by reasoning, as a dog's activities are guided by perception. When Aristotle looks for the 'special' human function, he does not look for one specific activity that is peculiar to human beings. (If that were his aim, why pick on reasoning? Why not mention the use of cosmetics, the building of skyscrapers, the use of weapons of mass destruction?) He looks for the type of activity that is essential to human beings, as distinct from other living creatures. Cf. 1166a16–17.

'Life of action' might include (1) a life of rational action, as opposed to the goal-directed movements of non-rational animals; (2) a life including rational action that is its own end (according to Aristotle's narrow use of 'action'), in contrast to STUDY; and (3) a life of goal-directed activity that is its own end, in a broad sense of 'activity' that may include study (cf. *Pol.* 1325b16–30†). Aristotle may intend all of these.

24. **1098a3 the <part of the soul> that has reason:** Lit. 'what has reason'. This anticipates the division of the soul into parts (hence 'of it' in the next sentence). See 1102b13–1103a10.

25. **1098a4–5 One <part> . . . and thinking:** The part that obeys reason is non-rational DESIRE (1102b25–8). This is different in human beings from non-rational desire in non-rational animals, because it is capable of agreeing with practical reason. Aristotle anticipates the account of VIRTUE of character that he begins in i 13.

26. **1098a5–7 Moreover, life . . . fully:** Since the human function requires activity, not merely a STATE, which is a sort of CAPACITY, we are not subject to the objection that ruled out identification of happiness with virtue (1095b31–1096a2).

27. **in accord . . . requiring reason:** The first relation to reason belongs to the part of the soul that is inherently rational. The second relation belongs to the part that obeys reason.

(c) §14–17. Function, virtue, and the human good.

28. **§14 1098a10–12 And the same . . . play it well:** Here (as in §10, '<doing> well') 'well' includes more than competent or skillful performance. Playing well is achieving one's good as a harpist, i.e., one's good insofar as one is considered simply

as a harpist. Similarly, the virtue that makes someone do well as a human being is the virtue that makes one achieve one's own good as a human being; this matters more than one's good as a harpist, since our essential function is to be human beings, not to be harpists. Aristotle needs this connexion between virtue, doing well, and achieving one's own good, if he is to argue legitimately from the actions of a good and virtuous human being to the good of a human being.

29. **§15 1098a16–17 And so . . . with virtue:** Our good requires us to perform the function of a human being. But simply performing the function will not ensure our good; many people may live human lives, and in doing so perform human functions to some extent, and still may be badly off in their lives (*EE* 1215b27–31†). In that case 'performing one's function' cannot be a sufficient account of a person's good. In such cases people do not perform the human function well. To achieve our good we must perform the human function well. To perform it well is to perform it according to virtue. In i 13 Aristotle begins the task of identifying the relevant virtues.

30. **1098a17–18 and indeed . . . more virtues than one:** See §3 above. Here again we must explain why Aristotle says 'most complete' rather than 'all'. An exclusive or an inclusive answer might be given.

31. **§16 1098a18 complete life:** This is the last clause of the definition. [Less probably, a note added to the definition.] See 1101a6, 1177b25; *EE* 1219b5; *MM* 1185a5. Complete virtue needs a complete life (which need not, however, be a whole lifetime; see 1101a6–13) because virtuous activities need time to develop and to express themselves fully. This is especially clear with friendship, 1157a10, 1158a14, and with prudence, 1143b7. The fact that virtue is enduring contributes to the completeness of a life; see 1100b12–17, 1140b28–30, 1156b11–12.

7. §17–23. Attention to the proper method of ethics prevents us from asking inappropriate questions about this account of the good.

32. **§17 1098a20–2 Let this, then, . . . later:** One might take either x 6–8 (which refers back to i 7) or, more generally, the rest of the *EN* to fill in some details of this sketch.

33. **1098a22 to be everyone's task:** I.e., everyone ought to take on this task. [Or everyone can, i.e., it is easy for everyone.] Lit. 'to belong to everyone'. The same question arises in the next sentence.

34. **§18 1098a26–9 But we ought . . . of discipline:** The comment on filling in details prompts Aristotle to add a word about the degree to which we can reasonably expect details to be filled in. This is a third discussion of method (cf. 1094b11, 1095a28). First, he applies his remarks in c3 about exactness to the discussion of the highest good.

35. **§19 1098a31 what, or what sort:** See DEFINITION #3.

36. **1098a32–3 We must . . . other areas too:** I.e., we must seek the appropriate degree of exactness. Irrelevant digressions would result from seeking inappropriate exactness.

