

MAN'S END
IN
ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS

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PREFACE

The problem of giving a consistent exposition of Aristotle's views on man's end in the Nicomachean Ethics prompted the writing of this thesis. My analysis of the fundamental reason why a consistent exposition is not possible stems basically from a consideration of the ambiguity of the word "good". In terms of Aristotle's thought the end of any activity can be good both in the metaphysical sense of completeness as well as in the moral sense of desirability. Aristotle's failure to take this distinction into account consistently constitutes a fundamental weakness in his discussions on man's final end.

Siegler's essay, Reason, Happiness and Goodness, and Oates' study, Aristotle and the Problem of Value, provided me with valuable insights into an understanding of this underlying confusion in Aristotle's ethical thought.

DECLARATION

Unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, the whole thesis is my own original work.

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

Most commentators on Aristotle's ethics would agree with O'Connor's assessment that the "Nicomachean Ethics is one of the great books of moral philosophy."⁽¹⁾ However, it has also been argued that "it is only with difficulty that the Nicomachean Ethics can be considered as a systematic treatise enunciating a single straightforward doctrine."⁽²⁾ Walsh and Shapiro quote Henry Sidgwick as saying that "on the whole there is probably no treatise so masterly as Aristotle's Ethics and containing so much close and valid thought, that yet leaves on the reader's mind so strong an impression of dispersive and incomplete work."⁽³⁾

Various suggestions have been made to try to explain the unsystematic nature of the Nicomachean Ethics. Hardie⁽⁴⁾ proposes that Aristotle may have amended his basic text periodically without ever writing a final, finished work. Another possibility put forward by Walsh and Shapiro is that Aristotle did not write a "connected ethical work" and that his various treatments of related ethical topics were only subsequently edited as a single work.⁽⁵⁾ It is therefore possible that the editor, in order to ensure that no important material was omitted or lost, included what seemed to him to be all relevant sections dealing with one specific concept or problem.⁽⁶⁾ It should, however, be noted that even if it is uncertain as to whether Aristotle himself planned the work as it stands today, the Nicomachean Ethics is generally regarded as "the authoritative statement of Aristotle's system."⁽⁷⁾ The status and authenticity of the other two Aristotelean works on ethics, the Eudemian Ethics and the Magna Moralia, has been much debated. It is, however, not within the scope of this thesis to examine the debate in great detail.⁽⁸⁾

However, even if the Nicomachean Ethics is regarded as authoritative and despite the feeling that it is

"dispersive/

and incomplete" there is nevertheless a fundamental problem about the consistency of Aristotle's views on man's end, the central theme. In simple terms this difficulty lies in the attempt to reconcile the two "ends" put forward by Aristotle, namely perfect and secondary happiness.⁽⁹⁾ Instead of postulating one kind of happiness as one is led to believe from a reading of Book I of the Nicomachean Ethics, he concludes with two types, and the precise relationship between them is not definitively elucidated.

Various commentators have, of course, pointed out this problem. Copleston, for example, says :

"The precise relation of moral action to the highest type of human action is left obscure, but of course Aristotle makes it quite clear in the Ethics that without moral virtue, true happiness is impossible." (10)

(Whether Aristotle does indeed make it "quite clear" that true happiness requires moral virtue must be examined.)⁽¹¹⁾

Ross is severe in his criticisms of the dichotomy between the two ends. He argues that "though his (Aristotle's) formal theory ... makes the moral life subsidiary to the intellectual, this relation is not worked out in detail. When Aristotle is engaged in studying the moral activities he treats them as good in themselves, and the moral agent as finding his motive in nothing beyond the act, but its own nobility. In effect he assigns a higher value to the moral life than his formal theory warrants."⁽¹²⁾

Contained within this problem is the question of the relationship between the political life of co-operation (for man is, according to Aristotle, a political animal)⁽¹³⁾ and what appears as the essentially a-social, solitary activity of contemplation. Indeed, how are these seemingly incompatible notions of man's end to be reconciled in view of Aristotle's contention that the Nicomachean Ethics and Politics are not regarded as dealing with separate disciplines?⁽¹⁴⁾ Aristotle argues that the end of the

city /

state seems to be a greater and more complete thing because "it is more noble and God-like to secure the good for a whole people or for city states." (15) Yet the good of the state seems to be fulfilled through its members' attainment of secondary happiness since perfect happiness as contemplation is also said to be "too exalted for mere man." (16)

Aristotle's inability to free himself from his Platonic background plays an important part in these problems. MacIntyre says :

"The treatise which began with an attack on Plato's conception of the Form of the Good ends not so far away from the same attitude of contempt for the merely human." (17)

(MacIntyre's use of the word "contempt" may well be challenged. As we shall see he makes this comment because he uses the word "human" in a specific sense as including the notion of fallibility. Aristotle's perfect man is infallible. (18))

The Platonic element in Aristotle's thought does, to a very large extent, underlie many of the problems associated with man's end. In order to elucidate this point in greater detail let us firstly consider some aspects of Plato's thought.

The Doctrine of the Forms provides Plato with an underlying unity in metaphysics, ethics and politics (among others). The Republic gives the finest illustration of the intimate relationship of these disciplines. The ideal life of the philosopher is ideal both in the metaphysical and epistemological sense in that the philosopher king has attained pure thought and contemplates The Good, as well as in the ethical sense insofar as he is a just man. The justification for his position in the state is provided by the Forms as well as by the service he renders to the community. As Jaeger has pointed out, the theoretic life and the sphere of political action are reconciled by giving science and philosophy a new subject, namely the state, and by making the highest norms and laws of social action their

chief /

chief problem, on whose solution hung the welfare of the state itself.⁽¹⁹⁾ This intimate relationship means that there is no conflict in standards of value. Thus as we have already pointed out, an action is good both in the metaphysical, ethical and political sense.

A further characteristic of Plato's thought lies in his conception of the essential unity of theoretical and practical wisdom. Jaeger expresses this as follows :

"Plato had attached moral insight, the phronesis of Socrates, to the contemplation of the Idea of the Good." (20)

Whilst phronesis in the ordinary usage of Plato's time was confined to the realm of political action, Plato had extended the use of the word to include the sphere of theoretical knowledge of the Forms. Later, however, Plato's philosophy moved away from its close identification with the practical sphere, or its similarity to the Socratic position, towards an increasingly theoretical standpoint.⁽²¹⁾ Jaeger quotes an extremely interesting anecdote about Plato's lectures on the Good. Many came to listen to Plato in the hope of learning something about human goods such as wealth, health, strength and happiness. But instead, Plato lectured on mathematics and astronomy, and finally concluded that the Good is one. Hence Aristoxenus' comment: "I think it seemed an absolute paradox to them. Thereupon some of them despised the matter and others condemned it."⁽²²⁾

On the one hand, Aristotle tried unsuccessfully to effect a clear distinction between metaphysics and ethics (including politics). Yet on the other hand having attempted that separation, and in his reluctance to abandon the Platonic conception of perfect happiness as the contemplation of metaphysical truths, he was obliged to draw them together. For Aristotle could not accept the view that the wicked philosopher could be happy. The morally virtuous life must in some way be a necessary prerequisite for contemplation. Rejecting the Doctrine of Forms, Aristotle was forced to use two standards of value, a metaphysical goodness in the sense of completeness⁽²³⁾, and moral goodness in the sense of being desirable.⁽²⁴⁾

Aristotle /

Aristotle does not, however, always adhere to this distinction with the result that in the argument on function, for example, he makes an illicit transition from goodness in the former to the latter sense.⁽²⁵⁾ It is arguable that the reason for the use of this albeit fallacious argument lies in the crucial role played by moral virtue. For it is moral virtue which in the sphere of secondary happiness ensures that man will direct his activities towards the performance of morally good ends. Morally good actions will also be shown to be a necessary prerequisite for the attainment of perfect happiness.

The dichotomy in the standards of value also means that the essentially moral end of secondary happiness is to be judged differently from the metaphysical end of perfect happiness. These two spheres are also associated with different orders of reason, the former with practical reason and the latter with theoretical reason. Hence Aristotle once more separates these two spheres in accordance with the common usage rejected by Plato (Aristotle does always stress that his starting point is what is commonly held to be the case).⁽²⁶⁾ It will be shown that in fact the separation is untenable.⁽²⁷⁾

In the Eudemian Ethics a close connection is maintained between the realm of moral action and contemplation.

"Therefore whatever mode of choosing and of acquiring things good by nature - whether goods of body or wealth or friends or the other goods - will best promote the contemplation of God, that is the best mode and that standard is the finest; and any mode of choice acquisition that either through deficiency or excess hinders us from serving and contemplating God - that is a bad one." (28)

The Nicomachean Ethics, however, contains only one brief phrase linking the two realms. Aristotle says of practical wisdom that it provides for theoretical wisdom coming into being.⁽²⁹⁾ Precisely how Aristotle intends this to be interpreted must be examined. It will, however, be stressed that moral acts which presuppose both the possession of a good character as well as the intellectual

virtue /

virtue of practical wisdom are a necessary requirement for contemplation, but that the relationship between these ends can only be indirect in terms of the fundamental dichotomy which has been pointed out.⁽³⁰⁾ Insofar as the life of moral virtue, that is a life characterised by the consistent performance of morally good acts, perfects man's reason, it is an essential prerequisite for the rational activity of contemplation which constitutes perfect happiness. Furthermore the legislators, the men of practical wisdom, have the responsibility of organising the state in such a way that its inhabitants are encouraged to develop good habits. In a good state the good man will overlap with the good citizen. In such a state, moreover, the necessary leisure required for contemplation will be provided. An educational curriculum which includes the study of theoretical disciplines is an obvious requirement in order that the philosopher be enabled to contemplate those theoretical truths which have already been discovered by him.

The split between ethics (politics) and metaphysics, practical and theoretical reason, becomes clearer in the Magna Moralia. Furthermore the superiority of the theoretical activities is rejected. The analogy between the Divine Life, which is self-sufficient, and that of man is seen to be misleading, for according to the Magna Moralia that analogy does not prove that men need nothing.⁽³¹⁾ Rather moral virtue is held in the highest esteem. For moral virtues alone are considered praiseworthy. "No man is commended for being wise or prudent."⁽³²⁾

These arguments on the relationship between the life of moral virtue and contemplation might seem to support an "evolutionary thesis" regarding the development of Aristotle's thought. Jaeger⁽³³⁾ holds that Aristotle's early lost works were Platonic stressing for example the immortality of the soul as a separate substance, the contemplative ideal and the relative unimportance of the material world. Jaeger argues that Aristotle gradually abandoned this Platonism in favour of an increasingly

empirical /

empirical position. This idea of a linear transition is not, however, completely accepted by recent scholarship.⁽³⁴⁾ It has been rejected in this thesis. A close examination of some texts suggests that "not every aspect of Platonic Idealism was annihilated by Aristotle's growing appreciation of empirical knowledge and of the dynamic aspects of matter."⁽³⁵⁾ Aristotle did not abandon the Platonic ideal of the contemplation of metaphysical truths as constituting man's ultimate end. His attempt to reconcile the "contemplative" and "empirical" aspects of his thought was not entirely successful in view of the fact that perfect and secondary happiness belong to two distinct realms represented by philosophic and practical wisdom respectively, and with different standards of value. It will also be shown that Aristotle's psychological treatise, De Anima, contains both a Platonic and an empirical conception of the soul standing in uneasy juxtaposition with each other. Aristotle was to a large extent "the victim of his own education",⁽³⁶⁾ unable to free himself entirely from his Platonic background.

It is curious, perhaps, that contemplation, which is the highest form of life, that activity which is most pleasurable, has so little discussion devoted to it. Indeed it is an ideal attained only for brief periods of time.⁽³⁷⁾ Nor is Aristotle clear as to the objects of the activity of nous. It does not seem possible to come to any definite decision as to whether contemplation involves a religious or mystical dimension in the light of the limited information about it in Aristotle's works. Yet despite the fact that the Aristotelean conception of contemplation remains obscure, its influence on the development of Christian theology in its Catholic form as exemplified in the ethical thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, is undeniable.

In elucidating the concept of secondary happiness we shall criticise Aristotle for separating the function of each particular individual as his own specific calling from the function of man as man. This argument is

derived /

derived from the work of the psychologist, Abraham Maslow,⁽³⁸⁾ whose thought is distinctly Aristotelean.⁽³⁹⁾ Aristotle himself provides a justification for referring to contemporary psychological theories. He holds that the student of ethics "must study the soul."⁽⁴⁰⁾ For if we are concerned with what is good for man surely we should know something about the way man behaves? Aristotle's recommendation will therefore be taken into account by referring at times to some contemporary psychological theories which bear on certain aspects of Aristotle's thought. In particular the work of Maslow and B.F. Skinner⁽⁴¹⁾ will be consulted for, as will be shown, they share certain common factors in their views on man with Aristotle.

Generally regarded as a "common sense" philosopher, Aristotle holds his starting point to be what is in fact the case.⁽⁴²⁾ However, a close examination of Aristotle's discussions on various aspects of man's ends shows that he consistently violates his empirical starting point. Although, for example, he speaks in terms of the function of man qua man, of man as he is, it will be argued that Aristotle is rather considering the function of man as he ought to be as the basis of the content of happiness. Furthermore, whilst Aristotle states that all men seek happiness, it becomes clear that few are able to achieve perfect or secondary happiness. It seems that only a few intellectually gifted individuals attain happiness for short periods of time. But the vicious and the incontinent man, the individual engaging in unnatural actions, slaves and women are also progressively eliminated from attaining even secondary happiness for they are unable to perform morally good deeds.

Despite the many criticisms which will be levelled against Aristotle's conceptions of happiness, his basic premise that the good life is grounded in the nature of man constitutes an important insight.

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Whilst his identification of man's specific nature with his rational capacities may have been somewhat inadequate,⁽⁴³⁾ Aristotle's understanding of human nature was indeed profound.

FOOTNOTES :

1. O'Connor (Ed.) A Critical History of Western Philosophy
O'Connor: Aristotle, p.55.
2. Walsh and Shapiro (Ed.) Aristotle's Ethics, p.2.
3. Ibis.
4. Hardie: Aristotle's Ethical Theory, p.3.
5. Walsh and Shapiro (Ed.): Op.cit.p.3.
6. cf. Hardie: Op.cit. p.4.
This possibility might well be applicable to the way the concept of incontinence is dealt with (N.E. Bk. VII.). This point will be discussed at length at a later stage, in Chapter 5:3:3.
7. Hardie: Op.cit. quoting Rackman p.4.
8. See for example: Jaeger: Aristotle, Hardie Op.cit. pp.5-8.
9. N.E. Bk. X.
10. Copleston: A History of Philosophy Vol. 1 Part II, pp.89/90.
11. See Chapter 9.
12. Ross: Aristotle pp.233/4.
13. The Politics Bk. 1:2.
14. N.E. 1094b5.
15. N.E. 1094b9.
16. N.E. 1177b27.
17. MacIntyre: A Short History of Ethics p.82.
18. See Chapter 5:3:3:4.
19. Jaeger: Op.cit. p.430.
20. Ibid. p.437.
21. Ibid. p.434.
22. Ibis.
23. See Chapter 2:1.
24. Aquinas avoided a dichotomy insofar as God provides standards of value in the moral and metaphysical spheres.
25. See Chapter 3:3.
26. N.E. 1095b6.
27. See Chapter 4:2 and Hampshire's views in Chapter 4:5.
28. E.E. 1249b16.
29. N.E. 1145a8.
30. Chapter 9.
31. M.M. 1212b37.
32. M.M. 1185b5.
33. Jaeger: Op.cit.
34. Anselm H. Amadio: Aristotle: p.1166.
35. Ibis.
36. O'Connor: Op.cit.p.61.
37. Metaphysics - 1072b23.
38. Maslow: Motivation and Personality.
Maslow: The Farther Reaches of Human Nature.
39. See for example, Maslow: Motivation and Personality pp.340-345.
40. N.E. 1102a22.

41. Skinner: Beyond Freedom and Dignity.
Skinner: Walden Two.
42. N.E. 1095b6.
43. O'Connor: Op.cit. p.60.

CHAPTER 2 : THE NOTION OF THE END OR GOOD OF ANY ACTIVITY

The Nicomachean Ethics begins with that well-known sentence:

"Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim." (1)

This sentence provides an extremely good introduction into the problem of Aristotle's illicit blending of metaphysical and moral arguments. Thus two unrelated standards of value are shown to be juxtaposed.

What does Aristotle mean by the good to which every action is directed ?

2:1 Good in the metaphysical sense.

In his discussion on the priority of actuality over potency, Aristotle says :

"Everything that comes to be moves towards a principle, i.e. an end. The purpose of a thing is its principle, and the purpose of generation is its end. Now actuality is the end and therefore the principle of potency." (2)

In other words actuality is the purpose or goal or end of the thing and potentiality is preliminary to that end.

"The work is the end, and actuality is the work; and the very word 'actuality' is derived from activity and comes to mean much the same as entelechy or 'complete reality'." (3)

That which has attained its end is said to be perfect or complete.

"Things are said to be 'perfect' which have attained their end, this being good; for things are perfect when they have attained their end." (4)

The use of "good" above is a neutral term denoting completion or lacking nothing. For this reason, Aristotle can speak of the perfection of the humbug or the thief by which he means that they are "complete" humbugs or thieves.

"A physician and a flautist are perfect when they lack nothing of the form of their peculiar excellence. And likewise we speak of a 'complete' humbug and a 'complete' thief, indeed we even refer to them as 'good' - a good humbug, a good thief." (5)

On the purely metaphysical level therefore the end or good of any action may be that of thieving. In other words, the activity of thieving is directed towards the end of being a thief, that being the good of that activity. However, such an activity is evil or vicious in the moral sense, and Aristotle is, after all, writing an ethical treatise.

2:2 Good and bad actuality.

Let us develop this argument further by referring again to Aristotle's discussion on potency. He introduces a moral value standard in his distinction between two kinds of actuality, good and bad.

"It is clear from the following argument that a good actuality is better and more valuable than a good potency. Whatever we describe as potentiality for one thing is always potentiality for the opposite (e.g. that which we say can be healthy can also be unhealthy) and has both potentialities at once; for the same potentiality admits of both health and disease, or of rest and motion, or of building and demolishing, or of being built and being demolished. The potentiality for contraries, I say, is present at the same time, but neither these two contraries nor their actualities (e.g. health and disease) can be present at the same time. Therefore one of them must be good. But the potentiality may equally well be both or neither; therefore actuality is better. Similarly a bad actuality must be worse than its potency, for that which is capable is capable alike of both contraries." (6)

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There does therefore seem to be a moral scale interposed into a metaphysical argument. Actuality is neutral, a good actuality is valuable and a bad actuality disvaluable. As Oates argues, this distinction fits extremely uneasily into the metaphysical framework. For as Oates puts it, "Aristotle's theory of potentiality and actuality simply does not accommodate itself as a ground for a theory of value or worth."⁽⁷⁾ Indeed since Aristotle is discussing being as being, the introduction of the value concepts of "good" and "evil" seems to be highly inappropriate.

The distinction is, however, understandable for the teleological arguments are also used in his ethical work. Aristotle was perfectly aware that a man can choose an evil end just as well as a good one. Hence he says "That which is capable of causing motion in a certain way can also cause it not in that way; it is if it acts rationally."⁽⁸⁾

For as Aristotle has explained earlier in that section :

"Some things can initiate processes rationally and have rational potencies, while others are irrational and have irrational potencies. Rational potencies can belong only to living things, whereas irrational potencies can belong both to animate and inanimate objects. It follows, therefore, with regard to irrational potencies, that when the agent and the patient meet in a way appropriate to the potency in question, one must act and the other be acted upon. But in the case of rational potencies this is not necessary. For whereas the irrational potencies are productive of one result each, the rational produce contrary effects; and if they were actualised necessarily, they would produce contrary results at the same time. Since this is impossible, there must be something else, viz. desire or conscious choice to determine which of the two contrary results is to follow." ⁽⁹⁾

Man as a rational being can choose good or evil. In terms of his chosen end from the metaphysical point of view, he can be called a good thief. But from the

moral /

moral perspective his end is a bad actuality, and, as Aristotle will attempt to show, incompatible with the final end of happiness.

The opening sentence of the Nicomachean Ethics tacitly seems to assume that the end of the activity is good from the moral point of view. The possibility of bad actualities which are good in the metaphysical sense, cannot be acceptable in the context of an ethical work. Yet strictly speaking there does not seem to be any reason why they should be excluded.

It is therefore arguable that one of Aristotle's main aims in the Nicomachean Ethics is to clarify precisely what kinds of activities will be directed to ends which are good both in the sense of completeness, that is in the metaphysical sense, as well as being morally good, that is desirable. The kind of activity required must have the quality of excellence. But since Aristotle is concerned with morally good ends he moves from this excellence of function (which in man is the activity of the rational element of the soul) to moral virtue in order to ensure that the ends of man's activities as man will be morally good ones.

The argument on function must therefore be examined in some detail to elucidate the above discussion.

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The argument on function must therefore be examined in some detail to elucidate the above discussion.

FOOTNOTES :

1. N.E. 1094a 1-3.
2. Metaphysics 1050a 7-10.
3. Metaphysics 1050a23
4. Metaphysics 1021b24
5. Metaphysics 1021b16.
6. Metaphysics 1051a 5-18.
7. Oates: Aristotle and the problem of value, pp.193/4.
8. Metaphysics 1050b32.
9. Metaphysics 1048a 1-13.

CHAPTER 3 : THE FUNCTION OF MAN AND MORAL VIRTUE

In order to explicate the content of happiness, Aristotle introduces the controversial argument on the function of man. He argues that people like carpenters, flautists, sculptors and the like have a function or task or characteristic activity. In the same way, various organs of the body, the eye, the hand, the foot also have a function. Man, therefore, surely has a function as man, i.e. he has a characteristic specifically human activity peculiar to man alone. This activity cannot lie merely in the life of nutrition, growth and reproduction which man shares with plants and animals. Nor can it lie merely in the sentient life common to all animals. What is common to all men and unique to man alone is "an active life of the element that has a rational principle."⁽¹⁾ Continuing his analogy with the craftsman (and organs of the body) Aristotle goes on to say that just as the function of the good harpist, for example, is to play the harp well, so the function of the good man consists in "the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue or excellence."⁽²⁾

The above argument raises many contentious issues.

3:1 Does man have a function ?

It may be granted that a sculptor has a characteristic activity. We may also perhaps accept that the eye's specific activity is to see. Whether, however, the hand or foot may be regarded as having a function is debatable, for on what basis would we decide which of the many activities of the hand or foot constitute its specific function ? Furthermore, can one speak of the function of a hand or foot (or even an eye, for that matter) separate from the body ?

These difficulties apart, does Aristotle show that man has a function ? O'Connor states firmly that "there is no reason whatever to take this argument seriously."⁽³⁾ Siegler⁽⁴⁾ agrees that as it stands Aristotle's "argument"

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is not, in fact, an argument, but points out that had Aristotle asserted as a general truth that every natural thing has a function, then he could have concluded that man has one as well. Perhaps, however, it is possible to show that Siegler's suggestion is implicit in Aristotle's thought.

Considering a thing from the point of view of its nature, ⁽⁵⁾ Aristotle says that nature is substance, consisting of matter and form, having within it a source or cause of being moved (i.e. the efficient cause). Substance is essence, that is, it is what it is and nothing else. Nature as essence designates that which makes one particular primary substance different from every other particular primary substance. Aristotle also speaks of the nature of the thing as the process of growth or coming to be of the thing. Nature is also the final end or the end of becoming, when substance attains its fulfilment and is what it is more properly than when it exists potentially.

It may be argued that function presupposes essence, for function is the realisation of essence. It is a general truth in Aristotle's thought that every natural thing does have an essence. Purpose or function is immanent in all living things so that the workings of nature are the outcome of processes which are purposefully directed. If man's essence is his rationality, the process of growth or coming to be is man's function. This therefore consists in the active exercise of his rational element. The final end or the end of becoming of man as a rational being is contemplation.

Probably, therefore, Aristotle did presuppose in his readers a knowledge of his writings on nature. The function argument might therefore be intended to have implied the exposition above. It would be assumed as a general truth that every natural thing has a function, including man. However, there is a fundamental problem about Aristotle's conception of man's function.

3:2 What is man's function ?

If, as Aristotle argues, the function of man is an activity of the soul implying a rational principle, it is not entirely clear what he means to include under the label "rational principle" at this early stage of his argument. He elucidates the phrase "rational principle" as follows :

"Of this, one part has such a principle in the sense of being obedient to one, the other in the sense of possessing one and exercising thought." (6)

Many commentators have argued that Aristotle includes the activity of contemplation under the activity of "exercising thought." Gauthier, for example, speaks of the "two activities of the mind" as "the activity of exercising command, by which the mind rules over desire, over the body to which it is united and over all that which is inferior to it, and the activity of contemplation, by which the mind lives, apart from the body, its life as a spectator of itself and of all that which is superior to it." (7)

Allan too writes that two forms of rational activity are being included at this stage. Aristotle is therefore speaking firstly of "the free exercise of reason in theoretical study, and secondly in the discipline of the emotions according to a rule or purpose formulated by reason." (8)

Hardie⁽⁹⁾ argues that the phrase "active life" (praktike) need not be taken to exclude theoretical wisdom and quotes from the politics in support of this view.

"If happiness is to be equated with doing well, then the active life will be the best both for any state as a whole community and for the individual. But the active life need not, as some suppose, be always concerned with our relations with other people, nor is thinking only effective when it concentrates on the possible outcome of action. On the contrary, thinking and speculation that are their own end and are done for the sake of thinking and speculation - these are more

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effective because they are themselves the doing well which is their aim, and they are therefore action." (10)

Hardie does, however, go on to say that what is common and peculiar to man is rationality in the general sense of which metaphysical speculation is merely a specialised way of being rational. (11)

There is, of course, much evidence in the Nicomachean Ethics that contemplation is at some stage to be included in the notion of function. For example, Aristotle writes that the happy man "will be engaged in virtuous action and contemplation." (12) Furthermore, the inclusion of the virtues of theoretical reason may be implied in the phrase, "he is happy who is active in accordance with complete virtue." (13) Aristotle also mentions theoretical wisdom explicitly when explicating the phrase "the part which grasps a rational principle". (14) He speaks of two subdivisions within this "part" as the scientific and calculative faculties. (15)

It will also be remembered that in the discussion on nature, man's function was described in terms of his actualisation in contemplation.

But the view that contemplation is included in the initial formulation of function has been challenged. Many commentators have interpreted the phrase regarding the rational principle in terms of practical wisdom alone.