37. **§20 1098a33–b3 Nor should . . . the principle:** This passage on *archai* is concerned with theoretical principles known without qualification (in this case, the account of happiness), and not (as in 1095b6) with the starting points in our inquiry.

Starting points are beliefs that need some further explanation. Theoretical principles provide the necessary explanation, and so a further explanation cannot be given for them.

[Or one might take this passage to restate 1095b4–8 (second interpretation).]

38. §21 1098b3–4 **Now among principles . . . other means:** This translation assumes that Aristotle is still considering theoretical principles. Habituation (see EDUCATION) is discussed further in the following books. In ‘some sort of habituation’, he may mean to indicate that he does not have in mind habituation, as we might ordinarily conceive it. See EDUCATION #5.

[Or one might suppose that he is considering *archai* more generally (including both starting points and theoretical principles).]

39. §23 1098b5–6 **For they carry great weight:** Aristotle recalls his claim about knowledge of the highest good, 1094a23.

40. 1098b7 **for the principle . . . whole:** A Greek proverb: ‘well begun is more than half done’.

8

8. §1–17. *This account of the good accords with the relevant common beliefs.*

(a) §1. The relevance of common beliefs.

1. §1 1098b9–11 **We should . . . about it:** This further remark on method tests the claim to have found a principle. ‘From the conclusion and premisses’ refers to deductive INFERENCE, which has been used in arguing from general formal features of the good and from the human function. Following the method of considering APPEARANCES (see ETHICS #7), we appeal to common beliefs to confirm our claims about happiness.

(b) §2. Our account matches a common division of goods.

2. §2 1098b12–14 **Goods are divided, . . . body:** Goods of the soul are those that depend on the condition of the soul, rather than on the body or on conditions outside the agent. Cf. 1099b11–25. See GOODS #6.

(c) §3–4. Our account fits common views about the end and about happiness.

(d) §5–7. Our account explains the variety of conceptions of happiness.

3. §5 1098b22–3 **Further, all . . . described:** Common views about happiness: *Rhet.* i 5.

4. §6 1098b24 **to others prudence:** ‘Prudence’ (phronesis) may have a more general range than it usually has in *EN*. Cf. 1096a17; *EE* 1214a32†.

5. 1098b25 **including pleasure or requiring it:** Lit. ‘with pleasure or not without pleasure’. Activities that include pleasure are sources of pleasure in themselves. Those

that require pleasure are not in themselves sources of pleasure, but have sources of pleasure added to them. Cf. 1099a15.

(d) §8–9. Happiness requires more than virtue.

6. §9 1098b31–3 **Presumably, . . . its activity>**: Cf. 1095b31–1096a2. Happiness requires not only virtue but also activities that actualize the virtue in the circumstances that are discussed in c10.

7. 1099a6 **act correctly**: I.e., act successfully (as in ‘getting the correct answer’ in an arithmetic test).

(e) §10–13. Happiness requires more than pleasure.

8. §10 1099a7 **Moreover, . . . pleasant in itself**: On PLEASURE, cf. 1104b3, 1175a21–6.

9. §11 1099a11–12 **Now the things . . . conflict**: The sources of pleasure conflict with one another. If I have an excessive desire for food, I may make myself ill by over-eating, and so interfere with my other pleasures. On ‘pleasant by nature’, cf. 1153a5, 1176a19.

10. §12 1099a15–16 **Hence these people’s life . . . pleasure within itself**: Cf. 1169b26.

(f) §14. Our account shows how happiness satisfies the traditional ideals.

11. §14 1099a24–8 **‘What is . . . heart’s desire’**: The inscription at the temple of Delos: *EE* 1214b1–8†; Theognis 225.

12. 1099a29–31 **and we say happiness . . . the best one**: The best activity v. all these activities, cf. 1098a16–18.

(g) §15–17. Happiness requires external goods as well as virtue and pleasure.

13. §15 1099a31–2 **Nonetheless, . . . resources**: Happiness does not depend entirely on us. Our choices and actions are decisive for our happiness, but the activities required by happiness also depend on external GOODS #6 as resources. ‘For first of all’ and ‘Further’ introduce two roles of external goods that are discussed in c9–10.

14. §16 1099b3 **character of happiness**: Hence such people are not good candidates for happiness. Cf. 1176b16, 1177a6, 1178b23.

9

9. §1–11. Happiness consists in our activities, not in good luck, but it depends on luck and external circumstances.