Taylor, for example, when discussing function, writes of a life "consisting in conscious direction of one's actions by a rule", implying that a man needs to know this rule (through practical wisdom) and to follow it. (16)

Ross, writing of what it is that only man can do, speaks of the faculty "which has a plan, or rule, within which faculty are two sub-faculties, that which understands the rule, and that which obeys the rule." (17)

Siegler quotes Joachim as suggesting that Aristotle

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is initially concerned with "the good that is doable" having set aside contemplation for consideration at a later stage. For that activity is not unique as man to man. (18) Indeed Aristotle's description of perfect happiness as contemplation is generally regarded as suggestive of his account of the prime mover in *Metaphysics* Λ.

When Aristotle speaks of the "rational principle" in his initial formulation of function, there is a case for arguing that contemplation should be excluded from that activity which is common and peculiar to man. (19) For it does seem only a few gifted men are capable of that supreme activity of reason, which activity is akin to that of God, the prime mover. This conclusion seems to be borne out by Aristotle's comment that "the function of man is accomplished only in accordance with practical wisdom together with moral virtue." (20)

The contradictions apparent in Aristotle's thought pertaining to the interpretation of function do seem to illustrate his inability to work out clearly the implications of his attempt to separate practical and theoretical wisdom. It is arguable that initially Aristotle's aim is to ensure that man's actions will be directed towards morally good ends, hence his immediate concern is "the doable good." At the same time, he does allow for the later inclusion of contemplation in terms of the last words of this passage :

"Human good turns out to be activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete." (21)

The inclusion of contemplation is then made explicit in the discussion on the two parts of the soul. (22)

There is, however, a far more fundamental problem than the controversy about the inclusion of contemplation into the concept of function. In terms of Aristotle's formulation of function as having a rule and following that

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rule, it is clear that this excludes the innately incontinent man who, by nature, does not follow a rule.⁽²³⁾ Such men do not have practical wisdom and obviously cannot obey the rule given by that virtue. Indeed, if the rule is one given by practical wisdom, that in itself is already a virtue presupposed by having a good character and does not therefore constitute a part of the function of man as man, but rather the function of the good man as a good man. Aristotle is talking about what man's function ought to be, rather than what man's function is.

Aristotle's starting point in his discussion on function that man is essentially a rational being may be therefore challenged. Slaves, for example, also do not possess the virtue of practical reason and never will. Women possess it in an incomplete form.⁽²⁴⁾ In his discussion on brutish and morbid states, Aristotle admits as an empirical fact that there are people who are not rational. "They have no better part."⁽²⁵⁾ Furthermore he says that some of the morbid states arise in individuals "by nature".⁽²⁶⁾ Aristotle therefore seems to exclude these "brutes" from the class man - "they are departures from the natural norm."⁽²⁷⁾ But this norm is the way Aristotle thinks men ought to behave.

Apart from these non rational beings (who are, of course, excluded from ever attaining either type of happiness), Aristotle does also make this rather curious observation which could perhaps be taken to suggest that (some) men are not rational by nature.

"Reason causes men to do many things contrary to habit and to nature whenever they are convinced that this is the better course." (28)

If man does have a function as man, it is not clear what this is. For it does seem that Aristotle is telling us what man's function ought to be. It ought to be having a rule and following that rule. Aristotle, however, writes of that "ought" as if it were an "is".

3:3 Function and the role of moral virtue.

We have seen that the function of man in the Aristotelean argument may be interpreted to include initially the possession of a rule and the ability to follow such a rule. When function is treated in terms of its excellence the inclusion of practical wisdom and moral virtue follow. But the inclusion of moral virtue in the discussion on excellence of function has been challenged by Siegler.⁽²⁹⁾ He argues that if man's happiness lies in activity of soul in accordance with virtue, Aristotle makes an illicit transition from excellence in reasoning ability to excellence in the sense of moral virtue or goodness of character. Let us now examine Siegler's arguments in greater detail.

In his analysis of the two senses of the rational principle (viz. one in the sense of being obedient to one, and the other in the sense of possessing one and exercising thought⁽³⁰⁾) Siegler interprets this as a distinction between "having the ability to reason and the activity of reasoning."⁽³¹⁾ The function of the good man is then "to act well on reasons or to reason well in these actions."⁽³²⁾ Now to interpret function as Siegler does, i.e. in terms of practical wisdom alone, implies that a good man is one who shows skill in reasoning. He can, as Siegler puts it, "plan with precision, and organise his activities so that he can achieve his aims whatever they may be."⁽³³⁾ But, of course, this is not to say that such a man is thereby a morally good man, nor that his action will be a morally praiseworthy one.⁽³⁴⁾ A man may plan a robbery with precision, carry it out with great organisational skill, but that does not make his action good in the sense of it being morally desirable. We might perhaps think that a thief could be happy. But clearly Aristotle could never allow this to be the case. For it is, as Siegler has stressed, a necessary condition for acts being good acts that they be directed towards noble ends. And it is moral virtue which, according to Aristotle, ensures that

we do direct our activities towards such ends. (35)

Siegler argues that the illicit transition to excellence as moral virtue may perhaps be explained in terms of a misleading parallel between the harpist and man as man. For whilst the good harpist is praised for the excellence of his playing, that performance has nothing to do with it being morally praiseworthy. But man as man can, as Siegler points out, be praised on two accounts. Firstly if he reasons well; but secondly if he performs this function for the purposes of morally good ends or aims. However, "having the right aims is unfortunately not any more peculiar to human beings than having the wrong aims." (36) Excellence in reasoning ability is a necessary condition for moral goodness and happiness, but it is not a sufficient condition. What is missing is the quality of the end or aim of the action, and this is provided by moral virtue. "Virtue and the good man as such are the measure of each thing." (37) "Virtue either natural or produced by habituation is what teaches right opinion about the first principle." (38)

Siegler's argument is supported by a later discussion by Aristotle on moral virtue. (39) Aristotle begins by saying that "every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well." (40) Aristotle goes on to argue that the excellence (or virtue) of the horse makes the horse good in itself, good at running, at carrying the horseman as well as facing enemy attacks. (41) He then infers that "the virtue of man also will be the state of character which makes him do his work well." (42) But surely, one would like to object, there is a vast difference between the horse as a good horse and a man's goodness. The goodness of the horse refers to the metaphysical conception of completeness. It has nothing to do with moral aims. But man's goodness is more than this, and Aristotle is using "good" in the case of man in the moral sense. Hence there is an illicit transition from excellence or goodness or virtue in the metaphysical

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sense of completeness in the case of the horse to excellence or goodness or virtue as moral virtue in man.

It may be suggested that in this argument Aristotle is himself guilty of committing the fallacy of "Ignoratio Elenchi", the fallacy of "irrelevant conclusion".⁽⁴³⁾ His proof that the excellence of function is a moral excellence is irrelevant to the conclusion he should have reached, i.e. the excellence of function in the metaphysical sense of completeness.

Aristotle's argument on function and excellence may be challenged in another way by an examination of moral virtue itself. As Hardie points out, virtues and vices belong to the general category of power.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Aristotle's name for the kind of power they are is "state of character". ("A state of character is that in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions."⁽⁴⁵⁾) In the discussion in the Nicomachean Ethics Bk. 1:13, Aristotle points out that there are two kinds of powers in the soul, rational and non-rational. This point is discussed fully in Metaphysics Θ, the section entitled "Rational and non-Rational Potencies". As has already been pointed out⁽⁴⁶⁾ the difference between these two potencies is that whilst rational powers admit equally of opposite effects, the irrational admit of only one. Hardie argues that it is not clear into which of these two categories the moral virtues do fall.⁽⁴⁷⁾ For the problem is that moral virtue is not an "ambivalent power". The morally virtuous man necessarily desires only what is good. Hence in Hardie's words :

"Whereas it requires the external intervention of 'something else', desire or choice, to determine whether the art of medicine is used to cure or kill, a moral virtue is itself a disposition to desire or choose, and not merely a capacity to know; it is not neutral but, by definition, on the side of the angels." (48)

Ross, for example, classes the moral virtues as rational.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Gauthier says they are rational only by participation,

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since they require practical wisdom which provides the rule. (50)

Fortenbaugh argues that Aristotle developed a new bi-partite psychological theory replacing the tri-partite account in his ethical and political works. In terms of this bi-partite theory the soul is conceived of as consisting of alogical and logical halves, the former consisting of emotions which are "cognitive phenomena open to reason", whilst the latter corresponds to reasoned deliberation. (51) The relationship of alogical to logical is that of obedience of the former to the latter and corresponds, in the good man, to the relationship of moral virtue to practical wisdom. Whilst Fortenbaugh locates the alogical/logical model within the biological faculty of intelligence, the emotions are not rational but are open to reason. (52) Gauthier says of desire that it is irrational in essence and becomes a human value by obeying reason. (53) Of course the emotions or desires need not become reasonable; they need not be obedient. Such individuals will not be morally virtuous nor practically wise.

It is clear therefore that the "rational" status of moral virtues is unresolved, and furthermore that the emotions are not naturally obedient.

The passage from Metaphysics Θ quoted above (54) does also make another point. If Aristotle were to limit his definition of function to rationality alone, then as a rational being man can choose between two contrary things. In short, he can choose evil just as well as good. In Metaphysics Δ Aristotle also speaks of virtue and vice in terms of the modifications of things in motion qua motion. Thus virtue and vice may be said to show whether things in motion act or are acted upon well or badly. "Good and evil indicate quality especially in living things and among those especially which have purpose (or purposive choice)." (55) Badness therefore arises from a potentiality which is capable of either a good or a bad actualisation.

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It is clear therefore that acting rationally does not imply being morally virtuous. This leads us to a discussion on the vicious man.

3:4 The Vicious man

It is arguable that there are two treatments of vice in the Nicomachean Ethics. Firstly there is the spontaneous, vicious action in which the individual, dominated by his passions acts impulsively without calculation and therefore not in accordance with the mean.⁽⁵⁶⁾ But Aristotle does also speak of a wicked, calculated act as for example in his discussion on the smart or cunning man.⁽⁵⁷⁾ In talking about setting a bad mark as the end of an action, Aristotle is surely implying that the smart man plans his action deliberately, but the end he seeks is one which admits of no mean, for example, theft or adultery.⁽⁵⁸⁾ It seems possible that in his discussion on function, Aristotle forgets about the second kind of vice.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Thus in speaking about obeying a rule he eliminates the first variety of vice, but seems to ignore the vicious man who acts rationally insofar as he acts in accordance with the practical syllogism. (The exact nature of the practical syllogism used by the vicious man is not made clear by Aristotle. Difficulties would occur in such a formulation especially since the major premise is formulated in terms of a moral imperative.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Obviously Aristotle would have to say that the end appearing to the bad man was merely an apparent good.⁽⁶¹⁾) Aristotle's treatment of vice is one of the least satisfactory aspects of his ethics.

The original choice to be evil is a voluntary one.

"To the unjust and to the self-indulgent man it was open at the beginning not to become men of this kind, and so they are unjust and self-indulgent voluntarily." (62)

Is this original choice spontaneous or deliberately chosen ? Aristotle does speak of self-indulgence as

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being chosen deliberately but this is probably a reference to particular instances of that vice.⁽⁶³⁾ If the original choice was deliberate it would presumably have been chosen as an apparent good.

The question of the voluntariness of this original choice is complicated by Aristotle's insistence on the importance of the environment on moral development. This implies that a bad environment cannot (or perhaps is unlikely to) lead to the emergence of a good character.

"It is difficult to get from youth up a right training if one has not been brought up under right laws." (64)

On what basis, therefore, can the original choice to be evil be said to be voluntary if the individual has been reared in a bad environment ?

Possibly Aristotle was aware of the danger of a deterministic position in his thinking on this point. He does recommend that there be laws covering the whole of one's life so that one becomes habituated towards virtuous living.⁽⁶⁵⁾ And he holds that the best results will be achieved if that training is carried out by a centralised control.⁽⁶⁶⁾ But he does also say that one must be born with an eye to judge rightly and choose what is right. Either we do or we do not have this natural endowment.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Hence his remark: "We are ourselves somehow partly responsible for our states of character."⁽⁶⁸⁾ Furthermore he argues that states of character are not voluntary in the same way as actions. We do control the beginnings of our state of character, and it was in our power originally to do good or evil, but the gradual progress of our character was not obvious.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Perhaps Aristotle means that much depends on the correctness of the environment in order to ensure the full development of a good character once one has made that initial choice of virtue. In other words he leaves open the alternatives as to which forces are at work in the formation of character.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Yet Aristotle does also say quite definitely that once the

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original choice to be vicious has been made, men are held responsible for the development of their vicious characters. Indeed he says that "not to know that it is from the exercise of activities on particular objects that states of character are produced is the mark of a thoroughly senseless person."⁽⁷¹⁾

The confusion in Aristotle on this issue is clear. On the one hand he wishes to ensure that the lives of the citizens will be moulded in such a way that their acts will be performed according to a consistently moral pattern.⁽⁷²⁾ Yet, at the same time, he insists that a man be held responsible for his character.

Once the original choice to be evil has been made, the vicious man does follow the same mechanics of choosing as the virtuous man, that is, he directs his actions towards ends, choosing the appropriate means to achieve these goals. Being largely responsible for his character, he is responsible for the way the end of any action appears to him. But what is evil will appear to him as an apparent good.⁽⁷³⁾ Yet curiously Aristotle also says that the vicious man is ignorant of the universal rules of conduct and deliberately prefers bad to good acts.⁽⁷⁴⁾ But how can Aristotle expect a wicked man to know the difference between good and bad if it is only the virtuous man who knows these universal principles of action? If the wicked man deliberately prefers bad to good acts, he conceives of the former as being good. When Aristotle says that the vicious man deliberately chooses to do that evil which is in his power to do,⁽⁷⁵⁾ for it is irrational to suppose that the man who acts unjustly does not wish to do so,⁽⁷⁶⁾ it seems to be the case that the vicious man nevertheless lives in accordance with principles he conceives of as being good, once he has made the original choice to be evil.

As far as choosing the means towards the achievement of the end, Aristotle admits that one may talk of an evil man deliberating.

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"There is a faculty which is called cleverness, and this is such as to be able to do the things that tend towards the mark we have set before us, and to hit it." (77)

If, however, that end or mark is bad then cleverness with regard to the means becomes mere smartness or cunning.

In the light of the discussion above, it is surely permissible to talk of the vicious man as acting rationally, of choosing an evil end and cunningly deliberating on the means required for its achievement. Taking the function argument in terms of practical wisdom, vicious activities could be said to fit in with the phrase "an activity of the rational principle." The vicious man would also be said to be good in the metaphysical sense of lacking nothing, he is the complete, vicious man. Man as man is capable of acting rationally, with rational excellence to serve both good and bad ends. He can attain a good or bad actuality. It is for this reason that Aristotle is forced to equate excellence in rationality with moral virtue in order to ensure that man's rational excellence, his deliberative skill be directed towards the performance of noble deeds. Hence in the analogy with the craftsman, excellence in the metaphysical sense becomes transformed in the case of man to moral excellence.

3:5 Vice and happiness.

That there are many vicious men, more so than good ones, in fact, is admitted by Aristotle. "Goodness", he says, "is both rare and laudable and noble." (78) Furthermore, the life of pleasure characterising self-indulgent men is said by Aristotle to characterise the mass of mankind. (79) Possibly those who live such a life consider themselves to be happy, but Aristotle will have none of this. Aristotle speaks of the masses with scorn, referring to them as beasts. The vicious man could never achieve secondary happiness because "what he does clashes with what he ought to do" whereas the good man does what

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he ought to do.⁽⁸⁰⁾ A wicked man cannot be a lover of self since he does not gratify his reason.⁽⁸¹⁾ (We have seen, however, that the wicked man can be regarded as acting irrationally. Here Aristotle seems only to be thinking of spontaneous wicked actions.) At any rate to discourage any possible evil, rational rebels, Aristotle makes it quite clear that vice is a dead end. Whilst a man becomes vicious voluntarily, "now that they have become so it is not possible for them not to be so."⁽⁸²⁾ (It may be queried whether if this is indeed the case, the vicious man can still be said to be responsible for his actions.)

According to this argument the wicked man can never contemplate and cannot therefore attain perfect happiness. Gauthier agrees with this.

"It is intelligence of which vice is the perversion ... the vicious man thus cannot be a philosopher and contemplation is the privilege of the virtuous."⁽⁸³⁾

It will be argued that moral virtue is a necessary prerequisite for contemplation.⁽⁸⁴⁾ But unfortunately, Aristotle does seem to admit the possibility of philosophising without speaking about the necessity for being morally good as well. For example, he speaks admiringly of men like Thales and Anaxagoras who know remarkable and divine things. But they do not seek human goods. Does this mean that they are not happy?⁽⁸⁵⁾ However, the unhappy philosopher is an impossibility in terms of Aristotelean arguments.

3:6 Significance of moral virtue

Moral virtue obviously plays a crucial role in Aristotle's ethical theory. Firstly it ensures that man's activities will be directed towards morally good ends. As Gauthier has expressed this,

"If the habitual state which is virtue makes us capable of doing virtuous things without error, it has above all the effect

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of establishing a kind of kinship between us and virtuous things and of thus making us spontaneously drawn to them One virtuous man ... by his very virtue, is made to want virtuous things and, when he does them, it will thus be intentionally and for themselves." (86)

Secondly, it is clear that in some way a morally virtuous life is a prerequisite of perfect happiness.

Few man are naturally virtuous. To be virtuous in the strict sense involves the habitual performance of good deeds and the presence of practical wisdom.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Clearly Aristotle holds it essential that all men ought to be virtuous. His ethics, which purports to start with what is the case, is prescribing what ought to be the case. His empirical starting point may therefore be regarded as having been violated.

Appendix : The function of education

The precise function of education is the subject of heated debate among educationalists, philosophers, psychologists and the like. The following five possible functions, which are among those which are sometimes put forward, for example, Russell and Barnes,⁽⁸⁸⁾ are not necessarily regarded as being mutually exclusive, although some might disagree. It will be shown that these features of education are found in the ethical and political thought of Aristotle.

1. To encourage each individual towards his own particular self-realisation; to provide opportunities for every individual to develop his own potentialities.
2. To instil the custom of critical, impartial enquiry.
3. To instil values into the individual.
4. To teach the individual the inherited knowledge of his culture.
5. To mould the individual in order that he will fit easily into the life of his particular community.

Using these points as a framework for discussion, let us discuss Aristotle's views contrasting them with the theories of the Behaviourist psychologist, B.F. Skinner and with an Existential-type approach. Let us begin with the latter view.

Existentialists stress the need for the young to be afforded maximum opportunities to discover their own particular abilities, being encouraged to choose freely for themselves among the many possibilities before them. Whilst initially children might be given certain values held in their particular society (since the young do require some sort of guide) it would be explained that since values are socially constructed, these are not absolute. Existentialists would therefore emphasise the importance of each individual to think critically and as far as possible in an impartial way. Whilst the educator

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has the responsibility for presenting as many sides as possible of an argument, and as honestly as he is able, each student is encouraged to think and decide for himself. He must, however, be able to provide a rational justification for his choice and must accept the responsibility involved in choosing freely.

It has been argued that initially children would be given generally accepted values, being told that these could be other than they are. However, Existentialists would, in terms of their method of education, (hopefully) succeed in instilling certain values which are fundamental to any Existential thesis. These include the respect of the uniqueness of each individual, the value of personal freedom and its concomitant responsibility. As free individuals, we determine our future and must thus avoid being enslaved by our past heritage. Existentialists would therefore probably include a study of the inherited knowledge of a culture without absolutizing it. In the above senses, therefore, we may say of the values of Existentialism that they are "open-ended".

Four of the five points listed above have been covered. The fifth, namely the moulding of the individual in order to fit easily into the life of his community, would be abhorrent to Existentialism. Rather the stress is on individuality, on the importance of respecting the freedom, autonomy and uniqueness of every person in society.

A positive criticism of this type of education lies in a seeming paradox. For by giving the student an unlimited range of freedom, we are also imposing certain limitations on him. Thus it might be argued that we prevent him from discovering those sorts of qualities which he might acquire in a less tolerant atmosphere, for example, self-discipline and the ability to deal with frustrating situations. However, it is maintained that the individual who realises his potentialities is one whose various needs have been fulfilled. Both Maslow (whose views on education resemble the Existential

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thesis⁽⁸⁹⁾) and Aristotle would regard the un-self-disciplined individual as being far from self-realisation. Skinner, who would never use Existential-type terminology, nevertheless implicitly recognises the importance of certain needs being fulfilled. His well-educated individual too is eminently self-controlled.

Aristotle's views on education, as contained in the Nicomachean Ethics and Politics provide an interesting comparison. For him, the ultimate aim of education is happiness or living well, which presupposes that the individual has actualised his potentialities as man. Part of his educational scheme does include some exposure to the inherited knowledge of his Greek culture, though in an expurgated form. For "we must keep all that is of inferior quality far away from the young, particularly these things that contain repulsive evil."⁽⁹⁰⁾ Aristotle's actual educative program will not be discussed in detail. The point with which we are concerned is the way Aristotle manages to fuse all five points above in his philosophy of education, largely through the role of practical wisdom. Children are taught good habits, yet Aristotle would not hold that if every individual has a good character, each acts in the same way as his fellow. The structure of the practical syllogism which may be said to provide "the mechanics of action" makes it clear that Aristotle allows for every action to be treated in a unique way. The minor premise refers to the particular situation in which the individual finds himself and in terms of which he must choose the means to enable him to reach his goal. Furthermore, the mean is relative to each individual, again seeming to allow for individual differences. It is also clear that Aristotle did not consider all individuals capable of the same degree of self-actualisation (although why this is so is not explained adequately). Slaves, women and children participate in varying degrees in the virtues in terms of the degree or lack of the deliberative faculty in their souls. Unlike Existentialists, therefore, Aristotle does discriminate a priori among individuals -

all are not equal. Despite these arguments, there is nevertheless a feeling generated in Aristotle's thought that Aristotle's good men will largely resemble the proud man.⁽⁹¹⁾ A city state consisting of a collection of these worthies would not necessarily be universally acceptable in the light of Aristotle's characterisation of that epitome of virtue.

The realisation of potentialities in full, when it includes the subdivisions of theoretical wisdom, implies that the individual will have the ability to carry out critical and impartial inquiries.

In a good state, the good man will also be a good citizen.⁽⁹²⁾ The happy man will therefore be one who, through education, has been moulded to fit into his society, performing his political tasks with excellence.

Aristotle's belief in the preferability of a centralised control of behaviour in order to produce the happy man and the good citizen finds its echo in the albeit more sophisticated theories of the Behaviourist, Skinner. There are, however, two fundamental differences in their thought, viz. their views on the way man is to be conceived of, and their attitudes to punishment.

Aristotle's concept of man as an autonomous, free individual who deliberates, chooses, acts, and is held responsible for his actions, is given credit for his successes and blamed for his failures, is rejected by Skinner as being "pre-scientific".⁽⁹³⁾

What, asks Skinner, have we achieved in making the world a better place on the basis of this pre-scientific way of thinking about a person? How far have we been able to explain and to control behaviour? Of what use have been the numerous ethical and religious treatises in their exhortations to man to become good? Skinner's point is that it is precisely because we do resort to the idea of an "inner man", a "free self", that we are unsuccessful in answering these questions. Skinner there-

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fore proposes that we now consider man in the "scientific way", i.e. we study him in terms of the way he behaves in given sets of circumstances. Instead, therefore, of speaking in terms of a "body" with a "self"⁽⁹⁴⁾ within, we must now think in terms of "a body which is a person in the sense that it displays a complex repertoire of behaviour."⁽⁹⁵⁾ Skinner is not denying that there may be any mental processes, but as a science, behaviourism is concerned only with what is publicly observable. It is concerned with the stimulus which acts on the organism and the response which is the overt or observable behaviour of the organism. Hence we see the importance of the environment in shaping and controlling behaviour.

In the light of this argument, the writing of ethics must, in Skinner's view, be replaced by a properly supervised centralised system of behavioural control. For, as Skinner points out, our behaviour is determined or controlled by many factors in a haphazard way. These factors often compete with each other, the parent with the teacher, the philosopher with the advertiser. How, therefore can we expect an individual to behave only, for example, as the philosopher advocates ?

What therefore are the aims of the Skinnerean Utopia ? The main goal is to condition the inhabitants of that society towards the achievement of self-control. Children are taught to build up "a tolerance for annoying experiences".⁽⁹⁶⁾ For example, they are taken for a walk, return home tired and hungry, and are then made to stand in front of food for some minutes without eating. Controllers encourage children to pass the time in a good-natured way. Thus, in Skinner's words, "a system of gradually increasing annoyances or frustrations (is set up) against a background of complete security."⁽⁹⁷⁾ Children achieve a tolerance for annoying experiences. In short, Skinner's aim is not to control the final behaviour, but rather to ensure that the individual will achieve self-control, being able to adjust to any situation.

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In this way Skinner would avoid the charge of producing a society of mechanised robots.

The parallel between Skinner's views above and those of Aristotle is quite striking, despite the fact that Aristotle does conceive of man in the "pre-scientific way". (Yet, as we have seen, he does recognise the influences of various determining factors.) It is surely not too far-fetched to compare the man who has acquired good habits and is therefore self-controlled⁽⁹⁸⁾ with the Skinnerean-conditioned version above. In the same way too, Aristotle's trained man would be able to adapt to any contingencies. The performance of morally good actions is never merely mechanical.

Skinner rejects punishment as a means to control behaviour. He writes :

"A person who has been punished is not thereby simply less inclined to behave in a given way: at best he learns to avoid punishment." (99)

Skinner goes on to argue that the task of a science of behaviour is "not to encourage moral struggle or to build or demonstrate inner virtues. It is to make life less punishing and in so doing to release for more reinforcing activities the time and energy consumed in the avoidance of punishment." (100)

Aristotle would surely concur with this latter remark. He does not regard the man who indulges in a moral struggle with any favour,⁽¹⁰¹⁾ although he does admit that the actual formation of good habits is difficult because of the delight one feels in pleasures.⁽¹⁰²⁾

However, Aristotle does stress the importance of punishment in the shaping of behaviour :

"Again, if the virtues are concerned with actions and passions, and every passion and every action is accompanied by pleasure and pain, for this reason also virtue will be concerned with pleasures and pains. This is indicated also by the fact that punishment

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is afflicted by these means; for it is a kind of cure, and it is the nature of cures to be effected by contraries." (103)

"For most people obey necessity rather than argument, and punishment rather than a sense of what is noble." (104)

The efficacy of punishment in the shaping of behaviour is subject to much debate among psychologists. Summarising various theories of punishment, the psychologists Deese and Hulse conclude that it is possible to gain the impression that punishment is an ineffective and wasteful technique to use in the establishment and guidance of behaviour. Adding that punishment does, however, work in practice, Deese and Hulse point to the need for further research into this sphere of behaviour.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Whether, therefore, Aristotle or Skinner is correct about the use or misuse of punishment in shaping behaviour cannot be answered at this stage. But the efficacy of positive reinforcements seem to be undeniable.