(a) §1–6. We achieve happiness by our own action, not by luck.

1. §1 1099b9–11 **This also . . . fortune**: Cf. Plato, *Meno* 71a1–4, 100b2–4.

2. §6 1099b24–5 and it would . . . **fortune**: Cf. 1095b23–6. Happiness is something of our own, not something we passively receive from other people or from external circumstances. It depends largely on our own actions; we are not at the mercy of FORTUNE for the major components of our happiness. Happiness partly consists in virtuous actions; and being virtuous is up to us, not entirely dependent on fortune (cf. iii 5).

(b) §7–11. Since happiness requires complete virtue in a complete life, it is not entirely independent of good and bad luck.

3. §7 1099b26 a **certain sort . . . with virtue**: Hence not a result of fortune.

4. §8 1099b28–32 **Further, this . . . fine actions**: Since political science aims at the best good, and seeks to secure it through education of character, it presupposes that happiness consists primarily in character and action, not in fortune.

5. §9 1099b32–1100a5 **It is not surprising . . . complete life**: Children, animals, and happiness: 1178b25–8; *Phys.* 197b6; *EE* 1219b5.

6. §11 1100a7–8 **the Trojan . . . Priam**: Aristotle refers not only to Homer, but to other stories about the Trojan War. As king of Troy, Priam was rich, prosperous, and successful, amply meeting the normal standards for happiness, until the Greeks came, destroyed Troy, and killed Priam himself. See Homer, *Iliad* xxii 44–76. Like Croesus in Herodotus, he provides a clear example of someone whose life was apparently ruined by the way it ended.

10

10. §1–16. *Happiness is not completely stable, but it is stable enough to justify us in calling people happy during their lifetime.*

(a) §1–2. Solon's advice to call no one happy until he is dead does not mean that we can be happy when we are dead.

1. §1 1100a10–11 **Then should . . . end**: In Herodotus i 30–2, Solon advises the prosperous and overconfident Croesus not to judge people's happiness (especially Croesus' own) during their lifetime, but to wait until they are dead, to see how their lives end. This advice applies especially to Priam, whose life went well until near its end.

(b) §3–5. It is not clear that someone's past happiness is fixed, even after his death.

2. §3 1100a14–17 **We do not . . . and misfortunes**: Solon thinks happiness is complete success, and that (e.g.) Croesus lacks complete success if his success does not last his entire lifetime. Since external conditions beyond Croesus' control may interfere with success, we are wise to wait until the end of his life, when we can be sure that they have or have not interfered, before we decide whether he was happy.

3. 1100a17–21 **But this claim . . . suffer misfortune**: Even the end of a person's life may be too soon to tell if he was or was not really successful in his aims. If someone is happy, he succeeds in fulfilling his aims. If, then, he aims at the welfare of

his children, his success, and hence his happiness, depends on what happens after his death, when his children succeed or fail.

4. §4 1100a27–9 **Surely, then, . . . to have been miserable:** Queen Victoria died in 1901; her descendant Czar Nicholas was deposed in 1917. The absurdity that Aristotle considers here is not (a) ‘Victoria has now become unhappy’ (said in 1917); see a14–15, ‘we do not say . . .’. He considers the different absurdity (b) ‘It has now (in 1917) become true that Victoria was (before 1901) unhappy’. What was true of her in her lifetime cannot be affected by every fluctuation of fortune after her death (but it can be altered by some fluctuations; see previous note).

(c) §6–8. It is possible to be happy during one’s lifetime.

5. §7 1100a34–5 **Would it . . . happiness he has:** Aristotle rejects the attitude that refuses to ascribe happiness until after someone’s death.

6. 1100b2–4 **for we suppose . . . to and fro:** The attitude Aristotle has rejected would be reasonable, if happiness consisted primarily in good fortune; for in that case happiness would be as unstable as fortune. If someone can be happy in his lifetime, happiness does not consist primarily in good fortune.

(d) §9–11. The life of virtuous activity meets the legitimate demand for happiness to be stable.

7. §9 1100b8 **For his . . . does not rest on them:** [Or ‘does not consist in them’. The Greek has simply ‘in’; cf. iii 1. §15, note.] In Aristotle’s view, Solon is mostly, but not entirely, wrong. A virtuous person’s main aim is the exercise of his virtues in his life. He can succeed in this, and hence achieve the main component of his happiness, independently of fortune. Since, however, some conditions and elements of happiness depend on fortune, happiness is not entirely stable.