FOOTNOTES

1. N.E. 1098a3 See Chapter 7:2.
2. N.E. 1098a16.
3. O'Connor: Op.cit. p.57.
4. Siegler: Reason, Happiness and Goodness in Walsh and Shapiro: Op.cit. p.34.
5. Physics: Bk. II:1.
6. N.E. 1098a6.
7. Gauthier: On the Nature of Aristotle's Ethics in Walsh and Shapiro: Op.cit. p.11.
8. Allan: The Philosophy of Aristotle p.126.
9. Hardie: Op.cit. p.25.
10. Politics 1325b 14-24.
11. Hardie: Op.cit. p.25-6.
12. N.E. 1100b19.
13. N.E. 1101a15. (My underlining)
14. N.E. 1139a5.
15. N.E. 1139a12.
16. Taylor: Aristotle, p.91.
17. Ross: Aristotle, p.191.
18. Siegler: Op.cit. p.31.
19. Curiously, Aristotle does also admit in one passage that some of the lower animals have practical wisdom. "They have the power of foresight with regard to their own life." N.E. 1141a28. It seems then that, strictly speaking, even practical wisdom is not peculiar to man alone.
20. N.E. 1144a11. (My underlining). (Warrington's translation in the Penguin edition of Aristotle's Ethics reads "function". Ross uses the words "the work of man.")
21. N.E. 1098a16.
22. N.E. 1139a5.
23. N.E. 1152a28.
24. Politics 1260a13.
25. N.E. 1150a2.
26. N.E. 1148a30.
27. N.E. 1149b35.
28. Politics 1332b5.
29. Siegler: Op.cit. p.30-46.
30. N.E. 1098a5.
31. Siegler: Op.cit. p.31.
32. Ibid. p.40.
33. Ibis.
34. Huby: Greek Ethics does also query how it is that Aristotle can define happiness in such a way as to bring virtue into the definition. But Huby accepts Aristotle's definition on the basis of the range of meanings covered by the Greek word "arete". "Arete" does cover a variety of kinds of goodness, including both the disposition of the individual and the things he does. p.22.
Nevertheless this range of meaning does not excuse the movement in Aristotle's argument from "virtue" used in the metaphysical sense of goodness as excellence, to "virtue" as moral goodness.

35. N.E. 1144a13.
36. Siegler: Op.cit.p.42.
37. N.E. 1176a22.
38. N.E. 1151a20.
39. N.E. Bk. II:6.
40. N.E. 1106a15.
41. N.E. 1106a18.
42. N.E. 1106a20.
43. De Sophistics Elenchis 167a21.
44. Hardie: Op.cit. p.99.
45. N.E. 1105b27.
46. Metaphysics 1048a1.
47. Hardie: Op.cit. p.101.
48. Ibis.
49. Ross: Aristotle's Metaphysics CXXV.
50. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.10.
51. Fortenbaugh: Aristotle on Emotion pp.23-26.
52. Ibid. p.30.
53. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.29.
54. Metaphysics 1048a 1-13.
55. Metaphysics 1020b24.
56. N.E. 1169a15.
57. N.E. 1142b19 and N.E. 1144a22.
58. N.E. 1107a7.
59. Vice is voluntary and the two kinds of vice correspond to the two types of voluntary action.
N.E. 1111b4.
60. See Chapter 4:2.
61. N.E. 1144a34.
62. N.E. 1114a14.
63. N.E. 1150a17.
64. N.E. 1179b35.
65. N.E. 1180a1.
66. N.E. 1180a35.
67. N.E. 1114b8.
68. N.E. 1114b22 (My underlining).
cf. Adkins: Merit and Responsibility, p.328.
69. N.E. 1114b35.
70. cf. Allan: The Practical Syllogism, p.333.
71. N.E. 1114a11.
72. See Appendix: The function of education.
73. N.E. 1144a34.
74. N.E. 1110b23.
75. N.E. 1114a30.
76. N.E. 1114a10.
77. N.E. 1144a25.
78. N.E. 1109a30.
79. N.E. 1095b20.
80. N.E. 1169a15.
81. N.E. 1168a32.
82. N.E. 1114a22.
83. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.20.
84. See Chapter 9.
85. N.E. 1141b8.
86. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.16.
87. N.E. 1103a32; N.E. 1144b15.

88. Russell: Unpopular Essays: Chapter 8.
Barnes : An Existentialist Ethics: Chapter 9.
89. Maslow: The Farther Reaches of Human Nature - Part 4.
90. Politics:1336b35.
91. N.E. Bk. 1V:3. See Chapter 8:1:4.
92. See Chapter 9.
93. Skinner: Beyond Freedom and Dignity.
94. See Chapter 4:6.
95. Skinner: Op.cit. p.195.
96. Skinner: Walden Two p.107.
97. Ibid. p.111.
98. N.E. 1168b33.
99. Skinner: Beyond Freedom and Dignity, p.83.
100. Ibid.
101. See Chapter 5:3:4:4.
102. In this sense Aristotle says "the good is better when it is harder". N.E. 1105a8.
103. N.E. 1104b11.
104. N.E. 1180a4.
105. Deese and Hulse: The Psychology of Learning,p.249.
Macgraw-Hill Kogokusha Ltd., 1967.

CHAPTER 4 : THE STRUCTURE OF A GOOD ACT - THE PRACTICAL SYLLOGISM

4:1 Introduction

In the previous section it was argued that the importance of moral virtue lay initially in its direction of man's actions towards noble ends. It was also suggested that the life of moral virtue must in some way be necessary for perfect happiness. These two contentions must be examined in detail. Let us begin by a consideration of the structure of a morally good act in order to elucidate the role of moral virtue therein. The relationship between such acts and contemplation will be dealt with in Chapter 9.

Examples from the Nicomachean Ethics may be cited to back up the contention that only the morally virtuous man desires a good end. Virtue is said to determine the end, whilst practical wisdom enables us to choose the correct means in order to attain that goal. ⁽¹⁾

However, this argument seems to be challenged by the following passages :

"Excellence in deliberation will be correctness with regard to what conduces to the end which practical wisdom apprehends truly." ⁽²⁾

"Virtue makes the choice right." ⁽³⁾

It obviously becomes necessary to justify the argument given that it is the role of moral virtue to ensure that men's actions are directed towards noble ends. This requires a detailed examination of the practical syllogism which may be regarded as providing us with the "mechanics of action". (Allan speaks of the practical syllogism as being an account of "the psychophysics of action", that is, what happens to the besouled man in his process of initiating change through action.) ⁽⁴⁾ It will also, however, be shown that the practical syllogism is intended as a moral imperative, telling men how they ought to act in order to be morally virtuous.

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Some commentators have argued that the practical syllogism is regarded by Aristotle as an inclusive account of the whole process of deliberation and choice which characterises voluntary action. Hardie, however, rejects this view, arguing that the role of the practical syllogism may well be "humbler" than is supposed.⁽⁵⁾ Hardie backs up his claim by asking how the example given in De Motu Animalum can be accounted for in syllogistic form.

"I need a covering, and a cloak is a covering,
I need a cloak. What I need I ought to make;
I need a cloak, I ought to make a cloak." (6)

Hardie also challenges the practical syllogism to account for the following passage:

"They assume the end and consider how and by what means it is to be attained; and if it seems to be produced by several means they consider by which it is most easily and best produced, while if it is achieved by one only they consider how it will be achieved by this and by what means this will be achieved, till they come to the first cause which in the order of discovery is last." (7)

It will, however, be argued that the practical syllogism is intended to cover Aristotle's views on deliberation and choice. However, since Aristotle himself has not provided us with a full, clear, exhaustive exposition of the practical syllogism, this argument can obviously not be regarded as the last word.⁽⁸⁾ It is extremely difficult to formulate the major and minor premise of the practical syllogism in such a way to cover the scattered examples given by Aristotle in his various writings on that subject.⁽⁹⁾ The formulation we shall choose may be regarded as a kind of shorthand which implies the detailed discussions given on the nature and function of the major and minor premises and the conclusion.⁽¹⁰⁾

A further problem involved in giving a clear account of the practical syllogism lies in the fact that there can never be a direct relationship between the realm of moral action (i.e. the practical syllogism) and man's perfect

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end of happiness. For the two realms of reason belong to different orders of knowledge.⁽¹¹⁾ Hence happiness in the sense of the activity of contemplation can never stand as the major premise, that final end for the sake of which we deliberate about means.

But even secondary happiness, which is well doing - "it is a kind of moral action since it is well doing"⁽¹²⁾ - never appears as the major premise either, although Aristotle implies that it should. For he says that it is "the mark of a man of practical wisdom to be able to deliberate well ... about what sorts of things conduce to the good life in general."⁽¹³⁾

The following passage also therefore provides difficulties :

"Honour, pleasure, reason and every virtue we choose indeed for themselves (for if nothing resulted from them we should still choose each of them) but we choose them also for the sake of happiness, judging that by means of them we shall be happy."⁽¹⁴⁾

The practical syllogism does not and can not show how these ends can also be means towards the attainment of perfect happiness.

There is, however, another difficulty. In his discussion on the calculative faculty, Aristotle distinguishes between the virtues of art and practical wisdom. Art is the disposition whereby we make things "involving a true course of reasoning."⁽¹⁵⁾ And he calls the practical syllogism insofar as it is concerned with art, the productive syllogism.⁽¹⁶⁾ The main distinction between the productive and practical syllogisms is that the end of the former is a stepping stone to some further end, whereas that of the latter is an end in itself. "For while making has an end other than itself, action cannot; for good action itself is its end."⁽¹⁷⁾ Yet we have already seen that virtue is also a means. The contradiction has been pointed out⁽¹⁸⁾ and an attempt will be made to overcome the inconsistency by arguing that insofar

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as moral actions constitute secondary happiness, they are ends in themselves. But in some way (to be determined) they are also means for the attainment of perfect happiness.⁽¹⁹⁾ For those incapable of the contemplative life, a morally virtuous life is the self-sufficient and final end of their activities. The contemplative life is the final and self-sufficient end of a few who are probably intellectually gifted.

Besides moral virtue, there are other "constituents" of happiness. Aristotle, in the Eudemian Ethics, makes a distinction between "living finely" and "the things without which living finely is impossible."⁽²⁰⁾ One of these things is health.⁽²¹⁾ (But of course merely being healthy is not being happy.) Greenwood suggests that one should distinguish between those means which are components of happiness and those which are external to it.⁽²²⁾ Aristotle himself did not make such a distinction explicit but we may try to discover evidences for it in his thought. Walking in order to become healthy is a means to happiness although it is external to that end, whereas the state of being healthy and the performance of morally virtuous acts would count as components. If we speak about perfect happiness, then philosophic wisdom is a component. Aristotle seems to recognise this when he says "As health produces health, so does philosophic wisdom produce happiness; for being a part of virtue entire, by being possessed and by actualising itself it makes a man happy."⁽²³⁾ In the discussion on the practical syllogism Aristotle seems to concentrate on external means. The relationship between external and component means is unclear. Is it necessary to be healthy, for example, in order to be courageous? Presumably the answer would be in the affirmative for in terms of Aristotle's conception of man as a unity of body and soul, perfection of the soul requires the concomitant perfection of the body. Actually being healthy (after one has exercised) would be a component of happiness. But it is clear that being healthy as a component of happiness is different to the performance of a just act,

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for example. Greenwood's distinction has the virtue of showing the problems associated with the notion of the various means required for the achievement of happiness.

The practical syllogism, insofar as it provides "the mechanics of action" is, as Hardie expresses it, "that process in which a rule is applied to a concrete situation, the application consisting in the thinker's doing something, actually performing as an agent or producer."⁽²⁴⁾ If we refer to the discussion on function, the practical syllogism tells us how a man ought to act in terms of having and obeying a rule.

As has already been mentioned, the formulation chosen as a model for a discussion on the practical syllogism is that in De Anima. It is the view of this thesis that this is the best and most authoritative formulation.⁽²⁵⁾ Nevertheless in the light of the difficulties already outlined, this elucidation can only hope to be "within the bounds of truth." In terms of the De Anima formulation, it is held that the other examples given by Aristotle are incomplete.

The relevant passage from De Anima reads as follows:

"The major premise is universal, whether judgement or proposition, while the minor has to do with a particular fact (for the one asserts that a man in such a position should do such a thing, but the other asserts that this present act is such a thing and that I am a man in such a position) it is surely this latter opinion which causes movement not the universal." (26)

4:2 The major premise

The major premise provides the starting point of action.

"The originating causes of things done consist in the end at which they are aimed." (27)

"The end is the object for which one acts." (28)

Aristotle /

Aristotle does also say of the major premise that its form is "what is best".⁽²⁹⁾ The end is "what ought to be done, or not to be done."⁽³⁰⁾

The end is the object of the appetite. Aristotle distinguishes between desire, inclination (or passion) and wish.⁽³¹⁾ Gauthier clarifies these three states as follows :⁽³²⁾

Desire is the condition of appetite when it is closed to reason. Inclination or passion is the condition of appetite wherein appetite partially heeds reason. Wish is the condition of appetite when it heeds reason fully.

A wish is therefore characteristic of the rational man who is also a morally virtuous man. Since "the end appears to each man in a form answering to his character"⁽³³⁾ it is clear that in the case of the good man, his wish is not for an apparent good. Rather "that which is in truth an object of wish is an object of wish to the good man."⁽³⁴⁾ How do these remarks relate to moral virtue ?

We never, says Aristotle, deliberate about the end of an action, only about those means we require to achieve that aim.⁽³⁵⁾ For example, if I am a doctor, I do not deliberate whether the aim of my actions is to secure the health of my patients or not; I only deliberate how to make them healthy. An analogy can be drawn in the sphere of moral activity. If I have a good character, if I have been correctly brought up to have good habits, then I do not deliberate as to whether or not I will perform good actions. Once I have chosen to be good I have an habitual wish to perform good deeds. Moral goodness ensures that the agent will act for the sake of a noble end. As Fortenbaugh puts it, "The morally virtuous man ... has been habituated to believe that certain kinds of action are good and desirable. In other words, he has acquired goals which are action-guiding."⁽³⁶⁾ He has become well-disposed with regard to an emotional

response /

response to a situation.⁽³⁷⁾ As Gauthier puts this point, a good character ensures that we have the right intentions habitually. We will do things which are objectively virtuous for their own sakes.⁽³⁸⁾

There are, obviously, many different kinds of good acts, for example, acts of courage, justice, liberality and the like. If I have a good character I will always strive to perform these acts. But what is an act of courage, or justice or liberality? How do I know what an act of courage is?

Writing about the courageous man Aristotle says, "The man, then, who faces and who fears the right things and from the right motive, in the right way and at the right time, and who feels confidence under the corresponding conditions is brave; for the brave man feels and acts according to the merits of the case and in what ever way the rule directs."⁽³⁹⁾

Let us now fuse this definition with the formulation given in De Anima⁽⁴⁰⁾ in delineating the major premise.

"A man who faces fear, should fear the right things from the right motive in the right way at the right time."

Now let us consider how a man becomes brave. Is it not through repeated acts of bravery that a man is habitually disposed to perform brave acts?⁽⁴¹⁾ In short, through the performance of particular acts we come to know the universal formulation - we know what courage is. This argument sounds like an example of induction. Ross says of induction that it was for Aristotle "(essentially) a process not of reasoning but of direct insight, mediated psychologically by a review of particular instances."⁽⁴²⁾ Aristotle speaks of intuitive reason as grasping the minor premise of the practical syllogism.⁽⁴³⁾ But according to the argument above there is also an element of intuitive reasoning involved in knowing the major premise (as is the case in the categorical syllogism).

Indeed /

Indeed it is held that the distinction between theoretical and practical wisdom is not tenable, and that theoretical wisdom plays a role in formulating the end.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The major premise, as stated above, is a formulation of a general moral rule. Ignoring (as Aristotle does) the role of theoretical wisdom in being able to arrive at such rules, it is through practical wisdom that we know the moral rule. We have already seen that practical wisdom tells us what means to choose to attain an end, but as numerous commentators⁽⁴⁵⁾ have pointed out practical reason has the function too of knowing general moral rules and then applying them to particular cases (which latter activity will involve knowing what means to choose). Thus as Aristotle puts it, "A man has practical wisdom not by knowing only but by being able to act."⁽⁴⁶⁾

In terms of the objections made at the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that moral virtue and practical wisdom both play an integral role in clarifying the end of any action. Not only must a man be well-disposed to seek always to perform good actions, that is, be morally virtuous, but he must also know what good actions are, he must know the general rules. Aristotle says this knowledge is provided by practical wisdom. But it has been argued that insofar as there is an element of what we have called "induction" practical wisdom does also seem to involve theoretical wisdom. Indeed it is clear that inductive knowledge cannot be separated from moral deeds. This point will again emerge in the discussions on the minor premise.

4:3 The minor premise and the conclusion.

The minor premise tells us about the particular circumstances of the action.

Let us once more consider the brave man, that is the man who is habitually disposed to perform deeds of courage. He finds himself in a particular situation - for example he sees a burning house with a child trapped

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inside. In terms of the De Anima model, the minor premises are :

- (i) I am a man in the face of fear.
- (ii) This is an act of courage - I have the right motive, this is the right way and the right time to fear.

Let us elucidate these propositions.

In terms of the twofold function of practical wisdom, I recognise firstly that this particular situation I find myself in is an example or an instance of the general moral rule of courage. Furthermore, in the light of my habitual intention to perform courageous acts, I must, secondly, deliberate about the means I must choose in order to achieve that end. I must decide on the right way to act. The right way lies in a mean which is relative to me and which depends on my particular temperament as well as the circumstances of my situation. I know I must avoid cowardice, but that I must also not be foolhardy. In deliberating about the means (which involve the notion of a mean) I am deliberating about that which lies in my own power and can be done by me, through my own efforts.⁽⁴⁷⁾ For example, if I am not a particularly athletic kind of person, I will not plan my act of rescue to involve any acrobatic feat. Referring to the account of deliberation mentioned earlier⁽⁴⁸⁾ there are two kinds of alternatives open to me :

- (i) I may decide that there are several means available to me to rescue the child; I will then consider which is most easily or best produced.
- (ii) I may decide that there is only one possibility and I must then consider how to put this into practice.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Referring once more to Aristotle's theoretical/practical reason dichotomy, it is surely clear that the former must in some way play a role in deliberation. For example, I must have some scientific knowledge about how fire is kindled and extinguished. Aristotle does speak

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of intuitive reason as involved in grasping the minor premise.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Ross says of the ultimate minor premise that it is grasped by a kind of perception, a "direct unreasoned type of perception which seems to be found in individuals who have had a certain amount of experience in life."⁽⁵¹⁾ In this way, Ross distinguishes the intuitive reason of practical wisdom from that of theoretical wisdom. Nevertheless, as we have pointed out, the separation does not work. There does appear to be strong evidence for a kind of induction operating in the major premise as well. Indeed, one cannot isolate the sphere of moral action from theoretical knowledge.

The ability to deliberate well is, as Aristotle puts it, that correctness of deliberation which tends to attain what is good.⁽⁵²⁾ It is "rightness in respect both of the end, the manner and the time."⁽⁵³⁾ Hence when Aristotle says that "it is characteristic of men of practical wisdom to have deliberated well, excellence in deliberation will be correctness with regard to what conduces to the end which practical wisdom apprehends truly",⁽⁵⁴⁾ he is referring to the deliberation directed towards discovering the mean which tells the right way to act in order to achieve the end in question.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Besides excellence of deliberation, the man of practical wisdom has the virtue of understanding which is the "exercise of the faculty of opinion for the purpose of judging what someone else says about matters with which practical wisdom is concerned, and of judging soundly."⁽⁵⁶⁾ Judgement which is "the right discrimination of the equitable" may either be sympathetic or correct, that is, it discriminates what is equitable correctly or it judges what is true.⁽⁵⁷⁾ In short, understanding and judgement are concerned with a grasp of general rules as well as their application to the concrete situation.

The discussion above covers the role of practical wisdom in the sphere of deliberation. In terms of the objections raised at the start of this chapter we do still

have /

have to explain in what sense virtue may be said to make the choice right.

To recapitulate the formulation of the minor premise given above - we said (ii) This is an act of courage. I have the right motive, this is the right way and the right time to fear. (58)

It is clear that having the right motive comes from one's state of character. The importance of moral virtue in the process of choosing means will be discussed, but let us firstly say something about choice itself.

"Choice," says Aristotle, "cannot exist either without reason or intellect or without a moral state." (59) For choice involves desire and reasoning with a view to some end. Choice is "deliberate desire of things in our power." (60) In order for a choice to be a good one, it must firstly be related to the right object which must be what is good, that is, our desire must be right. (61) Since, secondly, choice involves a rational principle and thought, one's reasoning must also be true. (62) This means that choice lies in what is intermediate, that is in the mean. (63)

The importance of moral virtue in the process of choice is well-illustrated by Burnet:

"On a given occasion there will be a temperature which is just right for my morning bath. If the bath is hotter than this, it will be too hot; if it is colder, it will be too cold. But as this right temperature varies with the condition of my body, it cannot be ascertained by simply using a thermometer. If I am in good general health I shall, however, know by the feel of the water when the temperature is right. So if I am in good moral health I shall know, without appealing to a formal code of maxims, what is the right degree e.g. of indignation to show in a given case, how it be shown and towards whom." (64)

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In other words, the importance of moral virtue in choosing means is that one chooses what is good and noble in its own right.⁽⁶⁵⁾ It therefore becomes clear, as Taylor puts it, why Aristotle demands "goodness of character as a preliminary condition of intellect or judgement in moral matters."⁽⁶⁶⁾ Hence Aristotle's observation, "this eye of the soul (practical wisdom) acquires its formed state not without the aid of virtue."⁽⁶⁷⁾ Thus "the object of reason in the calculative faculty is truth corresponding to right desire" (or goodness of character).⁽⁶⁸⁾

The actual choice to perform a particular act constitutes the conclusion of the practical syllogism. Having chosen, there is yet another faculty which is "such as to be able to do the things that tend towards the mark we have set before ourselves, and to hit it."⁽⁶⁹⁾ This is the faculty of cleverness which takes care of the things to be done to carry out our choice. The importance of moral virtue is stressed, for if the agent does not aim at noble ends, cleverness is merely smartness or cunning.

4:4 Discussion

When, therefore, we speak of an action which is characterised by having been deliberately chosen, the initial wish has been provided by reason with the means to become fulfilled - it becomes deliberate choice. To choose deliberately is therefore to choose in the light of general principles. Hence, as Hardie expresses it, "to syllogise in action is to apply a rule of the form 'such and such a man should act in such and such ways with a view to realising an end.'"⁽⁷⁰⁾ The act can only be good if the agent is morally virtuous for only in such a case are his actions directed towards noble ends. Furthermore, in Aristotle's view, it is only the virtuous man who will choose the right means, who will deliberate correctly, and whose cleverness will be praiseworthy.

This discussion on the nature of the practical

wisdom /

wisdom makes it quite clear why practical wisdom and moral virtue require each other.

"The syllogisms which deal with acts to be done are things which involve a starting point, viz. since the end i.e. what is best, is of such and such a nature, whatever it may be (let it for the sake of argument be what we please) and this is not evident except to the good man, for wickedness perverts us and causes us to be deceived about the starting points of action. Therefore it is evident that it is impossible to be practically wise without being good." (71)

The wicked man, ruined by pleasure and pain, is unable to see "any such originating cause" (72) and his actions can never be directed towards noble ends. Strictly speaking, therefore, he cannot have practical wisdom, since it is "the mark of a man of practical wisdom to be able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, for example, about what sorts of thing conduce to health or to strength, but about what sorts of thing conduce to the good life in general." (73)

Whilst, therefore, Aristotle restricts the possession of practical wisdom to the morally virtuous man, it has been argued that a man may deliberate excellently in order to achieve an evil end. If "excellence" is used in the metaphysical sense of "lacking nothing", that is a skill in reasoning which enables the deliberator to take all contingencies into account, then deliberative excellence in this sense could fall within the scope of function as discussed by Siegler. Certainly Aristotle does admit that the evil man can also be clever. The clever, bad man, can deliberate correctly and as a result of his calculation can attain his evil aims. (74) This argument obviously only applies to the deliberately performed wicked act. The other kind, vicious act, the spontaneous act, is not deliberative. Aristotle says of the appetites that if they are "strong and violent they even expel the power of calculation." (75) Allan points

out /

out that "the self-indulgent man should be regarded as a responsible agent acting consistently upon principles for which he deserves to be blamed. There are perverse major premises and acts which follow necessarily from them." (76)

Thus although Aristotle does not specifically illustrate the mechanics of choice in the case of the vicious man, it is clear that such an individual can deliberate correctly. There are, says Aristotle, several ways of using the phrase "correctness in deliberation." (77) But he limits "correctness" to excellence in relation to a good end, eliminating the idea of correctness as skill. Thus moral goodness becomes an integral part of practical wisdom. The wicked man can therefore never be practically wise, in terms of the Aristotelean conception of it.

The major premise of the practical syllogism is not formulated as "a man in such a position does such a thing" but rather a man ought to do such a thing when in such a position. A man "ought to choose that which is intermediate, not the excess or defect, and ... the intermediate is determined by the dictates of the right rule." (78) Practical wisdom tells us what the right rule is, but it cannot exist apart from moral virtue. (79)

It is not the case that man's function insofar as it is an activity of the rational element consists in having a rule and the ability to follow that rule. Rather this is what his function ought to be. He ought to syllogise in the manner of the good man.

The importance of moral virtue in Aristotle's discussion on the practical syllogism which deals with the "mechanics of action" is clear. Any action, in order to be good, must be good both in will and in deed. (80) In other words the intention of the agent must be right. It is not enough that the act have a virtuous character. The agent must "be in a certain condition when he does

them; /

them; in the first place he must have knowledge, secondly he must choose the acts, and choose them for their own sakes, thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character."⁽⁸¹⁾ Moral virtue is that state of character which ensures that man directs his acts to good ends. Not only is moral virtue important in this sense, but Aristotle holds that only the good man will choose the correct means so that the deed, in exemplifying the mean, will be right. Moral virtue and practical wisdom work together harmoniously in the morally good man.

4:5 Hampshire on thought and action.

Perhaps one of the best modern criticisms of Aristotle's practical syllogism is to be found in the work of the so-called Neo-Aristotelean, Stuart Hampshire.

Hampshire⁽⁸²⁾ has criticised Aristotle's doctrine of the practical syllogism as being an inadequate account. He says that "there are too many different levels of rationality and deliberateness in conduct, too many varieties of half-intentional action and half-conscious thought for any tidy formula to fit."⁽⁸³⁾ We still, for example, know very little of the way the unconscious works and its role in the realm of action. (Certainly Aristotle was unaware of the possibility of unconscious motivation.)

Hampshire's own account of thought and action is more detailed and one of its main contributions is arguably his rejection of the Aristotelean separation of theoretical and practical wisdom (or knowledge). Hampshire argues that both inductive and intentional knowledge are necessary and complementary for any action. Both kinds of knowledge are a prelude to an action, whereas for Aristotle it is only practical wisdom which is concerned with doing. It has, however, been argued that theoretical reason does play a role in the performance of moral acts insofar as it is concerned with the

formulation /

formulation of the major and minor premises. Hampshire argues that a person needs to use inductive methods to predict what will happen in nature, and then he decides on his intention which is supported by reasons. But inductive knowledge must precede intentional knowledge because any attempts are defined by one's expectation of their effects.

According to Hampshire, freedom lies in the effectiveness of intentions. Intentions are formed on the basis of inductive knowledge. The more reliable our inductive knowledge, the more effective our intentions and the greater our freedom. An individual is less free when his intentions are increasingly worthless as a basis for predicting his actions. His inductive knowledge will be so unreliable that his actual action will be at variance with his intentions. Hampshire argues that the greater our knowledge of human nature the fuller our inductive knowledge and the more information we have to take into account when forming intentions and decisions. Through deliberate self-reflection an individual can therefore increase his freedom as his inductive knowledge becomes more and more reliable. He must also examine his beliefs (which are determined by his social environment in every situation he finds himself. For Hampshire, therefore, a man has the choice either of submitting passively to those influences which determine his inductive knowledge, or of deliberate self-reflection, in order to understand and possibly to change some of those influences, thereby increasing his freedom.

If we refer to the discussion on the theory of agency which follows this section,⁽⁸⁴⁾ it becomes clear that, in fact, Aristotle's thought could lend itself to a theory of freedom somewhat similar to Hampshire's position, which may be called "soft" determinism. For Aristotle does, as we have seen, admit of determining factors. Yet he does also presuppose man's freedom to choose in his philosophy of action.⁽⁸⁵⁾ But Aristotle

was /

was clearly not fully aware of the tensions in his ethical thought between determinism and freedom. In any case, the separation of theoretical from practical thinking was distinct, and Aristotle could not admit the former into the realm of the latter given their separate functions and objects of knowledge. A theory of "soft" determinism is therefore impossible in terms of the principles of Aristotle's thought.

4:6 Aristotle and the theory of agency.

It may be shown that Aristotle's views on freedom implicit in his discussion on voluntary acts may be said to constitute an example of a theory of agency.

In his discussion on the distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions, Aristotle ascribes two fundamental conditions to the former. Firstly the agent is the moving principle of the action, that is, he is self-moved and not compelled by any external agency. Secondly he has knowledge of the action and the objects with which the action is concerned.⁽⁸⁶⁾

As Richard Taylor points out, Aristotle's arguments fit into a general theory of agency.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Such a theory, as Taylor formulates it, is an attempt to overcome a deterministic position which would hold that no man can be morally responsible for his actions. Taylor therefore speaks of two requirements for such a theory.⁽⁸⁸⁾

(i) There is a reason for everything that happens.

(ii) Human acts, however, are contingent.

In other words, a theory of agency (of which Aristotle's thought would be an example) implies that "an act for which an agent is responsible is performed by him but that he, in turn, is not causally necessitated to do it."⁽⁸⁹⁾ An agent is therefore a being who acts. It is not the case that behaviour is a causal consequence of the way that a being is acted upon.

Taylor /

Taylor goes on to argue that such a theory involves firstly the agent performing certain acts rather than being determined by antecedent states and events in his history. Secondly it involves a conception of causation whereby the notion of an agent causing an act means that he originates that act. And as Taylor points out, "this is evidently the conception of Aristotle who spoke of living things as 'self-moved'".⁽⁹⁰⁾

Although the theory of agency is possibly a viable way out of the freedom-determinism dilemma, the problem is that Aristotle does explicitly mention certain determining influences on the individual. Hence this theory may be regarded as an inadequate "solution" - a "solution" in terms of "soft" determinism seems a better proposition. But this is precluded by Aristotle's formal theory of the two kinds of reason whereby theoretical reasoning is excluded from the sphere of moral action.

The freedom-determinism problem is not merely of academic interest. Let us consider briefly the question of imputing responsibility. Aristotle does, of course, deal with this point arguing that an individual is held responsible for any action if he was the moving principle of that action and if he knew the particular circumstances surrounding that action. It is difficult to assess the importance of the environment and one's upbringing in deciding responsibility. But as Haksar⁽⁹¹⁾ has pointed out, whilst considering whether the individual could help doing what he did at the actual time of the action in question is a necessary condition for deciding responsibility, it is arguably not a sufficient condition. An additional factor might well be "how far we could have helped things in the past."⁽⁹²⁾ As has already been pointed out, Aristotle was aware of the role of the environment on the formation of character. But he did also insist that each individual be held responsible for his character.⁽⁹³⁾ This tension remains an unresolved issue in Aristotle's ethical thought.

FOOTNOTES

1. N.E. 1145a4. N.E. 1151a14 N.E. 1095b7.
2. N.E. 1142b36.
3. N.E. 1144a19.
4. Allan: The Practical Syllogism, p.325.
5. Hardie: Op.cit. p.249.
6. De Motu Animalium: 701a.
7. N.E. 1112b14.
8. Allan, for example, says that because of these difficulties some commentators regard the doctrine as "a pardonable, but unimportant piece of 'archetonic'". The Practical Syllogism, p.325.
9. e.g. De Anima, 434a16, De Motu Animalium, 701a12.
N.E. 1144a30. N.E. 1147a5. N.E. 1147a28.
N.E. 1147a30.
10. The model chosen is that from De Anima.
11. N.E. 1139a1.
The dichotomy between theoretical and practical wisdom will, however, be challenged in giving an exposition of the practical syllogism.
12. Physics 197b5.
13. N.E. 1140a 26-29.
14. N.E. 1097b1.
15. N.E. 1140a20.
16. Ando: Aristotle's Theory of Practical Cognition.
Chapter III.
17. N.E. 1140b6.
18. e.g. Walsh: Aristotle's conception of Moral Weakness.
p.134.
19. See Chapter 9.
20. E.E. 1214b15.
21. Ibid.
22. See Hardie: Op.cit. pp.254-5.
23. N.E. 1144a5.
24. Hardie: Op.cit.p.240.
25. cf. Ando: Op.cit. p.245.
26. De Anima 434a16.
27. N.E. 1140a13.
28. E.E. 1227b7.
29. N.E. 1144a30.
30. N.E. 1143a9.
31. De Anima 414b2. E.E. 1223a26.
32. In Walsh: Op.cit. p.88.
33. N.E. 1114a30.
34. N.E. 1113a24.
35. N.E. 1112b34. E.E. 1227a22.
36. Fortenbaugh: Op.cit. p.75.
37. Ibid. p.69.
38. Gauthier: Op.cit.p.17.
39. N.E. 1115b16.
40. cf. Ando Op.cit. pp.245-6.
41. N.E. II:1.
42. Ross: Aristotle p.41.
43. N.E. 1143b3.

44. cf. Hampshire's views 4:5.
45. Walsh Op.cit.p.131. Allan: The Philosophy of Aristotle, pp.168-9.
46. N.E. 1152a8.
47. N.E. 1112a31. N.E. 1112b25. Aristotle's discussion of courage precludes an impulsive, perhaps dare-devil rescue action as being a truly courageous act, a conclusion with which many might disagree.
48. N.E. 1112b14 - cf. Note 7.
49. In terms of this discussion, the minor premise is shown to encompass both its being an example of a general rule as well as being a means to an end. These two aspects can be complementary; cf. Allan: The Practical Syllogism, p.337.
50. N.E. 1143b3.
51. Ross: Op.cit. p.219. cf. "Experience has given them an eye they see aright". N.E. 1143b14.
52. N.E. 1142b20.
53. N.E. 1142b26.
54. N.E. 1142b31.
55. Ando raises the question of whether there is a distinction between practical wisdom and deliberative excellence. However, the former seems a wider term since it includes the other intellectual virtues of the practical intellect, namely judgement, understanding and intuitive reason. Ando: Op.cit.p.218.
56. N.E. 1143a13.
57. N.E. 1143a16.
58. This formulation obviously implies that the agent is the moving principle of the act, that he has knowledge of the present circumstances, he knows who is is, what he is doing, upon whom he is acting, what instrument he is using and in what way. In short, he is performing a voluntary act which has been deliberately chosen and for which he can be blamed or praised. N.E. Bk.III:1.
59. N.E. 1139a32.
60. N.E. 1113a8.
61. N.E. 1112a7; N.E. 1139a23.
62. N.E. 1112a15; N.E. 1139a23.
63. N.E. 1138b15.
64. Quoted by Taylor: Aristotle, pp.95-6 - my underlining.
65. cf. Fortenbaugh: "When Aristotle is thinking of choice as moral choice and of practical wisdom in regard to technical deliberation about means, he understandably connects choice with moral virtue conceived of as an established disposition to assess correctly the particular situation and to act for noble ends." Op.cit. pp.78-9.
66. Taylor: Op.cit. p.96.
67. N.E. 1144a27.
68. N.E. 1139a28.
69. N.E. 1144a23.
70. Hardie: Op.cit.p.254.
71. N.E. 1144a32.
72. N.E. 1140b15.
73. N.E. 1140a25.
74. N.E. 1142b20.

75. N.E. 1119b10.
76. Allan: The Practical Syllogism, p.332.
77. N.E. 1142b18.
78. N.E. 1138b15.
79. N.E. 1144a32.
80. N.E. 1178a35.
81. N.E. 1105a31.
82. Hampshire: Thought and Action.
83. Ibid. p.168. It has, however, been pointed out that Aristotle's account of the practical syllogism is only with difficulty resolved into a "tidy formula".
84. See next Section 4:6.
85. Ibis, and note 58 above.
86. N.E. Bk. III:1.
87. Taylor: Determinism and the Theory of Agency in Hook (ed.) : Determinism and Freedom.
88. Ibid. p.227.
89. Ibid. pp.227-8.
90. Ibid. p.228.
91. Haksar: Aristotle and the Punishment of Psychopaths in Walsh and Shapiro: Op.cit.
92. Ibid. p.101.
93. See Chapter 3:4.

CHAPTER 5 : THE SPECTRUM FROM VIRTUE TO VICE

5:1 Introduction

One of the corner-stones of the Socratic ethic is the maxim "Virtue is knowledge", and its corollary, "No man does evil willingly." We have already seen that Aristotle rejects the idea that evil actions are involuntary. Vice is voluntarily chosen by the individual who is held responsible for that choice. The maxim does also imply that the man who knows what is good will do what is good. In terms of the practical syllogism this means that once the correct minor premise has been joined to the relevant major premise, an action necessarily follows. Yet it was clear to Aristotle that there are men who do know what is good, who know what they ought to do, and yet fail to do so. It was therefore necessary for him to try to explain the phenomenon of incontinence. Being nevertheless in sympathy with the Socratic position, Aristotle did try to present his explanation in terms of a distinction in uses of the word "know".

Besides incontinence or moral weakness, Aristotle describes a wide spectrum of good and evil actions. These have been listed in terms of the Socratic position.

The importance of moral virtue is clear when we consider which acts are to be pardoned and which are blameworthy. For only those individuals who, although their acts are evil, nevertheless possess a good character, will be pardoned. The good man who involuntarily, or in anger, performs an evil action is pardoned, for such acts are not vice in the strict sense.

In this chapter we shall deal briefly with the various types of virtuous and vicious acts, paying particular attention to incontinence proper and the sphere of unnatural acts. Incontinence has always presented problems in interpretation. It will be shown that in fact Aristotle does present a coherent account.

Aristotle's /

Aristotle's attitude to incontinence also provides interesting material for discussion. Should men strive to be self-controlled at all times? His discussion on unnatural acts raises the controversial question of what constitutes "normal" behaviour.

5:2 Knowing what is good and doing what is good.

5:2:1. The morally virtuous man and the god-like individual.

In terms of the Aristotelean argument, the knowledge possessed by the morally good man belongs to the sphere of practical wisdom. It has been seen that practical wisdom implies the possession of moral virtue. Making an explicit reference to Socrates, Aristotle says:

"Socrates then thought the virtues were rules or rational principles (for he thought they were, all of them, forms of scientific knowledge) while we think they involve a rational principle." (which is practical wisdom). (1)

The good man ideally not only performs good actions but his intentions are good since they proceed from a good character.

Aristotle points out that it is possible for men to become gods through an excess of virtue, although this state is rarely found.⁽²⁾ In the Politics, writing about the outstanding man, Aristotle writes that "if there is one man so superlatively excellent (or several but not enough to make the whole complement of a city) that the goodness and ability of all the rest are simply not to be compared with his (or theirs), such men we take not to be part of the state but to transcend it."⁽³⁾ These men are superior to the rest of the citizens both in political ability and virtue and must therefore be beyond the ordinary laws of the state.

The question arises as to whether such paragons are to be identified with those rare men who may attain perfect happiness. Although Aristotle disliked any kind of departure from the normal (the god-like man is contrasted

with /

with the brute who is said to be "beyond all ordinary standards by reason of vice."⁽⁴⁾ he admits in the Politics that such men could not be ostracized. These men would therefore govern. The parallel with The Republic is obvious. But Aristotle does also imply that the contemplative life is beyond politics. To talk about gods in political terms, performing brave or liberal acts is absurd.⁽⁵⁾ Perhaps we might distinguish between the perfectly happy man of perfect virtue and the excessively virtuous man; the former would engage in contemplation, the latter would be the ruler. But this is unsatisfactory because Aristotle never speaks of law-givers in the Nicomachean Ethics as being excessively virtuous.

It is indeed curious to find Aristotle's dislike of extremes extending to excessive virtue. For surely virtue can never be excessive since it is by definition concerned with the mean between excess and defect. Could one accuse Aristotle of putting forward an ethics of mediocrity? Such a criticism would, however, be unfair for Aristotle does say that "in respect of its substance and the definition which states its essence virtue is a mean, with regard to what is best and right an extreme."⁽⁶⁾ Yet Aristotle's uneasiness about excessively virtuous men is inexplicable.

5:2:2. Incontinence in respect of victory, gain and honour.

Aristotle distinguishes between those things which producing pleasure are necessary. That is, those things concerned with food and sexual intercourse, and those things which are worthy of choice in themselves but admit of excess. These latter are victory, gain and honour,⁽⁷⁾ and are "generically noble and good" and we do not blame men for desiring them, or being affected by them, but only if these things are loved excessively. (The influence of the Homeric tradition is very marked in this argument.)⁽⁸⁾

Yet /

Yet Aristotle does also say that those who "busy themselves more than they ought about honour" do know what is good but their acts, whilst being good, can nevertheless be regarded as going to excess.⁽⁹⁾ Strictly speaking, such acts are evil insofar as they do not embody the mean, but Aristotle cannot bring himself to say so. The agent who pursues victory, gain or honour in excess is regarded as good and his acts may well be praised.⁽¹⁰⁾

5:3. Knowing what is good and doing what is evil.

5:3:1. Involuntary actions.

Involuntary actions are those "which take place under compulsion or owing to ignorance."⁽¹¹⁾ We are not concerned at this point to examine compulsion and the nature of involuntary acts. The question to be answered in this discussion is what exactly is the nature of the ignorance which is said to characterise an involuntary act.

It is, says Aristotle, acting by reason of ignorance, being ignorant of the circumstances of the act and the objects with which it is concerned.⁽¹²⁾ These include ignorance of who one is, what one is doing, what or whom one is acting upon, what instrument one is using, how one is acting and to what purpose. Ignorance of any one of these factors renders an act involuntary.⁽¹³⁾

Hamburger⁽¹⁴⁾ attaches contemporary legal labels to Aristotle's examples of the kinds of involuntary acts possible,⁽¹⁵⁾ thereby illustrating the modern relevance of his distinctions.

- (i) Mistake: I did not know it was a secret; it slipped out of my mouth by mistake.
- (ii) Error in objectio: I give medicine to save a man but it kills him because it contains poison.
- (iii) Error in persona: Thinking someone (a shadow perhaps) is an enemy, I kill him and find out he is

my /

my friend.

- (iv) *Aberratio ictus*: I fence without realising that the button at the end of the sword is off, and I wound my opponent.

The agent performing an involuntary act is not therefore ignorant of the universal principles of action (the major premise) and has a good character even although the act is evil. He cannot be blamed for that act - rather his deed is pardoned or pitied.⁽¹⁶⁾ Furthermore, he will repent that action which has caused him pain.⁽¹⁷⁾ (We shall see how the involuntary is contrasted with the non-voluntary in chapter 5:4:1:3.)

5:3:2. Incontinence in respect of anger.

A man may indeed know what is good but will perform an evil deed as a result of anger. But such an act (which is voluntary) is, according to Aristotle, "less disgraceful" than an incontinent act, and the angry man is more easily pardoned.⁽¹⁸⁾

Aristotle's attempts to justify the higher status of anger are interesting. He says that "anger and bad temper are more natural than appetites for excess, that is for unnecessary objects".⁽¹⁹⁾ In terms of Aristotle's thesis on man's function, "appetites for excess" must indeed be less natural if man is a rational being. But a point made in this thesis is that it is because man "naturally" does have "appetites for excess" that Aristotle's definition of function is as it is. He tries to justify his argument further by explaining that "anger runs in the family", and that it is, to an extent, open to argument.⁽²⁰⁾ (Vice in the sense of a passionate action is not open to logical argument.⁽²¹⁾) Anger is also regarded as being more open than criminal plotting, it is accompanied by pain rather than pleasure, and the agent is more likely to regret his action.⁽²²⁾

An act performed in anger is a spontaneous

voluntary /....

voluntary act, and although the act itself is unjust,⁽²³⁾ this does not imply that the agent himself is evil, "for the injury is not due to vice."⁽²⁴⁾ The action is therefore "rightly judged not to be done of malice aforethought."⁽²⁵⁾

Any such act falls under the label of acts performed in ignorance. "The man who is ... in a rage is thought to act as a result not of ignorance but of (rage) yet not knowingly but in ignorance."⁽²⁶⁾ In other words rage is the cause of his ignorance. The way this lack of knowledge is to be explained is unclear. An act of anger is, according to Aristotle, "thought to be less than any others object of choice."⁽²⁷⁾ There seems to be a similarity between acts of anger and the impulsive form of incontinence, despite the distinction made earlier in this section. Perhaps the lack of knowledge in the angry man is also explicable in terms of the impetuous form of incontinence wherein excitable people "by reason of the violence of their passions do not await the argument, because they are apt to follow their imagination."⁽²⁸⁾ (Yet we have also seen that acts of anger are open to argument.) All it seems that one can suggest is that in some way the major premise must be temporarily obscured.

Although Aristotle lumps together acts performed by the man in a rage and the man who is drunk in his voluntary-involuntary distinction,⁽²⁹⁾ it is surely the case that they are vastly different acts. An act done in anger is excusable; the same cannot be said about drunkenness.⁽³⁰⁾ The drunk man is a man of evil character and has no knowledge of the major premise.⁽³¹⁾

5:3:3 Incontinence proper.

5:3:3:1. Introduction.

It has already been pointed out in the introduction to this chapter that, according to Socrates, incontinence

was /

was impossible. For if a man does know what is the best way to act, he could not but act in that way. Yet the facts of ordinary experience tell us otherwise. It is clear therefore that Aristotle felt the need to explain incontinence and did so within the Socratic framework of "virtue is knowledge."

In keeping perhaps with his distinction between natural and habitual virtue, Aristotle speaks of an innate as well as an habitual incontinence. The latter type is, he says, more easily cured than the former for although it is difficult to change a habit, nevertheless a habit is more easily changed than one's nature.⁽³²⁾

If Aristotle admits that incontinence may be innate, that is part of man's nature, then it seems that to speak also of man's function in terms of having and following a rational principle⁽³³⁾ is inaccurate, since this is not common to all men. In short, Aristotle's definition of man's function does seem to be what man ought to be like.

Aristotle makes a further distinction between spontaneous incontinence or impetuosity and weakness. In the former, the individual does not deliberate, being led by his emotions. The latter state is characterised by the individual deliberating but failing to adhere to the conclusions of his deliberations because of his passions.⁽³⁴⁾ This distinction is surely in keeping with Aristotle's identification of two kinds of voluntary action, spontaneous and deliberate, for incontinence is voluntary.⁽³⁵⁾ Aristotle devotes little discussion to impetuosity. Let us therefore examine his account of weakness in some detail.

The weak man is one "who is carried away as a result of passion and contrary to the right rule - a man whom passion masters so that he does not act according to the right rule, but does not master to the extent of making him ready to believe that he ought to pursue such

pleasures /

pleasures without reserve."⁽³⁶⁾ Thus although both are concerned with bodily pleasures, the incontinent man is contrasted with the self-indulgent man, the former being only half-wicked for his purpose is good; he does not act of malice aforethought.⁽³⁷⁾ For whilst his action is voluntary, since he acts in a sense with knowledge of what he does and of the end to which his act is directed, he does not think he ought to pursue bodily pleasures.⁽³⁸⁾ But the reason for his failing to abide by the rule lies in the excess delight he takes in bodily things.⁽³⁹⁾ He is therefore said to act with appetite and not with choice.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Indeed he is said to act contrary to his wish for he does those things he thinks he ought not to do.⁽⁴¹⁾ Hence Aristotle says that the impulses of incontinent people move in contrary directions, for whilst the rational principle "urges them aright and towards the best objects, there is found in them also another element naturally opposed to the rational element which fights and resists that principle."⁽⁴²⁾ An incontinent person is therefore at variance with himself, having appetites for some things and rational desires for others.⁽⁴³⁾

The point which bothers Aristotle is how to explain incontinence in terms of a lack of knowledge. How, in other words, is it accounted for in the formal terms of the practical syllogism ?

The incontinent man is not ignorant of the major premise for he is not classed as a vicious man. Does this mean that his ignorance is of the minor premise ? If so, incontinence seems to fall within the class of involuntary actions, and then Aristotle's arguments are inconsistent. O'Connor does come to this conclusion.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Yet although Aristotle does not make this explicit, it is clear that incontinence can not be an involuntary act since it is acting in ignorance where ignorance is the cause of the act but ignorance is in some way due to appetite. What needs to be explained therefore is in

what /

what way the appetites obscure knowledge in the incontinent man, and to what aspect of the practical syllogism this ignorance relates. As will be shown, it is the conclusion which is obscured.

5:3:3:2. Incontinence and Temperance.

It is generally agreed⁽⁴⁵⁾ that Aristotle quotes two practical syllogisms to illustrate incontinence. These are :

- (i) Dry food is good for every man, I am a man, such and such food is dry.⁽⁴⁶⁾
- (ii) Nothing sweet ought to be tasted. This is sweet, everything sweet is pleasant.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Two questions arise. Firstly, do both syllogisms in fact illustrate the concept of incontinence ? Secondly, is Aristotle's account of that concept coherent ?

Before beginning the discussion it must be pointed out that as these syllogisms stand in the text, they are incompletely formulated in terms of the arguments given earlier on the nature of the practical syllogism.⁽⁴⁸⁾ They will therefore be enlarged upon in this exposition.

As we have pointed out, Aristotle, in contrasting the incontinent and self-indulgent men, says of the former that he pursues the present pleasure although he does not think that he ought to do so.⁽⁴⁹⁾ These pleasures are the necessary pleasures associated with the body, that is those concerned with food and sexual intercourse.⁽⁵⁰⁾ By saying that the incontinent man does not feel he ought to pursue these pleasures of touch and taste, Aristotle is surely implying that the major premise must be the same as that for the temperate man. For the incontinent man is not self-indulgent; his character is not perverted. In terms of the arguments given in the discussion on the practical syllogism, and being half-wicked insofar as he does not abide by his deliberations, the incontinent man

must /

must be regarded as being sufficiently good to know the universal principles of action. Let us now examine some of Aristotle's remarks on temperance and self-indulgence.

"The temperate man occupies a middle position with regard to these things (i.e. what is pleasant, pertaining to food and sexual intercourse). For he neither enjoys the things the self-indulgent man enjoys most - but rather dislikes them - nor in general the things he should not, not anything of this sort to excess ... but the things that, being pleasant, makes for health or for good condition, he will desire moderately and as he should." (51)

Thus in the temperate man the appetitive element will be in harmony with the rational principle, for when the appetites are too strong or violent, they expel the power of calculation. Hence it is essential that these appetites be few and moderate.⁽⁵²⁾ Aristotle says that "the temperate man craves for the things he ought, as he ought and when he ought."⁽⁵³⁾

Using these passages let us consider the two syllogisms above. At first sight the connections with temperance are clear. Dry food is presumably something "making for health" and perhaps not the sort of food that the self-indulgent man would enjoy to excess. The second syllogism specifically mentions pleasure.

In terms of the discussions on the major premise, it is suggested that the major premise be formulated (in a general sense) as follows :⁽⁵⁴⁾

"A man in such a position should do such a thing" becomes "A man in the presence of pleasurable things (food and sexual intercourse) should crave for what he ought, as he ought, when he ought."

Applying this to the two examples given, it is possible to suggest the following formulations of the respective practical syllogisms :

(i) A /

(i) A man in the presence of pleasurable things should eat dry food.

I am such a man.

Such and such food is dry.

This is such and such food.

(ii) A man in the presence of pleasurable things should not taste anything sweet. ⁽⁵⁵⁾

I am such a man.

This thing is sweet. (Everything sweet is pleasant.)

5:3:3:3. Incontinence and ignorance.

Now the question arises - in what sense the incontinent man is said to be ignorant.

Before giving this answer, it is stressed that in this thesis it is maintained that Aristotle's account does not presuppose the presence of two conflicting syllogisms, especially in the case of (ii). ⁽⁵⁶⁾ Hence the sort of solution given by Allan, for example, is rejected.

Allan's argument assumes that there are conflicting syllogisms depending on the competition between an appetite in the form of a desire and one in the form of a wish. ⁽⁵⁷⁾ Arguing that since the appetite has two objects, the good and the pleasant, Allan maintains that the conflict between these appetites depends on the difference of "imaginative pictures (which) vary in degree of strength and vivacity." ⁽⁵⁸⁾ When therefore a conflict occurs it will be decided by the "strength of the contending imaginative pictures." ⁽⁵⁹⁾

It is the case that Aristotle does hold that thinking requires the presence of images. ⁽⁶⁰⁾ But as Walsh points out, ⁽⁶¹⁾ Allan's explanation poses several queries. For example, in what sense can it be said that there is a difference in strength between pictures? Furthermore Allan's argument implies that when the wish wins the agent acts through imagination. But Aristotle says that a man only acts in accordance with the imagin-

ation /

ation when "the mind is temporarily clouded over by feeling."⁽⁶²⁾ This is an important point for Aristotle does say that excitable people who suffer from the impetuous form of incontinence "by reason of the violence of their passions do not await the argument because they are apt to follow their imagination."⁽⁶³⁾ Allan's analysis appears therefore to misinterpret the relationship between wish, imagination and incontinence as weakness.