8. §10 1100b12–14 **For no human . . . the sciences:** The stability of virtue: 1105a33, 1140b29, 1156b12, 1159b2, 1164a12, 1172b9. The virtues deal with one’s life as a whole, and so one has reason to exercise them in all one’s dealings. FRIENDSHIP supports this constant exercise: 1170a7 (cf. 1154b20, 1175a3, 1177a21), 1172a1–8.

9. §11 1100b21–2 **‘good, foursquare, and blameless’:** Simonides fr. 379 (Page). Cf. Plato, *Pr.* 339b.

(e) §12–14. The happiness of virtuous people is not entirely stable, because it is not immune to external circumstances. But even bad luck cannot make them miserable.

10. §12 1100b25–8 **But many major . . . fine and excellent:** External goods ‘add adornment’: 1123a7, 1124a1.

11. 1100b30–3 **And yet, . . . and magnanimous:** See 1123b29. Because virtuous people do not overestimate external goods, they are not be crushed by misfortune. See 1166a29. Making the best of available resources: *Pol.* 1332a19.

12. §13 1100b35–1101a1 **For a . . . prudent person:** ‘PRUDENT’, usually translates *phronimos*, but here translates the cognate *emphrôn*.

13. §14 1101a6–8 **If this . . . Priam's**: The happy person does not become miserable even in misfortune; he is happy nor unhappy (miserable), but simply not happy. Here Aristotle uses 'blessed' (*makarios*) as well as 'happy' (*eudaimôn*). In some places (see *EE* 1215a10†, 1215b1–14†) being *makarios* seems to indicate a higher degree of well-being (more suitable to gods than to human beings) than the merely *eudaimôn* person possesses. But this chapter draws no distinction between *makarios* and *eudaimôn*.

14. 1101a10 **nor shaken . . . misfortunes**: Read *outh'hupo*.

(f) §15–16. Hence a virtuous person can be called happy in his lifetime, even though he is not assured of happiness throughout his life.

15. §15–16 1101a16–21 **Or should we . . . human being is**: Aristotle decides, in the light of §14, that we can call a person happy while he is alive, keeping in mind that we are speaking of human happiness, which is subject to the fluctuations of fortune.

[Or, with a different punctuation: 'Or should we add . . . appropriate end? Since the future . . ., we shall say . . . human being is.' We cannot call a person happy while he is alive.]

11

11. §1–6. *Solon is partly right. What happens after one's death can affect one's happiness slightly.*

(a) §1–4. Postmortem misfortunes differ in degree and in their impact on one's past happiness.

1. §4 1101a30–1 **much more . . . course of it**: In Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, for instance, the crimes of Agamemnon (who sacrificed his daughter) and of Atreus (who killed the sons of his brother Thyestes, and served them up for Thyestes to eat) are mentioned, but they affect us less than the murder of Agamemnon, which happens during the play.

(b) §5–6. But in any case their impact is slight.

12

12. §1–8. *The difference between praise and honour suggests that virtue (an object of praise) is inferior to happiness (an object of honour).*

1. §1 1101b12 **for . . . capacity**: A simple CAPACITY, or ability, is neither praise-worthy nor honourable. See 1106a6–10; *MM* 1183b30–5.†

(a) §2–3. Objects of praise.

2. §2 1101b12–14 **Whatever . . . to something**: On praise, cf. *MM* 1183b20–38†. Praise is accorded to what is FINE #3 because it is the agent's own achievement, resulting from his own voluntary effort under human conditions (hence it is inappropriate to the gods; 1178b16). Congratulation, however, belongs to success in action; this is what distinguishes happiness from virtuous action, which is not sufficient by itself for the complete success required in happiness (cf. 1177b18).

(b) §4–7. The best good is above praise.

3. §4 1101b24–5 **godlike**: Or ‘divine’. Cf. 1145a18–27.

4. §5 1101b27–8 **Indeed, Eudoxus . . . of pleasure**: See 1094a2, 1172b9. Aristotle endorses EUDOXUS’ claim that some goods are too good to be praised. He does not endorse the argument for hedonism that Eudoxus derives from this claim.

(c) §8. Happiness is above praise because it is the principle.

5. §8 1102a2–3 **for <the . . . other actions**: Lit. ‘for the sake of this we do all the other things’. ‘This’ probably refers to ‘principle’ (*archē*). Aristotle assumes that we do all our actions for the sake of happiness. It is the PRINCIPLE because our deliberation (see DECISION) begins from our conception of happiness as the highest good; and we aim at it as the END, since we try to find the action that will best realize our conception of happiness.