There are, says Aristotle, two senses in which we use the word "know". Firstly a man may know and use his knowledge. But a man may, secondly, know, but although he has the knowledge he is not exercising it.⁽⁶⁴⁾ The distinction between the possession and exercise of knowledge is, as so many commentators have pointed out, directly comparable to Plato's discussion in the Theaetetus on memory in terms of the aviary image.⁽⁶⁵⁾ What Aristotle seems to be contending is that the incontinent man does have the required knowledge for action, but that he does not use it. Hence he is said to have it "at the back of his mind" as it were.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Let us consider the first syllogism in the light of the distinction above.

The individual in the particular situation knows he ought to eat dry food. But either he will not know that the food in front of him is X food (which is an example of dry food), or else he does know that the food is X food but he knows it only at the back of his mind; that is, he is not actually exercising his knowledge.

Does this example illustrate incontinence? There is certainly no suggestion of passions as being the "cause" of ignorance. Is this rather an example of an involuntary action? It is arguable that ignorance in this example falls under the label "error in objectio" and hence it does belong to the category of involuntary acts.

Ando says that "incontinence and involuntariness

should /

should be distinguished not by the degree of ignorance, but in respect of whether this ignorance is concerned with facts or values."⁽⁶⁷⁾ But does the example of the dry food include a value judgement which it should if it is to be regarded as incontinence? Surely it does not.

Aristotle says of the incontinent man that he can use the language that flows from knowledge but this proves nothing.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The incontinent man's utterances mean nothing more than an actor's speech or the recital of the verses of Empedocles by a drunkard.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The problem is that Aristotle does specifically mention the incontinent man in relation to these kinds of "knowing" and in connection with the dry food syllogism. But agreeing with Kenny⁽⁷⁰⁾ it is held that this is in fact not an example of incontinence but an illustration of how the two senses of knowing can occur. Referring to the Introduction to this thesis, it is suggested that the dry-food syllogism has perhaps been erroneously included by an editor in such a way that it appears as an example of incontinence. There is no way of relating this syllogism to the descriptions given by Aristotle of the incontinent man. The second syllogism, however, is an account of incontinence and will be shown to be consistent with these descriptions.

In speaking about the ignorance of incontinence, Aristotle says that it is caused by the passions which "actually alter the bodily condition."⁽⁷¹⁾ In other words, the incontinent man is in a different state to the temperate man, and is similar to the man who is asleep, mad or drunk.⁽⁷²⁾ The altered bodily condition is the conflict between reason (as a rational wish) and desire. The incontinent man is gripped by a conflict of appetites. Aristotle says :

"Appetites may conflict when reason and desire are opposed, and this occurs in creatures which have a sense of time (for the mind [reason] advises us to resist with a view to the future, while

desire /

desire only looks to the present, for what is momentarily pleasant seems to be absolutely pleasant and absolutely good, because desire cannot look into the future." (73)

That is why Aristotle says that the incontinent man, at the time of his action, thinks he ought to pursue the present pleasure although he does not always think so. (74)

Let us now consider the second syllogism. The agent is in a particular situation where he sees something sweet before him. He recognises that this is something sweet and everything sweet is pleasant. He knows, however, that he ought to avoid tasting sweet things for he is not a vicious, self-indulgent man. He therefore chooses not to taste. However, since he is not temperate this is not a fixed, habitual response. Although his rational principle does "urge him aright towards the best objects" (75) he is not virtuous in the strict sense and cannot therefore be said to possess practical wisdom in its complete form. He is not habitually disposed to choose in the right way, for the right motive, at the right time. The point is, however, that he does know what he ought to choose. Now a man can be moved by desire as well as by reason. (76) Desire for something arises if an argument or one's perception tells us that a particular thing is pleasant. (77) The incontinent man, since he is not morally virtuous, does not "desire and act in accordance with a rational principle." (78) His desire is not subservient to the rational principle, and he takes, moreover, an excessive delight in the pleasures of food and touch. There is therefore a conflict between the rational principle urging him to choose what he ought, and the other element, which is "naturally opposed to the rational principle (and) which fights and resists principle." (79) He is at variance with himself, having appetites for some things and rational desires for others. (80) Thus Aristotle says that "the impulses of incontinent men move in contrary directions." (81) Since

there /

there is not the habitual subjugation of the passions, it is clear that the agent will taste the sweet food; he thereby acts contrary to his wish doing those things he thinks he ought not to do. ⁽⁸²⁾

What about the ignorance of incontinence? It is not knowledge of the universal premise which is "dragged about" as a result of the state of passion of the individual. It is argued in this thesis that what is obscured is the knowledge of the correct conclusion: "I ought not to taste this thing." We interpret the phrase "the last premise being an opinion about a perceptible object" and that which determines that we shall act, in the above sense. ⁽⁸³⁾ For Aristotle has said previously that "when appetite happens to be present in us, the one opinion bids us avoid the object, but appetite leads us towards it." ⁽⁸⁴⁾ What is therefore somehow known at the back of one's mind is that one ought to avoid tasting a particular perceptible object. In this sense it is held that what is dragged about as a result of passion belongs to the realm of perceptual knowledge. ⁽⁸⁵⁾ What would have been the rational choice preceding a temperate act is obscured because of the conflict in the incontinent man. ⁽⁸⁶⁾

Aristotle says that in a case where we have the premise "everything sweet ought to be tasted," (that is, the universal or major premise) followed by the minor or particular premise, this is sweet, the man who can act and is not prevented must act accordingly. ⁽⁸⁷⁾ As Kenny argues ⁽⁸⁸⁾ it is clear that desire acts as a hindrance to the performance of what would be a temperate act. Desire prevents the putting into practice of the correct syllogism, and therefore acting morally.

In a sense, therefore, the incontinent man behaves under the influence of a rule; it is appetite which is contrary to the right rule. ⁽⁸⁹⁾

5:3:3:4. Conclusion.

We have argued that only the second syllogism illustrates the concept of incontinence. It is held that the agent must know that the thing before him is sweet, otherwise he will not desire it. What is obscured by his desire is the knowledge of the correct conclusion that he ought not to taste what he has tasted. He has the knowledge but is not using it. It is therefore clear, as indeed Kenny points out,⁽⁹⁰⁾ that to accuse Aristotle of not being able to account for the case of the man who deliberately does what he knows to be wrong when he does it, is unfair.⁽⁹¹⁾ Aristotle does deal with such a case. In opposition to Walsh⁽⁹²⁾ and Ross,⁽⁹³⁾ we agree with Kenny⁽⁹⁴⁾ that the absence of the concept of will in Aristotle's account of incontinence does not constitute a weakness in his exposition.

Continence may be regarded as a stage prior to temperance, and one stage "higher" than incontinence. As Walsh argues, Aristotle's arguments seem to imply that the continent man does have the wrong desires but that his good responses are more habitual so that reason conquers these desires. But even this achievement is not habitual for the continent man is not yet morally virtuous and practically wise in a fixed sense.⁽⁹⁵⁾

It is clear that the temperate man, by definition, will never slip. He suffers no instances of moral weakness. Whether such individuals do actually exist is, of course, debatable. Whether they should be the acme of moral effort is even more debatable. Indeed MacIntyre⁽⁹⁶⁾ argues that "fallibility is central to human nature and not peripheral to it." He goes on to say that any portrait of a man who is infallible "cannot be the portrait of a human being."⁽⁹⁷⁾ MacIntyre's point is that, as in the case of Jesus, we need to be shown the way a good man grapples with temptations in order to discover the perfect man rather than the perfect man. Paraphrasing Hardie⁽⁹⁸⁾

MacIntyre /

MacIntyre would surely hold that the saint or moral hero was the continent man who struggled successfully against his desires, rather than the temperate man.

MacIntyre's views would be abhorrent to Skinner. The Skinnerean good man, like the Aristotelean model, is always self-controlled and will consistently and habitually perform the right actions. Skinner⁽⁹⁹⁾ holds that moral struggles waste valuable time which could be better used in creative activities. He points out that moral struggle is an integral aspect of "pre-scientific" moral literature, for it is those who are engaged in a moral struggle who receive credit for being "moral heroes", having "inner virtues". But in the case of Aristotle, the man who deserves praise is the self-controlled, temperate man whose reason has habitually mastered his desires.

5:4. Not knowing what is good and doing what is evil.

We have thus far been dealing with natural actions. Only natural actions, whether good or bad, fall within the realm of legal and moral responsibility. Within the sphere of vice Aristotle does also distinguish certain actions as being "unnatural", that is, corresponding to the sphere of "abnormal" behaviour.

5:4:1. Natural actions.

5:4:1:1. The Vicious man.

We have already discussed the vicious man in general terms in chapter 3:4. He is ignorant of the universal principles, the correct major premise, for he has a bad character. He acts deliberately from choice. Hence he is vicious and the injury he inflicts constitutes a vicious act.

5:4:1:2. Negligence.

Discussing vice in terms of legal and moral responsibility, Aristotle includes the following examples

of /

of negligence:

- (i) The agent is ignorant of laws he ought to know and which are not too difficult to understand.
- (ii) The agent is ignorant of something through carelessness, for the agent does have the power of taking care. ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

In both cases the agent's ignorance is held to be his own fault, for this ignorance is concerned with the universal principles of actions and he, being the moving principle of his actions, is responsible for that ignorance.

5:4:1:3. Drunkenness.

Aristotle says of the drunk man that it was originally in his power to get drunk or not. Since drunkenness is the cause of a man's ignorance, a drunk act being one performed in ignorance, the drunk man is blamed for his actions. Indeed the penalties are to be doubled. ⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Aristotle could of course be challenged by using studies showing the influence of the environment on the development of alcoholism. But, as has been suggested in an earlier discussion on vice in chapter 3:4, there is an unresolved tension in Aristotle's thought between man's freedom to choose and various determining influences on the formation of his character.

5:4:1:4. Non-Voluntary actions.

These acts do seem to fall under the general category of vice. A non-voluntary act (in contrast to an involuntary act) is one in which the agent feels no anger at himself for the act he has performed by reason of ignorance. ⁽¹⁰²⁾ He does not, therefore, repent his action. Although it has been queried whether there is a real difference between involuntary and non-voluntary acts, it does seem (as Ross has pointed out) that the

distinction /

distinction is primarily one related to the character of the agent. For what is being indicated is "whether an act was or was not consistent with the agent's general character."⁽¹⁰³⁾ A non-voluntary act would surely be blameworthy.

5:4:1:5. Concluding remarks.

Aristotle's identification and description of a wide variety of actions in terms of responsibility does illustrate the thoroughness with which he attempted to clarify this concept.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Adkins argues that Aristotle's "solution" to the problem of moral responsibility is unsatisfactory.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ However, it is not clear whether one can accept Adkins' argument that the traditional Homeric values, i.e. the "spectacular" virtues of courage, leadership and liberality preclude the possibility of a satisfactory solution. It is agreed that these virtues do form part of the moral background to Aristotle's thought.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ But in the light of the expositions above it cannot be agreed that Aristotle's views on responsibility were confused because of his conception of virtue. It is held that Adkins' thesis, whilst being difficult to follow, is not convincing.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ At the same time, Aristotle's exposition is not completely satisfactory for, as was pointed out in chapter 4:6, whilst Aristotle was aware of various determining influences on the formation of a man's character, he did not reconcile this point with his conception of man as a free agent.

5:4:2. Unnatural Actions.

Unlike vicious acts, unnatural actions are beyond the law. Although they are "more alarming" than vice, they are nevertheless less evil.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ For those men whose actions are said to be unnatural are regarded by Aristotle as being non-rational. They have no better part, whereas the vicious man, whose acts are natural, has his reason

perversed /

perverted.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Hence "the badness of that which has no originating source of movement is always less hurtful and reason is an originative source."⁽¹¹⁰⁾ The unnatural or non-rational states include the brutish (for example human cannibalism), those states which result from disease (for example some forms of madness), and the morbid states.⁽¹¹¹⁾

The existence of these non-rational individuals illustrates once more a view put forward in this thesis that man's function ought to be an activity of the soul which implies or follows a rational principle. It is not clear what man's function is.

We would agree with Aristotle that madness is beyond the law in the sense that such individuals cannot be held responsible for their actions. Let us, however, consider morbid states.

Aristotle's examples of this type of unnatural behaviour include plucking out one's hair, finger-nail biting, chewing earth or coal, and sodomy.⁽¹¹²⁾ The question of whether these "perversions" are merely eccentricities raises the controversial subject as to what constitutes "normal" or "natural" behaviour. This topic is the subject of some debate among psychologists and sociologists.

The psychologist Buss,⁽¹¹³⁾ for example, in outlining some of the problems which complicate attempts to delineate the spheres of normality and abnormality, mentions three approaches. There is firstly the attempt to define normality statistically; secondly, considering normality as ideal mental health; and thirdly the attempt to clarify precisely what abnormality consists in.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ It is within this third category that we see a resemblance to Aristotle. Buss argues that individuals are considered to be abnormal insofar as they manifest the criteria of discomfort, inefficiency and bizarreness in their behaviour.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ It is arguable that Aristotle's views on

morbid /

morbid states contains some observations corresponding to the criterion of bizarreness.

"Bizarreness", says Buss, "is abnormal deviation from accepted standards of behaviour."⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Of course, as Buss points out, not all deviations are to be regarded as abnormal (or unnatural). What these deviations are depend on social sanctions and do therefore ultimately illustrate cultural relativism. In general, behaviour is regarded as bizarre in one particular culture if the individual does not learn the rules of his society or if, having been socialised and therefore knowing such rules, he nevertheless breaks them.

Normality is therefore partly a social convention. It may also be argued that it is relative. The sociologists Berger and Luckmann⁽¹¹⁷⁾ have put forward an extremely interesting thesis supporting the idea of ethical relativism. They argue that values, institutions and roles are socially determined since society is a human product. To reify values, to conceive of them as other than the products of a particular social organisation is to forget this primordial inter-relationship between man and his particular society. Normal behaviour is therefore arguably the shared convictions about patterns of behaviour which are agreed to be appropriate to a particular social group. The essentially relativistic nature of values does therefore seem to be supported by this argument.

Although Aristotle would not admit it, it could be argued that cannibalism among the Black Sea tribes⁽¹¹⁸⁾ may have been socially accepted within that society and therefore constituted "normal" behaviour. Even eating coal in some societies, for example, could be said to illustrate cultural relativism. However, Aristotle's position is one of ethical absolutism. Rejecting the doctrine of Protagoras that man is the measure of all things, Aristotle tried to establish objective moral standards which would serve as a framework of reference

within /

within his society. His position was therefore that the good man, the rational man who also directs his activities towards the pursuit of noble deeds, is the measure of each thing. ⁽¹¹⁹⁾ But although he took as his starting point the values actually held in Greek society at that time, Aristotle's treatment of these values suggests that he conceived of them as being universally valid. ⁽¹²⁰⁾ In short, he regarded rational behaviour in the sense specified in his ethical thought as providing a universal, objective standard. The thesis put forward by Berger and Luckmann does, however, provide an extremely persuasive argument in favour of an ethical relativism.

Aristotle's treatment of objective and subjective standards of value will be examined in detail in chapter 8.

FOOTNOTES

1. N.E. 1144b29.
2. N.E. 1145a20.
3. Politics 1284a3.
4. N.E. 1145a34 (my underlining).
5. N.E. 1178b14.
6. N.E. 1107a6.
7. N.E. 1147b31.
8. See chapter 8:1:3.
9. N.E. 1148a29.
10. N.E. 1148a31.
11. N.E. 1109b35.
12. N.E. 1110b34.
13. N.E. 1111a 1-20.
14. Hamburger: Morals and Law: The Growth of Aristotle's Legal Theory pp.25-6.
15. N.E. 1111a10.
16. N.E. 1110b35.
17. N.E. 1110b18.
18. N.E. Bk. VII:6.
19. N.E. 1149b7.
20. N.E. 1149b13.
21. N.E. 1180a5.
22. N.E. Bk. VII:6.
23. N.E. 1111b10.
24. N.E. 1135b24.
25. N.E. 1135b27.
26. N.E. 1110b25.
27. N.E. 1111b20.
28. N.E. 1150b26. See also chapter 5:3:3.
29. N.E. 1110b24.
30. See chapter 5:4:1:3.
31. N.E. 1113b30.
32. N.E. 1152a28.
33. N.E. 1098a7. Also see chapter 3.
34. N.E. 1150b21.
35. N.E. 1152a18.
36. N.E. 1151a23.
37. N.E. 1152a18.
38. N.E. 1152a5.
39. N.E. 1151b28.
40. N.E. 1111b18.
41. N.E. 1136b8.
42. N.E. 1102b12.
43. N.E. 1166b7.
44. O'Connor: Op.cit. p.59.
45. e.g. Ross: Aristotle p. 222. Mure: Aristotle p.147. Lloyd: Aristotle: The Growth and Structure of his Thought p.233.
46. N.E. 1147a5.
47. N.E. 1147a25.
48. See chapter 4:1.
49. N.E. 1146b23.

50. N.E. 1147a24.
51. N.E. 1119a10.
52. N.E. 1119b12.
53. N.E. 1119b17.
54. This major premise applies both to the temperate and incontinent man.
55. Although it does, as Kenny points out, sound somewhat puritanical. Kenny: The Anatomy of the Soul and The Practical Syllogism and Incontinence, p.47.
56. Kenny: Op.cit. p.45. and Ando: Op.cit. chapter 5:4. also treat the problem in terms of a single syllogism.
57. Allan: The Practical Syllogism p.333.
58. Ibid. p.333.
59. Ibis.
60. De Anima 431b 2-10.
61. Walsh: Op.cit. p.125.
62. De Anima 429a 4-8.
63. N.E. 1150b26.
64. N.E. 1146b33.
65. Theaetetus: 197B.
66. Yet Aristotle also says that the incontinent man may also not have the required knowledge at all. N.E. 1147a7.
67. Ando: Op.cit. p.249.
68. N.E. 1147a18.
69. N.E. 1147a19 N.E. 1147b10.
70. Kenny: Op.cit. p.39.
71. N.E. 1147a17.
72. N.E. 1147a18. As Kenny suggests it is odd that Aristotle compares incontinence both with madness and drunkenness in the same breath. For whereas a man is held responsible for his drunkenness, madness is a non-rational state. Kenny: Op.cit. p.41.
73. De Anima 433b5.
74. The ambiguity of the sentence N.E. 1146b23 has been discussed by Kenny: Op.cit.pp. 30-1. Clearly Aristotle might mean that the incontinent man does not always think he ought to pursue the present pleasure, or he might not think that he ought always to pursue the present pleasure. The precise meaning of the sentence is unclear. But what Aristotle intends is to draw the distinction between incontinence and self-indulgence insofar as the latter feels he ought to act as he does, whilst the former does not, yet he does act.
75. N.E. 1102b12.
76. N.E. 1147a34.
77. N.E. 1149a35.
78. N.E. 1095a10.
79. N.E. 1102b18.
80. N.E. 1166b7.
81. N.E. 1102b20.
82. N.E. 1136b8.
83. N.E. 1147b7.
84. N.E. 1147a33.
85. N.E. 1147b17.

86. Thus we disagree with Ando and Walsh. Ando says that the practical syllogism of incontinent man is incomplete insofar as the minor premise does not give a particular value estimation. (Ando: Op.cit.p.253.) Walsh also argues that what is lost in incontinence is our understanding of a minor premise which expresses a moral perception. This loss is due to desire generating blindness and the absence of an opinion as to what is good in a particular situation. (Walsh: Op.cit. pp.149-157.)
87. N.E. 1147b9.
88. Kenny: Op.cit. pp.42-3.
89. N.E. 1147a35 N.E. 1148b2.
90. Kenny: Op.cit. p.50.
91. Copleston makes this charge. (Op.cit. pp.80-1.)
92. Walsh: Op.cit.pp.175-181.
93. Ross: Aristotle p.224.
94. Kenny: Op.cit. p.50.
95. The point is therefore made once more that man does not naturally act in accordance with a rational principle; but he certainly ought to in Aristotle's view.
96. MacIntyre: Op.cit. p.76.
97. Ibis.
98. Hardie: Op.cit. p.138.
99. Skinner: Beyond Freedom and Dignity - Chapter 4.
100. N.E. 1113b34.
101. N.E. 1113b30.
102. N.E. 1110b23.
103. Ross: Aristotle, p.198.
104. N.E. 1109b33.
105. Adkins: Op.cit. Chapters XV and XVI.
106. See chapter 8:1:3.
107. cf. Hardie Op.cit. pp.124-128.
108. N.E. 1150a1.
109. N.E. 1150a2.
110. N.E. 1150a3.
111. N.E. Bk. VII:5.
112. N.E. 1148b27.
113. Buss: Psychopathology.
114. Buss: Op.cit. p.1.
115. Ibid. p.8.
116. Ibid. p.10.
117. Berger and Luckmann: The Social Construction of Reality.
118. N.E. 1148b25.
119. N.E. 1176a22.
120. See chapter 8:1:4.

CHAPTER 6 : SOME ASPECTS OF HAPPINESS IN THE SECONDARY
SENSE

6:1. Recapitulation

The consistent performance of morally virtuous actions constitutes the life of secondary happiness.⁽¹⁾ For it is such activities which, according to Aristotle, befit man's human state. Through moral virtue man's acts are directed towards noble ends. By means of practical wisdom the choice of the correct means to achieve these ends is ensured. A man cannot therefore be good in the strict sense without being practically wise, nor practically wise if he is not also morally virtuous.⁽²⁾ Referring back to the arguments on function in chapter 3, it is clear that the realisation of function in its initial, narrow sense, i.e. covering the "doable good"⁽³⁾ leads to happiness in the secondary sense.

Whilst moral virtue and practical wisdom are necessary conditions for secondary happiness, they are not sufficient. Aristotle speaks also of the need for external goods, some degree of wealth, fortune and health.⁽⁴⁾ As was pointed out,⁽⁵⁾ Aristotle does not clarify the precise relationship of these means to the end of secondary happiness. Furthermore it must not be forgotten that there are also certain things which, if absent, remove the lustre from happiness, namely good birth, good children and beauty.⁽⁶⁾ It may well be true, as Huby suggests, that Aristotle's list of the things necessary for happiness is "a common sense one."⁽⁷⁾ It is also clear from a consideration of these requirements why the Aristotelean conception of happiness is best translated as living well.

Yet how many individuals will attain that end ? Certainly vicious and incontinent men, those practising unnatural activities, slaves and women are excluded from the achievement of secondary happiness. For they are all unable to acquire the necessary virtues. The rational

faculty /

faculty of the vicious and incontinent man is not exercised in order to perform morally good deeds. Although the vicious man may be said to act rationally, and might achieve metaphysical excellence insofar as he is a "complete" thief, his acts are not desirable. Having once made the choice to be wicked, he cannot cease to be so and is thus denied the chance to be happy. Unnatural individuals, slaves and women are deficient in their rationality. Referring back to the discussion on function⁽⁸⁾ it is therefore arguable that the Aristotelean conception which forms the starting point of his enquiry is the function of the way men ought to be. His claim to start with what is in fact the case⁽⁹⁾ may therefore be regarded as having been violated.

The way the state is run is obviously an extremely important factor in the attainment of secondary happiness. Aristotle makes it perfectly clear that the greatest opportunities for attaining happiness will lie in the best-organised state.⁽¹⁰⁾ This point will be dealt with in chapter 9.

If we consider man from the point of view of his human state, the performance of morally virtuous deeds may be regarded as desirable in themselves. Nothing need be sought beyond the performance of a morally good activity. A specific morally good action is good both in the sense of it being desirable as well as having the metaphysical characteristic of completeness. In the sense of these acts being ends in themselves, secondary happiness does obey the criteria of self-sufficiency and finality.⁽¹¹⁾ But secondary happiness is not man's ultimate end. The perfectly happy man requires not only righteousness and moderation, but also philosophy. The relationship between the performance of morally good acts and the activity of contemplation will be elucidated in chapter 9.

6:2. Moral obligation.

In the discussion on function it has been argued that man is not naturally disposed to live in accordance with a rule, that is to be morally virtuous and practically wise. Aristotle's work is therefore prescriptive, advocating how a man ought to live his life. Why ought a man to live thus ?

Allan⁽¹²⁾ argues that Aristotle "takes little or no account of the motive of moral obligation." It is true, as Gauthier⁽¹³⁾ points out, that Aristotle does not actually discuss the concept of duty. But he does specifically argue that acting according to a rule is the way men ought to act. Practical wisdom is imperative, "it issues commands since its end is what ought to be done or not to be done."⁽¹⁴⁾ The rule provided by practical wisdom acts as a standard for behaviour. As Gauthier says, "if the rule insofar as it is an imperative makes the act which it commands a duty, it is because it enunciates moral obligation."⁽¹⁵⁾ We shall argue that, in his discussion on natural justice, Aristotle seems to be approaching the formulation of a natural law theory. In terms of this theory, rational moral standards transcending the diversity of ordinary standards, are normative principles insofar as man must live in accordance with his own rationality in order to live a good life.⁽¹⁶⁾ Ollé Lapruné speaks of this moral imperative in Aristotle's thought in terms of an aesthetic arrangement rather than in legal terms. Yet his views are substantially in agreement with the argument above. He writes⁽¹⁷⁾ that "(practical wisdom) prescribes a beautiful arrangement, a beautiful configuration of the soul and of life The form which it gives is thus aesthetic rather than legal. It arranges mind and feeling, assigning everything to its place, thus determining conduct: and the analogy is much less to a law which commands than to an internal principle of harmony." Thus one ought to live

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a planned life of moral virtue and practical wisdom because this is the appropriate life for man as a rational being.

A life in accordance with the rule prescribed by practical wisdom also brings rewards both to the individual and to his society.

Discussing the good man's relation to himself,⁽¹⁸⁾ Aristotle says his opinions are in harmony with each other.⁽¹⁹⁾ He desires the same things with all his soul. He wishes to live and be preserved, and especially his reason. Trying always to realise the good in action, he wishes always for himself what is good or seems good to him. He therefore lives with himself with pleasure. The recollections of his past acts are delightful and his hopes for the future are always good and pleasant. Moreover the performance of virtuous acts is a pleasurable activity. Hence he profits himself by doing noble acts.

Furthermore accruing from a life of moral virtue is, as we shall see, the reward of contemplation. For only such a life can enable the gifted individual to achieve perfect happiness, the supremely pleasurable activity.

But the good man will also benefit his fellow man, unlike the wicked man, who following his evil passions, "will hurt both himself and his neighbours."⁽²⁰⁾ Since one's friend is like another self, egoism in the ethics of Aristotle may be held to have the same characteristics as altruism.⁽²¹⁾ The good man performs many acts for the sake of his friends. Desiring the good for himself, he wishes to realise in his acts what is good for the best part of himself. Since his friend is a second self, he wishes also what is best for his friends. The good man's friendship thus involves having a sympathetic consciousness of the other's existence obtained by association with the other, by conversing and exchanging ideas.⁽²²⁾ If everyone tried to outdo his friend in the elevation of his character through the performance of good acts, the

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welfare of all would be affected, for each individual would thereby realise his own goodness of character.

In short, the good man not only profits himself by doing noble deeds, but performs many acts for the sake of his friends as well as for his country. If necessary he will even die for his friends.⁽²³⁾ Indeed, if everyone did perform virtuous deeds, "if all were to strive towards what is noble, and strain every nerve to do the noblest deeds, everything would be as it should for the common weal, and everyone would secure for himself the goods that are greatest."⁽²⁴⁾

Furthermore insofar as the performance of these moral acts contributes to the smooth running of the state, so too do they contribute to the leisure required for the contemplation of the intellectually-gifted few.⁽²⁵⁾

Hence arguing against Allan it is held that whilst Aristotle's thought is obviously not a Kantian-type ethics, the concept of duty, though not central, is nevertheless implied. Furthermore, it has been shown that insofar as the good individual's life, epitomising the concept of harmony, is in accord with the rational harmony of the universe, it brings its own rewards to that individual, his fellows and the state as a whole.

6:3. Concluding remarks.

The above exposition constitutes a partial attempt to clarify the concept of secondary happiness. The question of what standards of value apply to this sphere will be discussed in relation to those which Aristotle uses to characterise perfect happiness. For it will be argued that the dichotomy which exists between the essentially moral standards belonging to the realm of morally virtuous actions and the metaphysical standards applicable to contemplation is an extremely important factor in explaining why the relationship between the two

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ends can only be an indirect one. (26)

Furthermore a fuller understanding of the nature and purpose of secondary happiness can only be achieved by considering it in relation to perfect happiness. (27) Such an analysis obviously presupposes a prior examination of contemplation itself. (28) It will be shown that whilst secondary happiness seems to be a substitute for perfect happiness for those unable to obtain that end, Aristotle argues that it is also a necessary condition for contemplation. This point may also be explained by making use of Hardie's concepts of an inclusive and a dominant end. (29)

The underlying presupposition that man's happiness lies in the actualisation of all his possibilities is held to be an extremely important concept. Clearly, however, a full understanding of this idea requires a consideration of both ends as put forward in the Nicomachean Ethics. Reference will be made to the work of the psychologist, Abraham Maslow, whose thought on that concept may be interpreted as being Aristotelean. An important criticism which emerges from this discussion is directed towards Aristotle's conception of man's function. For it is held that self-actualisation includes not only the function of man as man, but also the function of each particular individual, that is the specific calling of every man insofar as he be an artist, business man, craftsman and the like. (30)

FOOTNOTES :

1. N.E. 1178a9.
2. N.E. 1144b31.
3. Siegler: Op.cit.p.31. See chapter 3:2.
4. N.E. 1101a16. E.E. 1214b15.
5. See chapter 4:1.
6. N.E. 1099b2.
7. Huby: Op.cit. p.47.
8. Chapter 3:2.
9. N.E. 1095b6.
10. Politics 1332a5.
11. See Ross' comments in the Introduction.
12. Allan: The Philosophy of Aristotle, p.140.
13. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.21.
14. N.E. 1143a8. N.E. 1145a9.
The temperate man is also said to crave for the things he ought, as he ought and when he ought.
N.E. 1119b17.
15. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.23.
16. See chapter 8:1:4.
17. Quoted by Gauthier: Op.cit.p.22.
18. N.E. Bk. 1X:8.
19. Note the use of the word "harmony".
20. N.E. 1169a13.
21. N.E. Bk.1X:9.
22. N.E. 1170b9.
23. N.E. 1169a19.
24. N.E. 1169a8.
25. See chapter 9:3.
26. Chapter 8.
27. Chapter 9.
28. Chapter 7.
29. Chapter 9:4.
30. Appendix: The concept of self-actualisation.

CHAPTER 7 : CONTEMPLATION

7:1. Introduction.

It has been argued that the function argument is intended eventually to cover the activity of contemplation as well as the performance of morally virtuous acts. The problem is, however, that whereas contemplation is man's end from the metaphysical point of view, the morally virtuous life is man's end from a moral point of view. The relationship between these two ends must therefore be examined.

Before dealing with this problem, it is necessary to elucidate the nature of contemplation. That activity is, however, problematic, and the lack of clarity about what is regarded by Aristotle as man's highest achievement stands as a severe criticism of it as a tenable concept.

Contemplation, according to Aristotle, is the activity of philosophic or theoretical wisdom which is the superior part or the best thing in man.⁽¹⁾ Philosophic wisdom is the most highly perfected forms of knowledge, comprising intuitive reason combined with scientific knowledge of those objects which are highest by nature.⁽²⁾ We therefore contemplate the best knowable things, those truths which have already been attained through science and intuitive reason.⁽³⁾ Perfect happiness, says Aristotle, is some form of contemplation and it extends as far as contemplation does.⁽⁴⁾ For, as Aristotle argues in terms of his characterisation of the content of happiness, "if happiness is an activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be that of the best thing in us."⁽⁵⁾ This best thing is reason which more than anything is man.⁽⁶⁾ The contemplative life is one which is best and most pleasant for man, a life proper to reason.⁽⁷⁾ In terms of Aristotle's characterisation of happiness it alone is truly final and most self-sufficient, aiming at

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no end beyond itself and being loved for its own sake.⁽⁸⁾

It is strange that a work concerned with a consideration of what is the best life devotes proportionately so little space to an exposition of perfect happiness. Furthermore, as will be shown, Aristotle's elucidation of contemplation is extremely unsatisfactory. We are given no definitive account of the objects of contemplation. The contemplative activity of the rational element nous raises further problems involving Aristotle's psychology. The relationship between secondary happiness, the life of moral virtue, and perfect happiness as contemplation is not made explicit. Why is it that not all men become philosophers? Is it simply that they have not enjoyed the necessary training or is it the case that only some are intellectually gifted? Whether or not contemplation is to be conceived of as an essentially selfish ideal since the contemplative intellect is neither practical nor productive raises further questions regarding the desirability of such an end for man who is, after all, a political animal. These and other points will be discussed in some detail in order to attempt an evaluation of man's end in its perfect form as contemplation.

7:2. Contemplation and its objects.

A justification for philosophic wisdom as the most perfect forms of knowledge is found in the Metaphysics. It is the most universal discipline, its objects being the most primary and furthest removed from sensation. It is concerned with knowledge of what is most knowable, that is, the first principles and causes of all things for it is through these that other things are known.⁽⁹⁾ Hence Aristotle says in the Nicomachean Ethics that the wise man possesses the truth about first principles as well as knowing what follows from these principles.⁽¹⁰⁾ Philosophic wisdom is the ruling or governing science since it involves knowledge of the final cause of the

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world.⁽¹¹⁾ As Ross⁽¹²⁾ has pointed out, Aristotle's characterisation of philosophic wisdom as the most authoritative science presents certain difficulties. For in what sense can theoretical wisdom be said to issue any commands? Aristotle has made it quite clear that the theoretical intellect is not practical, nor is it productive.⁽¹³⁾ Politics, on the other hand, is spoken of as the most authoritative discipline in that it legislates with a view to the end of man and the state.⁽¹⁴⁾ Yet Aristotle says of philosophic wisdom that it knows for what purpose every act takes place, that is, it knows the final cause or the good in each particular instance and the final good in nature as a whole.⁽¹⁵⁾ As Ross⁽¹⁶⁾ points out, the notion of a final cause is therefore ambiguous. Indeed Ross holds that Aristotle's argument, although used to prove metaphysics to be the highest form of knowledge, could nevertheless only prove ethics or politics to be the most authoritative wisdom. If we refer to the earlier discussion⁽¹⁷⁾ on the notion of an end or good of any activity, then it is arguable that Aristotle uses the word "good" in two senses when discussing the respective claims of the theoretical and practical disciplines to be the most authoritative. Clearly politics, insofar as it is concerned with the state, is the most authoritative in seeking the end or good which is most desirable, that is, what is good in the moral sense.⁽¹⁸⁾ But metaphysics or theology is concerned with the final cause or the good in the metaphysical sense of completeness. However even if philosophic wisdom is the most authoritative science in this metaphysical sense, it cannot issue any commands and legislate with a view to man's moral end.

We have said that contemplation is the activity of philosophic wisdom. When writing about the two parts of the soul which grasp a rational principle, Aristotle says of one that it is that by which we contemplate the kinds of things whose originative causes are invariable,⁽¹⁹⁾

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and it is in this sense that we use the word contemplation. Yet it should also be noted that Aristotle does also use the word in connection with other activities. Indeed Aristotle does also say that there is one part by which we contemplate variable things.⁽²⁰⁾ He also writes that the supremely happy man's purpose is to contemplate worthy actions.⁽²¹⁾ In another passage we read that the contemplation of a great and beautiful work of art inspires admiration.⁽²²⁾ This looseness in usage leads to the problem of precisely what are the invariable things which are being contemplated.

It has already been mentioned that philosophic wisdom is concerned with the first principles and causes. In short we contemplate being. First philosophy or theology studies all the causes or principles of being qua being.⁽²³⁾ "There is a science which investigates that which is, as being and the attributes that belong to it in virtue of its own nature."⁽²⁴⁾ Theology is therefore distinguished from other sciences by its subject matter. It studies all that there is as being. This, of course, implies that it deals with the first causes and principles of reality as a whole. It studies the primary kind of being, that is, that being which gives to all other things their fundamental character. Theology is the most primary as well as the most universal of all sciences.

However, apart from theology, the theoretical sciences do also include physics and mathematics.⁽²⁵⁾ As Hardie⁽²⁶⁾ has pointed out, Aristotle does not give any definite indication whether or not the objects of physics and mathematics are also to be included as objects of contemplation. Ross argues that physics may well be included insofar as it is "the study of the non-contingent element in contingent events."⁽²⁷⁾ But Aristotle says that there is a kinship between man's reason which is divine and the objects of that reason.⁽²⁸⁾ It is not clear how the objects of physics may be conceived of as divine. Aristotle does say that the heavenly bodies

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are divine and therefore those things which are highest by nature.⁽²⁹⁾ But it is astronomy which studies the planets, and insofar as it deals with substance that is concrete but eternal, astronomy is that mathematical discipline most akin to philosophy.⁽³⁰⁾ However, Aristotle does not imply that the objects of mathematics are divine.⁽³¹⁾ Whether or not contemplation includes the objects of physics and mathematics is therefore unclear despite the fact that philosophic wisdom is the union of intuitive reason and scientific knowledge. Possibly the planetary bodies, insofar as they also form part of the complicated cosmological system comprising the prime mover, the intelligences and the spheres are included for they are divine and invariable in terms of Aristotle's thought.

Since contemplation is concerned with those truths already discovered, Hardie, for example, has criticised Aristotle for ascribing to perfect happiness only "the joys of knowing," thereby excluding "the joys of research."⁽³²⁾ The latter may however be considered as part of secondary happiness for Aristotle does say, when talking about the good man's relation to himself that "his mind is well-stored with the subjects of contemplation."⁽³³⁾

Taylor's⁽³⁴⁾ suggestion that Aristotle intends "the genuinely aesthetic appreciation of good literature and music and pictorial and plastic art" to be included in the activity of contemplation is rejected despite the quotation from the Nicomachean Ethics above.⁽³⁵⁾ As Ross⁽³⁶⁾ points out there is simply no evidence for such an argument.

Theology, the study of being as being, does also include Aristotle's conception of the final cause, the prime mover, God. Insofar as the philosopher contemplates truths of being including God, it may be tempting to attribute the character of religious worship to contemplation. In the Eudemian Ethics⁽³⁷⁾ this does

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seem to be a correct interpretation. Jaeger's⁽³⁸⁾ thesis is of course that the Eudemian Ethics, as an early work, is still heavily influenced by Platonism. It has been argued⁽³⁹⁾ that Aristotle did not entirely emancipate himself from his Platonic inheritance and it is not possible to state categorically that the activity of contemplation, as conceived of in the Nicomachean Ethics, is a purely intellectual act involving no religious dimension. For it is not clear whether Aristotle abandoned the view expressed in the last work, De Philosophia, in which he speaks of the feeling of awe men experience in the presence of that which is higher than they are.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Hardie denies that there was a religious dimension present in Aristotle's mature thought. Hardie claims that there is insufficient evidence for claiming that contemplation includes "either religion as something on its own or religious emotion associated with non-scientific forms of experience."⁽⁴¹⁾ Whether or not contemplation was conceived of by Aristotle as a religious experience is therefore unclear. A typical passage in the Nicomachean Ethics does not, however, seem to support such a claim :

"The activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative; and of human activities, therefore, that which is most akin to this must be of the nature of happiness."⁽⁴²⁾

What is undeniable, however, is the influence of the contemplative ideal on the development of Western theology, and especially the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas.

7:3. Aristotle's conception of man's soul.

Contemplation, as an activity of the best thing in man, nous, is an activity which has no bodily concomitant. Aristotle says that "the excellence of the reason is a thing apart."⁽⁴³⁾ Nous is an element

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in the soul which is separable from man's body. (44)
 Moreover, "reason more than anything else is man." (45)
 What Aristotle is suggesting is that contemplation as perfect happiness lies in an activity of an element of the soul, the most divine element in man's nature, small in bulk, but supreme in power and worth, the most authoritative part of man. (46) Yet Aristotle began his search for happiness by insisting that his concern was with man as man. (47) This led him to an elaboration of the three powers or elements of man's soul and the view that each is said to contain its "predecessor" in a "potential" way. Hence the rational element in man contains the perceptual and nutritive elements. (48) In other words, the exercise of man's rationality presupposes sense perception, and bodily passions require rational moderation. Yet perfect happiness, we now learn, is a purely intellectual activity - the possibility of disembodied rational thinking is admitted. Gauthier expresses this as follows : "Mind, apart from the body, lives as a spectator of itself and all that is superior to it." (49)

Once more therefore we find in Aristotle's thought an unresolved tension between what is essentially a Platonic view of the soul and the more empirical conception. On the one hand Aristotle considers man as part of nature and therefore describable in terms of matter and form, potentiality and actuality. Yet on the other hand, the Platonic view of body and soul being different substances, the former material, corruptible and destructible, the latter immaterial and immortal, is never completely abandoned. Hardie expresses this as follows :

"In most of what Aristotle says about human nature we find combined or juxtaposed a biological view of man as one animal among others, and a Platonic or near Platonic view of man as a spiritual or mental entity in association with a living body." (50)

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This dichotomy has of course been the subject of heated controversy. Nuyens,⁽⁵¹⁾ in the tradition of Jaeger, has postulated an evolutionary theory of soul. According to Nuyens, Aristotle in his early thought was essentially Platonic, conceiving of the soul as a separate substance in the body. In the intermediate stage of his thought, Aristotle is said to have regarded the body as an instrument of the soul, drawing a comparison with a pilot (soul) steering the ship (body). The conception of the substantial unity of body and soul belongs to the mature period of Aristotle's thought.

However, Nuyens' theory is not persuasive for within one work, De Anima, Aristotle speaks both in terms of the substantial unity of body and soul as well as admitting the existence of an element of the soul which is separate, disembodied and eternal.

In De Anima the word "psyche" which is usually translated "soul" also means consciousness and the principle of life. The life principle of any organism is shown in the way that organism functions. The soul of a plant is shown in its powers of nutrition and reproduction, while that of an animal is indicated in these powers as well as the powers of sensation as sense perception, instinctive desire and movement. Man's soul includes these "lower" powers as well as the power of thinking and intelligence.⁽⁵²⁾

In short, Aristotle may be said to have postulated a type of "evolutionary" view of nature wherein higher organisms include within them the powers of the lower. Such an "evolutionary" scale in nature culminates in man.⁽⁵³⁾

Yet despite these powers in the soul it must be stressed that the soul is to be regarded as a unified whole.⁽⁵⁴⁾

From the metaphysical point of view the soul is

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the form of the body. It is the actuality of the body.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The soul is the way the body works, it is the body in action and neither body nor soul can therefore exist apart from each other.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Aristotle does not suggest that the soul is a substance and that man's nature is dualistic. He makes it quite clear, for example, that a state-of-mind like anger has a bodily aspect.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Perception is "a movement of the soul through the body."⁽⁵⁸⁾ Hence Aristotle says "so one need no more ask whether the body and soul are one than whether wax and the impression it receives are one."⁽⁵⁹⁾ As Ross puts it, "all psychological phenomena are essentially psychophysical."⁽⁶⁰⁾

Yet despite this thesis of a be-souled body conceived of as a unity, Aristotle nevertheless shows the influence of the Platonic conception of soul. For example, he says "but mind seems to be an independent substance engendered in us, and to be imperishable."⁽⁶¹⁾ He also comments that "in the case of the mind and the thinking faculty nothing is yet clear, it seems to be a distinct kind of soul and it alone admits of being separated as the immortal from the perishable."⁽⁶²⁾

Furthermore, in his epistemology the doctrine of active reason suggests that there is in each individual a kind of surplus of form which is not taken up in the organisation of the body, and that this can itself serve as "matter" to the impress of intelligible forms.⁽⁶³⁾ The distinction between active and passive reason has been the subject of much philosophic debate, this debate falling beyond the scope of these comments, but it is surely arguable that the characterisation of active reason as independent of the body, containing no unactualised potentialities and knowing always what it knows, is reminiscent of the activity of nous insofar as it contemplates. However, it must be remembered that Aristotle does not specifically state in the Nicomachean Ethics

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that nous is active reason.

As the "pure never-ceasing activity of thought",⁽⁶⁴⁾ contemplation does seem comparable to the intellectual exercise of the prime mover which is pure form. However, Aristotle does not mention God in his discussion on passive and active reason in De Anima even though there is a very definite similarity between the description there of the increasing pure activity of thought and that ascribed to the prime mover in the Metaphysics.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Is there any suggestion that in view of the possible similarity between the activity of nous and that of God that contemplation may be a mystical experience? In the last work On Prayer Aristotle says that "God is either nous or something beyond nous."⁽⁶⁶⁾ Aristotle does argue that "where objects differ in kind, the part of the soul answering to each of the two is different in kind, since it is in virtue of a certain likeness with other objects that they have the knowledge they have."⁽⁶⁷⁾ Clark,⁽⁶⁸⁾ for example, interprets contemplation as a mystical experience basing his view on the argument that nous, as the prime mover, is also that whose presence in us we do occasionally realise. During the activity of contemplation, according to Clark, we have an intuition of the world as a unitary whole, and we are made aware of the very nature of things. Clark compares contemplation to the enlightenment of the doctrines of Ch'an Buddhism. It is true that insofar as contemplation is of being as such, man may be said to become aware of the very nature of things during that activity. However, whether contemplation therefore has a mystical nature as Clark claims is unclear. Certainly Aristotle offers no conclusive evidence for the "correctness" of any particular interpretation of the nature of contemplation. Even if it were to be interpreted as a mystical experience of God, Aristotle's notion of God is an "arid" one.⁽⁶⁹⁾ God's knowledge is of Himself alone; He cannot know any-

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thing of the world of human experience. As Ross puts it, "the prime mover is not the creator of the universe, for both matter and the subordinate forms are uncreated and eternal; nor is He a providential ruler, since His thought is of Himself alone; nor is He a God of love, since emotion of any sort would mar His life of pure contemplation." (70)

Returning to the discussion on soul, the question arises whether the Platonic doctrine of a disembodied soul and the theory of a substantial unity of body and soul are reconcilable. Jaeger, ⁽⁷¹⁾ for example, argues that they are incompatible, the doctrine of nous belonging to an earlier period. The evolutionary theory of Aristotelean thought has been rejected and it is extremely difficult to see how these two doctrines could be synthesized into a simple, coherent whole. Hardie says they may be reconciled, arguing that "Aristotle never regarded acceptance of the biological view as involving the rejection of the doctrine that a man's mind or an element in it is in some sense independent of his body." (72) Hardie himself attempts a reconciliation in terms of an epiphenomenalist argument. He defines epiphenomenalism as "a term for the doctrine that the mind, being discontinuous and dependent on the body, is not a thing in its own right but is incidental to the body, which has a certain degree and kind of complexity." (73) The burden of Hardie's suggestion is "not that Aristotle has a good case for holding that thought, unlike sensation, has no bodily organ, but that he would have a good case if the dependence of thought on the body were understood, and could only be understood as epiphenomenalism understands it." (74)

The mind-body question is, of course, one of the perennial problems of philosophy. Certainly Aristotle seems to have wanted to retain both his theory of body and soul in terms of the substantial unity of matter and form as well as to allocate to that small rational entity,

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nous, a special status. He did not effect a synthesis. Epiphenomenalism is itself subject to much criticism and there is no indication in Aristotle's thought that he would have agreed to that type of solution.

7:4. Contemplation as an ideal.

We have seen that Aristotle considers the activity of man's most divine element, nous, in accordance with its proper virtue, contemplation, to constitute man's perfect happiness.⁽⁷⁵⁾ However, if man does attain this end, it is only a temporary achievement. God is always in that state; man achieves it sometimes for brief periods of time.⁽⁷⁶⁾ To live such a life consistently is, according to Aristotle, too high for man since he lives it by virtue of that which is divine in himself.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Thus man's final end, perfect happiness, turns out to be an ideal. Nevertheless we must strive to make ourselves immortal, we must "strain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us."⁽⁷⁸⁾ The strange paradox has been reached that after insisting that unlike Plato, he (Aristotle) is determined to discover those goods which are achievable and attainable, Aristotle ends up with a Platonic-type ideal.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Furthermore, the precise nature of this ideal is not clearly elucidated nor is it certain whether every individual who has attained secondary happiness is capable of moments of perfect happiness. Presumably in view of the fact that Aristotle does not make use of a Foundation Myth,⁽⁸⁰⁾ perfect happiness is available to those who are morally good and whose education has included the theoretical disciplines. Yet one would be inclined to suppose that only a few who are intellectually gifted would in fact be capable of contemplation. Perfect happiness is, after all, limited to philosophers and whilst every philosopher must also be a virtuous man (as will be argued in the next subsection) the opposite seems dubious. Hence it

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seems that Aristotle was almost forced to recognise that a life of moral virtue constitutes happiness in an albeit secondary degree.⁽⁸¹⁾

It has been argued that a morally virtuous life is a necessary prerequisite for contemplation. This claim must be justified in some detail. Prior to this undertaking, some of the problems underlying that relationship will be discussed.

7:5. Problems regarding the relationship between secondary and perfect happiness.

Some of the problems involved in giving a satisfactory account of the relationship between man's two ends have already been dealt with.

The dichotomy between the two realms was illustrated in the discussion on man's soul. Contemplation is an activity of disembodied reason whilst the life of moral virtue is concerned with man's passions, with bodily actions.

A further difficulty lies in a difference between the intellectual and moral virtues. For only moral virtues admit of a mean.

"Virtue must have the quality of aiming at the intermediate. I mean moral virtue for it is this that is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect and the intermediate." (82)

Contemplation cannot have a mean. Practical wisdom is not required for the perfection of the virtues of the theoretical intellect.

It has also been argued that in terms of the clear distinction made by Aristotle between theoretical and practical reason (despite the untenability of such a distinction) it is logically impossible for the major premise of the practical syllogism to be a proposition in terms of theoretical reason.⁽⁸³⁾ The relationship between

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the morally virtuous life and contemplation cannot be a direct means-end one. Hence whilst Ross and de Vogel,⁽⁸⁴⁾ for example, point out that Aristotle does not attempt to deduce the necessity for any moral virtue from the activity of contemplation, it is clearly impossible for him to have done so within the framework of his own thought. It cannot be argued that any or every moral action performed is undertaken directly for the sake of perfect happiness.

A further problem lies in the different standards of value used by Aristotle in each realm. This question will be dealt with separately and in detail in the next chapter.

There seems to be a confusion in Aristotle's thought on the status of moral deeds in relation to contemplation. For Aristotle says of the man who is contemplating that he needs no noble deeds; they may even be said to be hindrances.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Contemplation is after all a completely intellectual act. Yet Aristotle does also say that contemplation seems to "need external equipment" though only a little and certainly less than does moral virtue.⁽⁸⁶⁾ When man as man lives a "human" as opposed to a "divine" life, he is required to perform certain moral actions.⁽⁸⁷⁾

It is clear, however, that the performance of morally virtuous deeds must in some way be a prerequisite for contemplation. For otherwise why should any individual form good habits? A man could merely study philosophy in order to be happy. It is surely logically possible in terms of the Aristotelean separation of metaphysics and ethics that a man become an excellent metaphysician without being a morally good man⁽⁸⁸⁾ (and vice versa of course.) This is possibly suggested in Aristotle's discussion on Thales and Anaxagoras who have philosophic but not practical wisdom.⁽⁸⁹⁾ We have seen that practical wisdom and moral virtue are interdependent. The

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implication may well be that Thales and Anaxagoras are not morally good.

Yet it is argued in this thesis that Aristotle could not hold such a position, and that the point raised above must be regarded as being inconsistent with the main thrust of his argument. For having assigned to contemplation the status of being the best activity of man, constituting his highest and most perfect happiness, it would be totally absurd if the morally vicious man could become happy merely through the study of philosophy. Having separated the metaphysical from the ethical realm, Aristotle is now forced to bring them together in some way in order to show the necessary role of a morally virtuous life in the attainment of perfect happiness. It is clear, however, in view of the points raised above, that whilst the life of moral virtue or 'secondary happiness must in some way be a necessary prerequisite for contemplation or perfect happiness, the relationship between the two ends can only be an indirect one.

FOOTNOTES

1. N.E. Bk. X:7.
2. N.E. 1141a16.
3. N.E. 1177a21-6.
4. N.E. 1178b28.
5. N.E. 1177a12.
6. N.E. 1178a6-7.
7. N.E. 1178a5.
8. N.E. 1177b20.
9. Metaphysics 982a5 - 982b10.
10. N.E. 1141a17.
11. Metaphysics 928a4.
12. Ross: Aristotle's Metaphysics p.121.
13. N.E. 1139a26.
14. N.E. 1094a34.
15. Metaphysics 982b4.
16. Ross: Aristotle's Metaphysics p.121.
17. See Chapter 2.
18. N.E. 1094a32.
19. N.E. 1139a7.
20. N.E. 1139a8.
21. N.E. 1170a3.
22. N.E. 1122b6.
23. Metaphysics 996b10.
24. Metaphysics 1003a21.
25. Metaphysics 1026a18.
26. Hardie: Op.cit.pp.338-9.
27. Ross: Aristotle p.234.
28. N.E. X:7. Hardie: Op.cit. p.339.
29. N.E. 1141a35-b2.
30. Metaphysics 1073b4.
31. Metaphysics 1078a2-5.
32. Hardie: Op.cit. p.14.
33. N.E. 1166a25.
34. Taylor: Op.cit.p.99.
35. N.E. 1122b6.
36. Ross: Aristotle p.234.
37. N.E. 1249b15-25.
38. Jaeger: Op.cit.
39. See Introduction.
40. Jaeger: Op.cit. p.159.
41. Hardie: Op.cit. p.341.
42. N.E. 1178b22.
43. N.E. 1178a19.
44. De Anima 413b28.
45. N.E. 1178a6.
46. N.E. 1177b30 - 1178a5.
47. N.E. 1097b27.
48. N.E. 1097b34 and De Anima 11:III.
49. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.11.
50. Hardie: Op.cit. p.92.
51. Quoted by Walsh and Shapiro: Op.cit. p.3.
52. De Anima II:III.