13

13. §1–19. *The soul and the virtues.*

(a) §1–4. A discussion of happiness requires a discussion of virtue.

1. §1 1102a5–7 **Since happiness . . . happiness better**: This is a better place to begin Book ii than the place where our mss. divide the books. Aristotle summarizes what he has said, and anticipates what comes next.

He refers back to his definition of happiness in 1098a16–18. In ‘a certain sort’ (*tis*) he may allude to the parts of the definition that he leaves out here: (a) the demand for the best and most complete virtue, and (b) the demand for a complete life. He has discussed (b) in c9–11. It is reasonable to consider (a) when we have examined the specific virtues, and seen that there are a number of them (as 1098a17 suggested). Hence the next task is to discuss virtue.

In his account of happiness Aristotle has not yet said what the virtues are, and whether happiness requires justice or injustice, kindness or cruelty, bravery or cowardice. Aristotle begins his answer to that question. Following the suggestion in 1098a3, he considers the rational and non-rational parts (see DESIRE) of the human SOUL. The condition that promotes happiness will be the proper relation between the rational and the non-rational parts.

2. §2 1102a8 **the true politician**: Aristotle recognizes that his conception of political science and of the politician does not entirely fit the common conception of what politicians do. Cf. *EE* 1216a23–7†.

3. §3 1102a10–11 **Spartan and Cretan legislators**: Aristotle commends their systematic supervision of moral education. See SPARTA.

4. §4 1102a12–13 **Since, then, . . . beginning**: This was the decision announced in c2, to pursue political science.

(b) §5–8. A discussion of virtue requires a discussion of the soul.

5. §7 1102a18–20 **If this . . . body as well**: Cf. Plato, *La.* 189e–190c (adapted by Aristotle).

6. **1102a23 Hence . . . <as the student of nature> . . . soul:** The account of the SOUL in the *De Anima* belongs to Aristotle's natural philosophy.

7. **§8 1102a25–6 for a more exact . . . requires:** Cf. 1094b11–27. On the present question EXACTNESS is not impossible, but irrelevant.

(c) §9–10. The soul is divided into rational and non-rational parts.

8. **§9 1102a26–7 <We> have . . . less popular>:** [Or ' . . . even in the POPULAR works'].

9. **§10 1102a28–32 But are these . . . present purposes:** Parts: *DA* 413b13–32†, 432a15–b8, 433a31–b13†. By 'two <only> in definition' (*logos*) Aristotle means what he means when he speaks of things that are 'the same, but their being is not the same'; cf. 1130a12–13.

(d) §11–14. One sort of non-rational part operates without our awareness, and is therefore irrelevant to ethics.

10. **§11 1102a32–b2 Consider the non-rational . . . capacity to them:** In this section it is useful to remember that Aristotle ascribes SOULS to plants as well as to animals. 'Full-grown' translates *teleion*, also translated 'COMPLETE'.

(e) §15–19. Another sort of non-rational part includes non-rational desires; it is capable of agreeing or disagreeing with the rational part.

11. **§15 1102b18–19 uncontrolled:** Literally 'loosed', i.e., moving independently, not under one's control.

12. **§17 1102b26–8 At any rate, . . . reason in everything:** Continence and virtue: 1111b14, 1115b10, 1119a11, 1151b34.

13. **§18 1102b30 the <part> . . . in general desires:** Aristotle does not mean that the non-rational part is the only part that has DESIRES; for the rational part has the type of rational desire that Aristotle calls 'wish' (*boulêsis*). He means that the desires of the non-rational part are simply desires, i.e., they lack the rational element that is essential to desire for the good.

14. **1102b31–3 This is . . . in mathematics:** [Or ' . . . in the way in which we 'take account' (lit. 'have *logos* [reason, account]') of father or friend, not in the way in which we <give an account> . . .']

15. **§19 1103a1–3 If, then, . . . a father:** Aristotle has now explained the two ways of acting 'in accord with reason' that he introduced in 1098a3–5. The non-rational part that includes desires is not inherently rational, but is capable of following the reason in the inherently rational part.

(f) §19. Different types of virtue are required for the non-rational part (capable of agreeing with the rational part) and for the rational part.

16. **1103a3–4 The division . . . virtues of character:** The virtues of character do not involve only the non-rational part. They all require PRUDENCE, which belongs to the rational part. Some of the virtues of thought—prudence, good deliberation, understanding and consideration—require the right training of the non-rational part; see vi 9, 11.