53. N.E. 1097b34-1098a4.
54. De Anima 411b10.
55. Ibid. 414a19.
56. Ibid. 403a10.
57. Ibid. 403a16 cf. N.E. 1178a12.
58. Hardie: Op.cit. p.79.
59. De Anima 412b7.
60. Quoted by Hardie: Op.cit. p.75.
61. De Anima 408b19.
62. Ibid. 413b28.
63. Ibid. III:IV.
64. Ross: Op.cit. p.153.
65. Metaphysics 1072b20-30.
66. Jaeger: Op. cit. p.160.
67. N.E. 1139b9.
68. Clark: Aristotle's man, Chapter V:3.
69. Ross: Aristotle's Metaphysics, p.cxlix.
70. Ibid. cliii.
71. Jaeger: Op.cit. p.334.
72. Hardie: Op.cit. p.92.
73. Ibid. p.90.
74. Ibid. p.352.
75. N.E. 1177a18.
76. Metaphysics 1072b23.
77. N.E. 1177a20.
78. N.E. 1177b34.
79. N.E. 1096b35.
80. The Republic 415.
81. N.E. 1178a9.
82. N.E. 1106b13. (my underlining).
83. Chapter 4.
84. Ross: Aristotle p.204.
De Vogel: Greek Philosophy: A Collection of Texts with notes and explanations: Volume II. p.198.
85. N.E. 1178b4.
86. N.E. 1178b25.
87. N.E. 1178b6.
88. Gauthier points out that we could conceive of a vicious philosopher whose will was corrupted but not his reason. But Aristotle does not, of course, speak in terms of will and reason. Op.cit. p.20.
89. N.E. 1141b3.

CHAPTER 8 : TWO STANDARDS OF VALUE

8:1. Morally virtuous acts.

8:1:1. Introductory remarks.

Having discussed some of the problems which preclude the postulation of a direct relationship between man's two ends, the dichotomy between the standards of value used by Aristotle to characterise each realm will be elaborated upon. It will be seen that the values used in the sphere of secondary happiness are initially moral, derived ultimately from the ethical values of Aristotle's era. However, Aristotle extends his argument to suggest that his critical clarifications of these values are in accord with transcendent metaphysical standards having a universal application. This contention is challenged in terms of Berger and Luckmann's thesis which is contained in their work The Social Construction of Reality. The values applicable in the sphere of perfect happiness are metaphysical ones only.

In order to gain a fuller understanding of Aristotle's views on standards of value, we shall discuss briefly what is meant by the "conventional morality" of a society and a role of the ethical philosopher in terms of that conventional morality.

Any society may be said to be characterised by a certain order, stability and direction. It may be argued that these characteristics are due mainly to two forms of social control which operate in order to regulate human behaviour. These two forms of control are law and what might be called the "conventional morality" of that society.⁽¹⁾ By this latter term is meant the manners, customs, religious views and generally accepted moral code held by most people in that society. In sociological terms these forms of social contract work because the

individual /

individual is socialised into behaving in accordance with the norms and mores of his society. However, the term "conventional morality" is somewhat wide for it does not necessarily imply that there is a general consensus on any one issue.⁽²⁾ In Aristotle's society there was a wide spectrum of opinion on various moral issues. Aristotle himself, whilst claiming to take as his starting point what is the case,⁽³⁾ does also say on one occasion that it is superfluous to examine all opinions on happiness in any great detail. The multitude, he says, "talk at random about almost everything."⁽⁴⁾ Yet he does in fact critically discuss a broad spectrum of views on the nature of happiness and virtue in the Nicomachean Ethics. Whilst the term "conventional morality" may be vague and perhaps an over-simplification, it is nevertheless a useful one for making a distinction between what are the essentially uncritically-held moral opinions of society in general, and those critical reflections made on these opinions by the ethical philosopher.

8:1:2. Some thoughts on a role of the ethical philosopher.

Taking Socrates as perhaps the most famous example, it is arguable that at least one task of the ethical philosopher is to examine critically and to clarify the fundamental assumptions of the conventional morality.⁽⁵⁾ This does not necessarily mean that the philosopher will reject the conventional morality in toto or in part - he may not necessarily repudiate all tradition, the heritage of the collective wisdom of the ages (as is the case in some Existential thinkers). However, it is possible that his elucidations will lead him to propose alternatives which will then be defended by rational arguments. Plato, for example, in the first book of The Republic shows the conventional definition of justice as put forward by Cephalus to be inadequate.⁽⁶⁾ Plato

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gives the conception of "each according to his due" a specific interpretation in the light of his own philosophical thought.

Turning now to Aristotle, it is clear that he does recognise the above two forms of social control. Thus he writes at the conclusion of the Nicomachean Ethics as follows :

"When these matters have been studied we shall perhaps be more likely to see with a comprehensive view which constitution is best, and how each must be ordered, and what laws and customs it must use, if it is to be at its best." (7)

Aristotle does examine the morality of his time, constantly taking words like "happiness", "voluntary", "incontinence", "justice" and the like and elucidating the way they are ordinarily used, both for the purposes of clarification and also perhaps recommending changes. As Huby,⁽⁸⁾ for example, has pointed out, Aristotle's method does parallel that of some modern linguistic analysts. It is felt Aristotle would have agreed with this famous comment made by Austin :

"Certainly, then, ordinary language is not the last word; in principle it can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superceded. Only remember it is the first word." (9)

However, Aristotle does claim more for his clarifications than does a philosopher like Austin. For it is arguable that in his rational elucidations as a practically wise man, Aristotle conceives of his conclusions as having a universal validity. He seems therefore to be moving towards the idea of a natural law, the conception of some sort of transcendent rational order which underlies the multiplicity and diversity of the universe and which imposes a standard on man's behaviour insofar as he must act rationally.⁽¹⁰⁾ This is suggested by the following arguments.

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In making the distinction between natural and conventional justice, Aristotle argues for there being certain "rights and duties"⁽¹¹⁾ which do "everywhere have the same force and do not exist by people's thinking this or that,"⁽¹²⁾ as well as conventional laws which are created by particular states for particular purposes and may therefore vary accordingly.

"Things which are just by virtue of convention and expediency are like measures similarly, the things which are just not by nature but by human enactment are not everywhere the same since constitutions are not the same though there is but one which is everywhere by nature the best." (13)

The clarifications and recommendations made by Aristotle would not be understood by the common herd. The Nicomachean Ethics and Politics are not moral hand-books for the majority. Aristotle says quite bluntly that his lectures are beneficial only to those who already desire and act in accordance with a rational principle"⁽¹⁴⁾ and thus therefore excludes those who are young, both in the chronological and the moral sense as well as those who are not properly educated. These would have been written for the "true student of politics ... (who) is thought to have studied virtue above all things; for he wishes to make his fellow citizens good and obedient to the laws."⁽¹⁵⁾ Hence the rational clarification is obviously only appreciated by those who already act rationally. "For he who lives as passion directs will not hear argument that dissuades him, not understand it if he does."⁽¹⁶⁾

8:1:3. Background to Aristotle's ethical thought.

Let us discuss briefly some aspects of the conventional morality of Aristotle's era.

Although the age of Homer was long since over, the legacy of the Homeric virtues remained in Aristotle's

society./

society.

The good man in Homeric times was "brave, skilful in war and peace; and (he) must possess the wealth and (in peace) the leisure which are at once the necessary conditions for the development of these skills and natural reward of their successful employment."⁽¹⁷⁾ The successful man was the warrior, the wealthy man, the possessor of social status. Hence virtue or excellence was interpreted in terms of skills, physical gifts and certain inherited advantages. The Homeric man's chief aim was the attainment of success or fame.⁽¹⁸⁾ What Adkins calls the "quiet virtues" of the co-operative excellences were present but less highly admired since, in that society which was essentially competitive, skill or courage were vital for survival.⁽¹⁹⁾

The development of city states (as opposed to the household system of organisation in Homeric Ages) led to the emergence of new moral insights. The so-called "quiet" virtues, of which justice came to be considered the most important, tended gradually to become dominant. Thus Aristotle says, quoting the proverb of his time, "In justice is every virtue comprehended."⁽²⁰⁾ A good man is now no longer merely successful - he is also just.

Although Homeric virtues persisted they were not always suited to civic life and some tended to be restricted to war and performances in the games.⁽²¹⁾ Euripides, for example, was critical of the Homeric hero. In his play Electra he speaks of the self-controlled man who "administers well, both their cities and their own households, whereas those who are nothing but senseless lumps of muscle are mere ornaments of the market place, for a strong arm does not even endure a spear thrust any better than a weak one."⁽²²⁾ The emphasis is very definitely changing towards self-control and justice which are regarded as essential to the stability and prosperity of society. The ability to administer well,

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the intelligent handling of one's own and the city states' interests belong to the virtue of practical wisdom. The use of coined money with the consequence of new ways of acquiring wealth did enable any man to achieve status and position. The democratic tradition ensured that all could participate in civic life and hence a new standard of behaviour appears beside the good warrior, namely the good citizen. The new conventional morality, combining the Homeric tradition of courage and liberality with civic virtues and administrative skill, is perhaps best illustrated in the famous "Funeral Oration" given by Pericles.⁽²³⁾ There we have the explicit reference to a "belief in courage and manliness", the citizens' pride in democracy and the equality of all before the law, the importance of "actual ability", the need for "proper discussions" and deliberation on important issues. However, there was also the problem of a possible dichotomy between the good man and good citizen. The relativism of the Sophists made this danger clear, and the great Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were concerned that the good man and good citizen should coincide. This was, in their view, possible only in a good state.⁽²⁴⁾

8:1:4. Objective standards of value.

If we now examine the moral virtues in the Nicomachean Ethics, this background is clearly illustrated. The four cardinal virtues of wisdom, temperance, courage and justice undoubtedly provided the backbone of the conventional morality of Aristotle's time. Not only do we find these discussed in Plato's thought, but also in works by Xenophon, Isocrates and Demosthenes.⁽²⁵⁾ But Aristotle does also include virtues concerned with honour and wealth. Indeed his spectrum of virtues provides us with a panorama of the inherited tradition of his era.

Aristotle does clarify precisely in what sense he conceives of these virtues, and in so doing introduces

rationality /

rationality as an objective standard. It is the mean which provides such a standard. This point might be disputed for the mean is said to be chosen relative to the individual. The above claim must therefore be justified.

Before doing this, however, it must be stressed that the doctrine of the mean was itself a part of the conventional morality; it belonged to the "collective wisdom" of that era. Heraclitus had spoken of fire being kindled and quenched in measure. The Pythagoreans had called for moderation in drinking, eating and sport. Theognis spoke of walking quietly in the middle of the road.⁽²⁶⁾ Euripides wrote: "Flee thou extremes."⁽²⁷⁾ In The Republic Plato said that a man should "choose the middle course that avoids both extremes, for in this way he will attain the greatest possible happiness."⁽²⁸⁾ Thus as Gauthier points out, by the time Aristotle wrote his ethics, "the idea of the mean had invaded all regions of life and thought."⁽²⁹⁾

It will be remembered that moral virtue is, in the ethics of Aristotle, that state of character which is concerned with choice. Or one might put this in other words - moral virtue is the state of soul from which the choice of an action originates. The point already stressed in this thesis is that only the morally virtuous man will choose what is good. What therefore is the good which the morally virtuous man chooses? The answer given by Aristotle is that "virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, that is the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it."⁽³⁰⁾ In short the good man's choice of what is good lies in that good exemplifying a mean. Although the mean is relative to us, depending on our individual temperament and the particular circumstances of the act,

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nevertheless Aristotle does not speak of it as a relative standard. Rather it is "an extreme with regard to what is best and right." (31)

Nor, as Gauthier stresses, does Aristotle intend that the choice of the mean be left to "the arbitrary appraisal of the subject." (32) Aristotle does try to clarify in what sense the mean operates as an objective standard. He says :

"In all states of character we have mentioned, as in all other matters, there is a mark to which the man who has the rule looks, and heightens or relaxes his activity accordingly, and there is a standard which determines the mean states which we say are intermediate between excess and defect, being in accordance with the right rule." (33)

The mark to which the man who has the rule looks is later clarified as those things which are "just, noble and good for man." (34) The right rule, as we saw, is the mean chosen by practical wisdom. Since practical wisdom is a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to things which are good or bad for man, it is clear that the standard according to which practical reason fixes the mean is that which is conducive towards the achievement of morally good ends. As Gauthier says, the mean will therefore be "a conformity of action to the moral law." (35) Thus, only the morally virtuous man, through the exercise of his virtue of practical reason will choose in such a way that any act he performs embodies the mean. It will be truly just, courageous, temperant and the like, and will therefore be an act which is good or noble for himself as a man. But insofar as these conditions have been fulfilled, the action may also be said to be good for all men, and it thus embodies an objective standard of value. Hence Aristotle speaks of the man of practical wisdom, the phronimos acting as a norm. "Regarding practical wisdom we shall get at the truth by considering who are the persons we credit with

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it." (36) The phronimos is the man who is not only able to deliberate well about what is "good and expedient for himself" but also about what sorts of things are conducive to the good life in general. (37)

Hence practical wisdom (in the morally virtuous man, the man of good character) constitutes an objective standard of value. Thus although the performance of a brave act as manifested by different good men will vary from individual to individual, from situation to situation, nevertheless Aristotle suggests that it will be possible to recognise acts of courage as being thus, provided one has practical wisdom, that is one is a phronimos as is the individual who does actually perform that deed. Men like Pericles epitomize the phronimos. (38)

A further way the phronimos acts as an objective standard is shown in Aristotle's discussion on the training of the young. Initially the young learn good habits by following standards provided by the legislators, who would be men of practical wisdom. It is only after their characters are formed that they habitually desire the good or the noble. Thus they choose virtuous acts for their own sakes and employ their own practical wisdom in order to discover the mean.

Insofar as the phronimos is also a man of good character, the good man or spoudaios acts as a standard of value. Hence Aristotle says "each state of character has its own ideas of the noble and the pleasant, and perhaps the good man differs from others most by seeing the truth in each class of things, being as it were the norm and measure of them." (39) The good man alone judges well about what is good and noble, (40) hence "virtue and the good man seem ... to be the measure of every class of things." (41) In this way therefore Aristotle tries to avoid the relativism of a Sophist like Protagoras, for the good man alone, insofar as he is the measure of things, provides an objective standard of value.

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Despite the derision and/or amusement sometimes heaped on Aristotle's great-souled or proud man,⁽⁴²⁾ it is clear that this paragon, exemplifying the phronimos and spoudaios, possessing all the virtues in their entirety, is an important objective standard of value. Pride, says Aristotle, is the "crown of the virtues, for it makes them greater and it is not found without them."⁽⁴³⁾ As Gilbert and Sullivan might say, he is the very model of a model virtuous man.

It is thus clear, as Monan has pointed out, that moral principles are not derived from a pre-existing, metaphysical absolute. They are, instead, derived from concrete situations of life.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Oates⁽⁴⁵⁾ argues that because there is a disjunction in Aristotle's thinking between being and value, he is forced to seek other criteria to stand as objective, moral standards lest he lapse into the relativism of a Sophist. Aristotle therefore uses goodness of character and practical wisdom as those standards, and in so doing he does clarify the conventional morality of his time. In short the objective standards which apply to the sphere of the doable good are ultimately those of his own society, after he (as a man of practical reason) has evaluated them critically. Insofar as they conduce to his own happiness, so too do they conduce to the happiness of mankind in general. Allan says of the man of practical wisdom that he is "to some extent a faithful interpreter of prevailing moral standards, who can point out what society would demand in a given case. But again - and this side of the picture ought not to be ignored - he has considered these standards more carefully than the average man;⁽⁴⁶⁾ he can justify them by a philosophical view of man's place in the universe, and perhaps in some rare cases propose to modify them."⁽⁴⁷⁾

The arguments above seem, however, to be destroyed by the following passage :

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"Those who object that that at which all things aim is not necessarily good are, we may surmise, talking nonsense. For we say that that which everyone thinks really is so, and the man who attacks this belief will hardly have anything more credible to maintain instead." (48).

The problem is that Aristotle uses the word "everyone".⁽⁴⁹⁾ This does not fit in at all with what has been said thus far and if accepted, would seem to render Aristotle's views on objective value standards as incoherent. In view of the various other remarks made by him on the good man and man of practical wisdom, and remembering his low opinions of the common herd,⁽⁵⁰⁾ it seems that this is a piece of careless writing.

We have argued that in clarifying the conventional morality of his era Aristotle puts forward objective value standards applicable to the realm of secondary happiness. Yet it does seem that he also suggests that these values have an objective existence beyond the limits of his own particular society. This is arguably implicit in his conception of natural justice and also in the discussion on unnatural actions.⁽⁵¹⁾ Thus whilst Aristotle's moral standards are not derived from a pre-existing metaphysical absolute, it may nevertheless be argued that there is an implicit Platonic assumption of some sort of underlying rationality which acts as a universal, transcendent standard in the realm of morally virtuous acts.⁽⁵²⁾ However, as we have already argued, the thesis put forward by Berger and Luckmann in favour of ethical relativism is a persuasive one. The essentially relativistic character of moral values is clearly illustrated by their arguments.⁽⁵³⁾

8:1:5. An Existential criticism.

The view that it is the prevailing values which, after critical elucidation, should act as standards of

behaviour /

behaviour, is one which has been attacked by Existential thinkers. Nietzsche, for example, said :

"My teaching is this, that the herd seeks to maintain and preserve one type of man, and that it defends itself on two sides - that is to say against those which are decadents from its ranks, and against those who rise superior to its dead level." (54)

The implicit anti-Aristoteleanism is clear. It has been argued that the good man of practical wisdom who is epitomised in the proud man does act as a standard of behaviour. Insofar as he has these attributes, his actions are predictable. He will always perform virtuous acts embodying a mean. Aristotle does reject those who are "decadent" - they are not even rational. Furthermore, we have seen that he feels uneasy about exceptionally good men.

Aristotle would find Dostoyevsky's Underground Man abhorrent. That individual rebels against a society so rationally organised that everyone will know what to do for his own advantage and will then do it. In such a society, "there will be no more incidents or adventures in the world." (55) The Underground Man goes on to say :

"One's own free unfettered choice, one's own caprice, however wild it may be, one's own fancy worked up at times to a frenzy - is that very 'most advantageous advantage' which we have overlooked And how do these wiseacres know that a man wants a normal, a virtuous choice? What has made them conceive that a man must want a rationally advantageous choice? What man wants is simply independent choice, whatever that independence may cost and wherever it may lead." (56)

The problem, of course, in atheistic Existential philosophies is to avoid moral anarchy. Since God is dead, everything does seem to be permitted. For Existentialism, in its stress on acts of free commitment which do not shelter behind ready-made values, provides no blueprint for ethics. It is perhaps possible to

argue /

argue that any action may be justified under the banner of authenticity or good faith. However, most Existentialists have recognised this problem and have attempted to include inter-personal relationships as an essential part of authenticity or good faith.⁽⁵⁷⁾

It might possibly be suggested that Aristotle tries to effect a compromise between an absolute and a situation ethics. For what the individual does actually do in any particular situation is contingent upon his personality and the specific circumstances in which he finds himself. Yet this seems to be only partly true. For, as has been argued,⁽⁵⁸⁾ it does seem that actions will be performed in predictable ways by those who are practically wise and morally good. An Aristotelean society would be so rationally organised that there would be no place in it for the eccentric, and perhaps the truly creative individual.⁽⁵⁹⁾

8:1:6. Subjective standard of value.

Pleasure is the subjective standard of value used by Aristotle in the realm of morally virtuous acts.

"We must take as a sign of states of character the pleasure or pain that ensues on acts; for the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and delights in this very fact is temperate, while the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent." (60)

Now since there are proper pleasures for every activity, and since activities differ in respect of their goodness or badness, "the pleasure proper to a worthy activity is good, and that proper to an unworthy activity is bad."⁽⁶¹⁾ It is the morally good man alone who is the judge of what is truly pleasant.

"But in all such matters that which appears to the good man is thought to be really so. If this is correct, as it seems to be, and virtue and the good man as such are the measure of each thing, those also will be pleasures which appear so to him, and those things pleasant which he enjoys." (62)

Thus /

Thus the good man knows he is performing a morally good act in terms of the pleasure accompanying that act.

Yet we may query this conclusion when considering courage. Aristotle argues that it is when man faces what is painful that he can be called courageous. Although the end which the brave man sets himself is pleasant, for example, honour or the crown won in a boxing match, the wounds or blows suffered will be painful. Aristotle says that the courageous man bears these pains because it is noble to do so. He then contradicts the pleasure criterion as follows :

"It is not the case, then, with all the virtues that the exercise of them is pleasant, except insofar as it reaches its end." (63)

Thus although the blows are painful, the achievement of honour is pleasant. Therefore it seems we must conclude that as the pleasure criterion does not apply to the performance of courageous acts, it cannot be a consistently-held subjective value standard (as indeed it should be, in terms of the discussion on pleasure in Book X).

A further difficulty related to the good/bad actuality problem has been pointed out by Oates.⁽⁶⁴⁾ For in the light of the arguments above, what are we to make of Aristotle's distinction between good and bad pleasures?⁽⁶⁵⁾ As Oates puts it, the problem is "how an activity functions sometimes as a symptom of value or worth, and at the same time, there be such a thing as a bad activity."⁽⁶⁶⁾ Clearly Aristotle is aware of the difficulty inherent in his basic premise that pleasure is bound up with the particular activity it completes.⁽⁶⁷⁾ In the metaphysical sense, Aristotle would presumably have to agree that the activity of stealing, if performed with excellence, would be pleasurable, although not as pleasurable as the activity of contemplation. But since he intends pleasure

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to be a criterion of moral value, he is forced to distinguish between good and bad pleasures in the moral sense. Thus it is only those pleasures which attend on the performance of morally good acts which can be thought of as good pleasures.

It is also interesting that in the scale of superiority of pleasures, Aristotle makes those of sight superior to those of touch, and those of hearing and smell superior to those of taste.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The latter clearly refer to those necessary pleasures associated with the body, that is sexual intercourse and food.⁽⁶⁹⁾ These pleasures, unlike sight, so easily admit of excess in which case they would be bad pleasures associated with bad actualities. It is only the good man whose activities, being good both in the metaphysical and moral senses, who will enjoy good pleasures.⁽⁷⁰⁾

8:2. Metaphysical act of contemplation.

There is an objective and subjective standard of value in the realm of perfect happiness.

8:2:1. Objective standard of value.

We have already seen that Aristotle's description of contemplation may be said to parallel that of the activity of the prime mover.⁽⁷¹⁾ Contemplation is the best activity since reason is the best thing in us and the objects of reason are the best of knowable objects. It is the most continuous and most pleasurable of all activities.⁽⁷²⁾

In the *Metaphysics*⁽⁷³⁾ we read that "thought which is independent of the lower faculties must be thought of what is best in itself." Aristotle says that "it (thought) becomes intelligible by contact with the intelligible so that thought and the object of thought are one. For that which is capable of receiving the object of thought, that

is /

that is, the essence of thought, and it is active when it possesses this object." Hence Aristotle goes on to say that activity is the divine element in thought, and that actual contemplation is the best and most pleasant of all activities. God, the prime mover, is always in that state. We only attain it sometimes.

The contemplation of the happy man therefore derives its objective value from its similarity to the activity of the prime mover. There is no possibility of moral standards of value operating in the sphere of perfect happiness, nor can the prime mover function as a value sanction in the realm of practical or productive actions.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The prime mover's activity is solely thinking on thought.

8:2:2. Subjective standard of value.

The above arguments do also show that pleasure is a subjective criterion in the activity of contemplation as well. Moreover this pleasure must resemble that of the prime mover. In Book VII of the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle prepares the reader for this point by arguing that "God always enjoys a single and simple pleasure; for there is not only an activity of movement but an activity of immobility."⁽⁷⁵⁾ This immobility clearly excludes any action in the practical sphere being part of contemplation.

Pleasure attending the activity of theoretical wisdom is hence analogous to the activity of the prime mover. Aristotle speaks of pleasure in a "metaphysical" sense, when arguing that "that which is proper to each thing is by nature best and most pleasant for each thing; for man, therefore, the life according to reason is best and pleasantest, since reason more than anything else is man."⁽⁷⁶⁾ Although the finest pleasure is that which accompanies the best activity Aristotle does not advocate a hedonistic position. Pleasure is not sought for its own sake. Rather pleasure completes the activity "as an

end /

end which supervenes as the bloom of youth does on those in the flower of their age." (77)

8:3. Conclusion.

It is clear therefore from this discussion that there is no systematic unity in the standards of value used by Aristotle in his ethical thought.

In the sphere of morally virtuous acts the standards used are essentially moral ones. There is also the implication of a transcendent moral law, which is also a metaphysical standard, against which acts are measured. But there is no room for the purely metaphysical criterion of excellence as completeness. The excellence of an activity must be a moral excellence too for it to count as embodying practical wisdom and for its pleasures to be good in the moral sense.

In the sphere of perfect happiness, moral standards are absent. The excellence of theoretical reason is metaphysical and pleasurable without the added need for moral criteria. Indeed theoretical wisdom is definitely regarded as separate from practical wisdom. (78) Since it is only the moral virtues which admit of a mean, (79) practical wisdom is not an essential prerequisite for the ability to contemplate.

But Aristotle does intend the realm of secondary happiness to be a requirement for the metaphysical contemplative activity. This relationship must now be elucidated.

FOOTNOTES

1. It is clear that any kind of conventional morality does presuppose the existence of a legal system and vice versa. It would be pointless having a moral code which forbade murder if there were no law punishing a man for that crime. To a very large extent, therefore, the law exists in order to uphold certain moral standards in society and moral codes teach us to refrain from certain acts forbidden by law. There is also a general feeling that individuals have a moral duty to obey laws. It is generally felt that the state has certain moral ends and that citizens have a moral obligation to help to promote the moral goods of the state. We have already mentioned that moral and legal responsibility are linked together. All these points are implicit in Aristotle's work on politics and ethics.
There is, of course, not always an overlap between the law and the moral code. We can distinguish between those acts which are evil insofar as they have a moral content, for example, murder, and those acts which are evil because they are prohibited by law, for example, parking for thirty minutes in a loading zone.
2. Indeed there may be a wide range of differing opinions on certain moral issues. Often various moralities compete against each other and which of these finally does become the law does often seem to depend on the moralities of those groups gaining political power.
3. N.E. Bk. 1:4.
4. E.E. 1215a3.
5. Euthyphro examines the conventional view of "piety", for example.
6. The Republic 331d/e.
7. N.E. 1181a22.
8. Huby: Op.cit. p.44.
9. Austin: A Plea for Excuses p.185.
Austin: Philosophical Papers.
Oxford University Press, 1970.
10. See D'Entrevies: Natural Law, p.15.
London Hutchinson Library, 1951.
11. These are Ross' words, in Aristotle, p.214.
12. N.E. 1134b19.
13. N.E. 1135a1.
14. N.E. 1095a8.
15. N.E. 1102a8.
16. N.E. 1179b26.
17. Adkins: Op.cit. p.33.
18. Ibid. p.46.
19. Ibid. p.36.
20. N.E. 1129b25.
21. Adkins: Op.cit. p.186.
22. Ibid. p.195.
23. Thucydides Bk.II:6.
24. See Chapter 9:3.

25. /

25. Ferguson: Moral Values in the Ancient World, p.27.
26. Ibid. p.33.
27. Ibis.
28. The Republic, Bk.X 619a.
29. Gauthier: Op.cit.p.12.
30. N.E. 1106b36.
31. N.E. 1107a6.
Is it possible for a person who is passionate and excitable to be happy by acting in accordance with a mean? Aristotle would reply that the mean for such individuals would lie close to excess as determined by other less passionate individuals.
32. Gauthier: Op.cit.p.13.
33. N.E. 1138b17.
34. N.E. 1143b23.
35. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.14.
36. N.E. 1140a22. (my underlining).
37. N.E. 1140a23.
38. N.E. 1140b7.
39. N.E. 1113a29.
40. N.E. 1099a22.
41. N.E. 1166a14; N.E. 1176a14.
42. See for example Oates: Op.cit.p.295.
43. N.E. 1124a1.
44. Monan: Moral knowledge and its methodology in Aristotle, p.89.
45. Oates: Op.cit.
46. In terms of the initial remarks about the ethical philosopher we would have to say that any practically wise man was an ethical philosopher.
47. Allan: Aristotle, p.133.
The passage raises the interesting possibility that the man of practical wisdom must also have theoretical wisdom. We have argued that Aristotle does not hold this position. But the point is that this possibility once more illustrates the difficulty of maintaining a sharp dichotomy between theoretical and practical wisdom.
48. N.E. 1172b35. (My underlining.)
49. cf. Oates: Op.cit. who points this out, p.288-9.
50. For example N.E. 1095b18.
51. See chapter 5:4:2.
52. It might be argued therefore that insofar as a particular moral action is in accord with such transcendent, rational standards it is also good in the metaphysical sense of completeness.
53. Berger and Luckmann: Op.cit.: Chapter II.
See also chapter 5:4:2.
54. Nietzsche: The Will to Power, Volume 2. p.236.
55. Dostoyevsky: Notes from Underground in Kaufmann: Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre, p.70.
56. Ibid. p.71-2.
57. See for example Sartre: Existentialism and Humanism, p.29.
58. See earlier discussion in this chapter on objective standards of value.

59. In Existential thought the creative individual is he who is able to perceive himself, his world and his situation with a fresh insight in moments of authenticity.
60. N.E. 1104b4.
61. N.E. 1175b24.
62. N.E. 1176a12.
63. N.E. 1117b14.
64. Oates: Op.cit. pp.309-10.
65. N.E. 1175b24.
66. Oates: Op.cit. p.310.
67. N.E. 1175b28,
68. N.E. 1175b35..
69. N.E. 1147b24.
70. N.E. 1176a15-29.
71. See Chapter 7:2.
72. N.E. 1177a20.
73. Metaphysics 1072b18-25.
74. Oates: Op.cit. p.321.
75. N.E. 1154b28..
76. N.E. 1178a5.
77. N.E. 1174b32.
78. Although as we have seen this split is untenable. Chapters 4:2 and 4:3.
79. N.E. 1106b14.

CHAPTER 9 : THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECONDARY AND PERFECT
HAPPINESS.

9:1. Introduction.

The realms of perfect and secondary happiness are separate and different in terms of Aristotle's thought. It has been shown that no direct relationship is possible in terms of the clear separation between theoretical and practical wisdom as well as the different standards of value applicable in each sphere. However, it is also clear that the life of moral virtue must in some way be a prerequisite for contemplation lest Aristotle be forced to admit the possibility of a morally wicked philosopher achieving perfect happiness. When dealing with the possible connection between theoretical and practical wisdom, Aristotle's only remark in the Nicomachean Ethics is that practical wisdom provides for theoretical wisdom coming into being. It issues order for the sake of theoretical wisdom.⁽¹⁾ It now becomes necessary to explicate this contention in order to clarify the relationship between man's ends.

It will be argued that there are three "aspects" to this relationship, namely the perfection of man's rationality; the role of leisure which, as an end product of moral virtue, is a necessary requirement for contemplation; and the role of the legislator, the man of practical wisdom, in organising the state in such a way that firstly, the theoretical disciplines form part of the educational curriculum and, secondly, that the young are encouraged to form good habits so that the opportunities for happiness are greatest.

9:2. The perfection of man's rationality.

A morally virtuous act is one in which goodness of character is combined with the exercise of practical wisdom which discovers the mean. The performance of

morally /

morally virtuous acts insofar as man uses his practical reason may be said to help to perfect the intellect or man's rationality as a whole. As Gauthier puts it, "Virtue prepares for its (reason's) flowering."⁽²⁾

In terms of this argument, the vicious man is precluded from becoming a philosopher, for vice degrades the intellect.⁽³⁾ It seems therefore that a vicious act must be an irrational act. But as we have seen, there is evidence in the Nichomachean Ethics of calculating, rationally chosen vicious actions being performed.⁽⁴⁾ It would therefore be possible to argue that the vicious, clever man is perfecting his rationality by his skilful planning and execution of evil acts. But this would be an untenable position for Aristotle. It is clear that the argument that reason is perfected in the practical sphere of action presupposes that these actions are directed towards morally good ends. Only insofar as man is morally virtuous can his rationality be said to flower in terms of Aristotle's arguments. The role of moral virtue is clear. It is because Aristotle operates within the teleological framework that he requires activities directed towards good ends to have the quality of moral virtue so that the ends will also have a moral excellence.⁽⁵⁾

It is surely in the above sense that we must firstly interpret Aristotle's argument that practical wisdom provides for theoretical wisdom coming into being.⁽⁶⁾ For the morally virtuous man not only helps to perfect his reason through the exercise of his practical wisdom, but insofar as his passions are thereby controlled, he is able to contemplate. A man constantly beset by his appetites could hardly be in a position for concentrated intellectual activity.⁽⁷⁾

This interpretation is confirmed by Aristotle's remarks that the best activity, that activity which is most complete (that is, good in the metaphysical sense)

and /

and the most pleasant is that of the best conditioned organ in relation to the finest of its objects.⁽⁸⁾

Yet, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that Aristotle does seem to admit the possibility of philosophising without speaking of the necessity for being morally good as well in his remarks on Thales and Anaxagoras.⁽⁹⁾ However, the passage must be interpreted as a piece of careless writing, for its admission would render Aristotle's ethical system incoherent.

9:3. The role of leisure and the task of the legislator.

"Happiness", says Aristotle, "is thought to depend on leisure, for we are busy that we may have leisure."⁽¹⁰⁾

In order to be able to contemplate, a man must have leisure. Aristotle's argument is that only in a good city state will this leisure be provided. It is therefore on this point that ethics and politics very conveniently overlap in their respective discussions on the good life.

The essential task of the legislators, the planners of the constitution, is to ensure that men will be good. It is therefore necessary that they know the aim of the best life and what practices will lead towards men becoming good.⁽¹¹⁾ Aristotle holds that the best constitution will be one so well ordered that any person may live happily.⁽¹²⁾ However, as we have already seen, Aristotle makes it quite clear that not all inhabitants will participate in the virtues to the same extent. Slaves do not possess the deliberative faculty at all. (Presumably slaves can do good deeds mechanically, having been trained in good habits, or perhaps they are naturally virtuous.) Women and children also possess the deliberative faculty imperfectly and are happy by analogy, insofar as their rationality is exercised to a limited degree.⁽¹³⁾

When does the good citizen overlap with the good

man ? /

man ? Aristotle says of the former that he knows well how to rule and be ruled.⁽¹⁴⁾ This definition applies equally well to the constitution of any particular state. But it is only in the case of a good constitution, when a man who is able and chooses to rule and be ruled, does so with a view to the good life, that he will be both a good citizen as well as a good man simultaneously. When the end of his life is the same, from the point of view of his being a political and an ethical being, the two concepts coincide.

The phrase "to rule and be ruled" is therefore extremely significant. In the case of the good citizen it obviously has a political significance. But as a man, the good man (who is also a good citizen) does rule and is ruled by his reason. The good man "gratifies the most authoritative element in himself, and in all things obeys this; and just as a city or any other systematic whole is most properly identified with the most authoritative element in it, so is a man."⁽¹⁵⁾

The legislators, men of practical wisdom, must have virtue in its entirety for their task is that of chief makers, and reason is the chief maker.⁽¹⁶⁾ They will understand Aristotle's political and ethical works, having been brought up to have good habits and therefore able to listen intelligently to arguments.⁽¹⁷⁾

It is clear that only in a good state, a state aiming at the good life, will morally virtuous acts coincide with acts of civic virtue. The aim of these acts is ultimately to provide leisure and peace, for the culmination of man's rational activities is to contemplate.

"Since it is clear that men have the same purpose whether they are acting as individuals or as a state, and that the best man and the best constitution must have the

same /

same distinguishing features, it becomes evident that there must be present in the state the virtues that lead to the cultivation of leisure; for, as has often been said, the end of war is peace, and the end of work is leisure. Of the virtues useful for the employment of leisure some are exercised in a period of leisure, others in a period of work, because a lot of things need to be provided before leisured activity can become possible. Hence a city must be self-restrained, courageous, steadfast. We need courage and steadfastness for the work, intellectual ability for cultivated leisure, restraint and honesty at all times, but particularly at times of peace and leisure." (18)

It is surely in terms of the above passage that Aristotle says that "the end is the same for a single man and for a state", but that the end of the latter is greater.⁽¹⁹⁾ For only in a well-ordered state will the majority attain secondary happiness, and the leisure thereby be provided which will enable an intellectually gifted few to reach perfect happiness. A further elucidation of the way practical reason provides for theoretical reason coming into being has therefore been provided. For insofar as the legislator, the man of practical wisdom, designs a well-ordered state which ensures the provision of leisure for its inhabitants, so is the opportunity for philosophising provided.

The legislator will also plan the educational system in such a way as to include in its curriculum the study of the theoretical disciplines, including theology, these being necessary in order that the mind be well-stored with the materials for contemplation.

In the Metaphysics Aristotle speaks of the evolution of the theoretical sciences in those places where men had plenty of free time. For example, mathematics originated in Egypt where, as Aristotle points out, "a priestly class enjoyed the necessary

leisure."/

leisure." (20). Aristotle also writes that "philosophy arose only when the necessities and the philosophic comforts of life had been provided for." (21) In a lost work De Philosophia a similar argument is presented. In it Aristotle sees the various elements of civilisation culminating in philosophy. Firstly, men are compelled to create those necessities which are required for their survival. The next stage is the emergence of the arts which refine life. This is followed by politics which ensures the emergence of a well-regulated state and finally the leisure for philosophising. (22)

The Magna Moralia sums up the links between man's ends in a succinct manner.

"Practical thought is a dispenser or steward to philosophical thought, ministering to it leisure and the freedom to perform its task, by restraining and disciplining the passions of the soul." (23)

9:4 Hardie's thesis of an inclusive and dominant end.

Another possible way of explaining the relationship between secondary and perfect happiness is by making use of Hardie's (24) distinction between an inclusive and a dominant end. Hardie maintains that Aristotle's thought contains a certain confusion regarding the notion of man's end. For he speaks about it both in the sense of its being an inclusive as well as a dominant end. Let us briefly elaborate on what Hardie means by these two concepts.

Happiness in the sense of an inclusive end is interpreted as a planned life embodying "the desire for the orderly and harmonious gratification of desires." (25) For, as Hardie puts it, men do require to live their lives according to some plan, and "the inevitability of a plan arises from the fact that a man both has, and knows that he has a number of desires and interests which

can /

can be adopted as motives either casually and indiscriminately or in accordance with priorities determined by the aim of living the kind of life which he thinks proper for a man like himself." (26)

Hardie quotes various passages in Aristotle's ethical thought to corroborate this interpretation. Thus in the Eudemian Ethics Aristotle speaks of the need to regulate one's actions towards the attainment of happiness.

"Everybody able to live according to his own purposive choice should set before him some object for noble living to aim at - either honour or else glory or wealth or culture - on which he will keep his gaze fixed in all his conduct (since clearly it is a mark of much folly not to have one's life regulated with regard to some End) it is therefore most necessary first to decide within oneself, neither hastily nor carelessly in which of the things that belong to us the good life consists, and what are the indispensable conditions for man's possessing it." (27)

The same sort of idea, according to Hardie, is implied in the various discussions about the man of practical wisdom who has a true apprehension of that end which is good for himself, and is able to plan the means which would enable him to attain it. (28)

The concept of a planned existence also extends to the political sphere where Aristotle speaks of a well-ordered constitution wherein the possibilities for happiness of its citizens are the greatest. (29) His stress on the importance of correct moral training by the state implies that its citizens will follow a consistently well-planned life. (30) Hence, to sum up, "one's own good cannot exist without household management, nor without a form of government." (31)

To what extent do people plan their lives systematically? Hardie argues that since men do have

many /

many and various aims, it is necessary for them to allocate priorities, to plan to achieve certain desires, to avoid what is undesirable as far as possible.⁽³²⁾ Even if one plans in a rudimentary form, one nevertheless does plan.

Aristotle would surely agree too with the Existentialist, Hazel Barnes, whose view is that an ethical life is one which embodies a coherent plan. Rejecting the arguments of an individual like Dostoyevsky's Underground Man, who refused to justify his life,⁽³³⁾ Barnes argues as follows : ⁽³⁴⁾

"What characterises many, if not most people, is precisely a lack of commitment and consistency. They do not have a coherent life plan either as ideal or reality. One cannot truthfully say even that they have chosen to respond spontaneously to each new situation as it occurs, for their responses are frequently not genuine, but only what they feel is expected. To apply the term ... 'ethical' to this sort of aimless, desultory, semi-mechanical living is to do violence to language so as to destroy the possibility of communication."

Perhaps, as Hardie suggests, men do impose a rudimentary plan on their lives. But for Aristotle, the only kind of planned existence desirable would be one directed towards a life of moral virtue, that is, directing one's actions in such a way that one consistently seeks to perform good deeds. This involves having the right ends and choosing the right means to attain such ends. It therefore implies the possession of good habits. The problem for Aristotle is surely that most people do not plan their lives in this way.⁽³⁵⁾ In terms of the function argument given in this thesis, this is because it is not the case that men naturally do follow the rule given by practical wisdom. But they ought to. As Kenny says, the fact that a planned existence is made as a recommendation shows that what is

being /

being recommended is something that is not "already the case in the behaviour of all men."⁽³⁶⁾

It is clear that the notion of an inclusive end refers specifically to the idea of secondary happiness, the life of consistently-performed morally virtuous acts. Why should a man plan his life in this way? Firstly, because, as we have seen, virtue brings its own rewards to the individual.⁽³⁷⁾ One ought to live rationally, directing one's acts towards good ends in order to attain secondary happiness. But it is surely arguable that it is only if one does live in accordance with such a plan that one will be in a position to achieve perfect happiness. For the consistently-lived rational and virtuous life (corresponding to the life of civic virtue in a good state) perfects one's reason, ensures the subjugation of one's passions, and provides for the leisure required for the sublime activity of contemplation, which, in Hardie's terminology, is the dominant end.

Happiness as the final good among all other goods is the dominant end, the summit of man's rational activity. Contemplation is loved for its own sake, being an activity of that which is best in man and most like the divine activity of God, the prime mover. It is never desired except for itself and is thus more desirable than moral virtue.⁽³⁸⁾ The notion of a dominant end therefore corresponds to perfect happiness.

Hardie criticises Aristotle for confusing these two notions. But there are, after all, two kinds of happiness which we have suggested correspond to the two ends indicated by Hardie. It has been argued that secondary happiness or happiness as an inclusive end is a prerequisite for the realisation of perfect happiness, which is happiness in sense of the dominant end.

9:5. Contemplation /

9:5. Contemplation and man as a social being.

As a social being or a political animal a philosopher is obliged to have contact with his fellows. Aristotle writes :

"Surely it is strange too to make the supremely happy man a solitary; for no one would choose the whole world on condition of being alone, since man is a political creature and one whose nature is to live with others." (39)

The "good man qua good man delights in virtuous actions." (40) The philosopher, when he performs a morally good act which at the same time helps to perfect his rationality, directs his acts towards ends which are good both in the ethical and metaphysical senses. These ends are morally desirable, and, insofar as they may each be said to exemplify the standard of rationality, are each characterised by the metaphysical characteristic of completeness. However, the life of moral virtue is not good in the sense of it being complete since it is not man's final end, although such a life is morally good.

Contemplation is good in the metaphysical sense since it is the final end of becoming a man as a rational being. In terms of Aristotle's arguments it can only be attained by the morally virtuous man. The question arises as to whether contemplation is also morally desirable as man's final end.

In an interesting passage Aristotle seems to suggest that contemplating philosophers will not be ivory-tower individuals. For they are "the creators of external actions also." (41) The parallel with the Platonic conception of the philosopher king in The Republic is obvious. Aristotle is trying to imply that the philosopher, as the supremely creative individual, does contribute to the practical life of the state. Commenting on this passage Jaeger says that the contemplative life is

therefore /

therefore "practical in the highest sense" but he does not elaborate.⁽⁴²⁾ However, whereas Aristotle would surely have wished to be able to argue in this way, there is no evidence to support such a contention.

Contemplation itself is an activity of the disembodied nous and is neither practical nor productive.⁽⁴³⁾ These objects contemplated are not concerned with political matters.⁽⁴⁴⁾ It does not seem to be logically possible that philosophising can provide practical benefits for the state as a whole. As was pointed out in the Introduction to this thesis, Plato avoided such a problem for the underlying unity which the Forms provided to this thought ensured the reconciliation of the theoretical life with the realm of political action. Furthermore, in Plato's early thought as evidenced in The Republic, for example, practical wisdom is conceived of as constituting a unity with theoretical wisdom. We have shown how, within the theoretical/practical wisdom dichotomy in the Nicomachean Ethics, an explanation may be provided for the way that practical wisdom legislates for the sake of theoretical or philosophic wisdom. But the converse is impossible within the framework of Aristotle's thought. Indeed, Aristotle does actually speak of the contemplative life as one which is free of all commitments.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Aristotle's supremely happy man, insofar as he contemplates only, stands apart from the state. As a virtuous man, happy in the secondary sense, he does contribute to the welfare of the state as a whole. But perfect happiness is a-social, it is a solitary activity, politically unproductive. It may be desirable for the individual himself since it does, after all, constitute his own perfect happiness. But it cannot be shown to be morally good within the larger context of the state as a whole. It does therefore seem to be a selfish activity.

How far Aristotle has moved from his initial conception of happiness is clear from this early passage

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in the Nicomachean Ethics :

"Why then should we not say that he is happy who is active in accordance with complete virtue, and is sufficiently equipped with external goods not for some chance period but throughout a complete life." (46)

It is surely arguable that in this passage, like most of the Nicomachean Ethics, the emphasis is on secondary happiness. Aristotle was, however, reluctant to abandon the Platonic conception of contemplation as constituting the ideally happy life. But his conclusion that contemplation is perfect happiness is not consistent with his conception of man as a political animal. It is true that the perfectly happy man is also a morally virtuous individual and a good citizen (in a good state), but insofar as he is a morally good citizen he is, after all, only secondarily happy.

Appendix: The concept of self actualisation.

The Aristotelean conception that the man who is happy is the man who has actualised his possibilities is held to be an extremely important one. This view may be assessed with specific reference to the thought of the contemporary psychologist, Abraham Maslow, whose thought may be regarded as being distinctly Aristotelean.

Maslow himself shows how closely his starting point overlaps with that of Aristotle when he writes :

"We may agree with Aristotle when he assumed that the good life consisted in living in accordance with the true nature of man, but we must add that he simply did not know enough about the true nature of man." (47)

Maslow points out, for example, that we now have a deeper understanding of man's unconscious, of "what lies hidden in man, what lies suppressed and neglected and unseen." (48) Another advantage modern thinkers have over Aristotle, according to Maslow, is that they have learned that self-realisation cannot be attained by man's rationality alone. Maslow rejects the conception of reason, accorded a dominant role, being contrasted with man's emotions which constitute his "lower" nature. (49) We may agree with Maslow that when Aristotle describes perfect happiness he does conceive it in a narrowly rationalistic sense. However, the performance of morally good actions is a necessary requirement for the contemplative life. Insofar as Aristotle deals with happiness in general terms he is concerned with "a realisation of man's total personality." (50) Aristotle's man who is happy is in Maslow's terminology an "integrated" individual; he is not at odds with himself, his reason struggling against his emotions. (51) Indeed, when Maslow's conception of the self-actualised man is examined, parallels with the Aristotelean view become apparent. Certainly Aristotle

did /

did not take into account man's unconscious, yet his understanding of human nature was profound. It is also undeniable that his inability to free himself from the Platonic emphasis on "pure" rationality and the contemplative ideal led Aristotle to identify perfect happiness with an exclusively intellectual activity.

Maslow interprets man's essential nature in terms of certain "needs, capacities and tendencies that are genetically based."⁽⁵²⁾ Some of these needs, capacities and tendencies are characteristic of the human species as a whole; others are unique to each individual. Maslow argues that "full health and normal and desirable development consist in actualising these potentialities, and in developing into maturity along the lines that this hidden, covert, dimly seen essential nature dictates."⁽⁵³⁾ The self-actualised individual is one whose needs, both basic and meta- have been satisfied (Maslow uses the word "needs" to cover "needs, capacities and tendencies"). The basic needs listed by Maslow are physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualisation.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The meta- or higher needs, which include beauty, justice, order and goodness, generally emerge after the prior satisfaction of basic needs, although there may, of course, be exceptions.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Like Aristotle, Maslow stresses the importance of the environment in ensuring the actualisation of man's potentialities.

Although Aristotle does not speak in terms of needs it is arguable that he does recognise their importance. He would surely agree with Maslow that whilst it is true that man lives by bread alone when there is no bread, when man's hunger needs are satisfied, higher needs emerge.⁽⁵⁶⁾ These are filled and still others appear. In other words, basic human needs may be conceived of as being hierarchically arranged and

becoming /

becoming pre-potent. (57)

Aristotle recognised the importance of physiological needs (provided the mean was operative) as well as the significance of safety needs. This is clear in his insistence on the formation of habitual behaviour, which promotes a sense of security in the individual, as well as the need for a well-run state which will ensure that the lives of individuals do appear to have a meaningful coherence. Man's need for self-esteem and self-respect, as well as the need for the esteem of others, is clearly understood by Aristotle in his discussion on the proud man⁽⁵⁸⁾ (even though this picture may be somewhat exaggerated). Maslow argues that the man whose self-esteem needs are satisfied is self-confident; he feels himself to be a useful and necessary part of his society.⁽⁵⁹⁾ The Aristotelean portrait of the good man's relation to himself provides a clear parallel.⁽⁶⁰⁾

When these needs are satisfied there emerges the need for self-actualisation. At this point Aristotle may be criticised, for in his discussion on man's function he has divorced man's actualisation of his potentialities from a man's special calling. The good for man is the good for man as man, and Aristotle does not include the good for man as a harpist, a craftsman, an author and the like. It is, of course, true that the good for man as man overlaps with man as a statesman or perhaps with man as a philosopher, in some instances, provided the state itself is a good one. But it is surely arguable that the happy⁽⁶¹⁾ man is also he who is expressing himself by doing that for which he is best fitted, by becoming what he is best capable of becoming. Plato seems to have recognised this in his version of the ideal state, The Republic. Apart from Aristotle's reference to slaves, females and children participating in the virtues to the extent required by each for the

exercise /

exercise of their proper function,⁽⁶²⁾ he does not pursue this point. The importance of vocation in the self-actualised individual is well-argued by Maslow. The extent to which one's work becomes a part of the self is shown in the sentence :

"If I were not an x, then I wouldn't be me."⁽⁶³⁾

The self-actualised individual, satisfied in his basic needs, now becomes motivated by the higher or metaneeds which, as has already been pointed out, include beauty, justice, order and goodness. Maslow suggests that the self-actualised individual, insofar as he practises his calling, is ultimately concerned with these metaneeds. Such people may meaningfully be said to be working for beauty, justice, law and order.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Hence the self-actualised lawyer, for example, would be ultimately motivated by these higher needs rather than the accumulation of monetary rewards for his services. These metaneeds, according to Maslow, constitute man's spiritual life which he regards as the defining characteristic of human nature.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Maslow does not conceive of this "higher" life as being in a different realm to the so-called more "animal" life. Rather the former, being on the same continuum as the latter, requires the latter as a necessary pre-condition.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Although Aristotle does conceive of perfect happiness as the intellectual activity of contemplation, it has nevertheless been argued that the life of moral virtue is a necessary pre-condition for the attainment of that state, and therefore Maslow's "continuum" argument is implied to a certain extent.⁽⁶⁷⁾ The philosopher's basic needs require fulfilment before he is motivated by metaneeds. In the realm of secondary happiness, the self-actualised legislator, for example, has his basic needs satisfied as he pursues the higher needs of justice, law, order and goodness in his ruling of the state.⁽⁶⁸⁾

It is clear that for Maslow a man is not good in

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the Aristotelean sense of behaving in a desirable way if he is merely morally good. Indeed, in a sense, that would be to put the cart before the horse. A man is good, that is, his actions are motivated by higher needs, precisely because he is a self-actualised scientist, artist or musician. In Aristotelean terms, his moral goodness is a consequence of his having attained metaphysical completeness as an individual with his own unique calling. The good of man as man presupposes the good of man as an individual doing that job for which he is best suited. The word "good" is thus used both in the metaphysical sense of completeness as well as referring to what is desirable or moral goodness.

But of course one may give the same sort of objection as was given against Aristotle.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Does Maslow allow that a competent thief, or perhaps a Mafia "Godfather" be considered as a self-actualised individual? Presumably Maslow would exclude them for he uses words like "law", "justice" and "goodness" in the ordinary sense. Maslow based his arguments on self-actualisation on his association with men who would ordinarily be called "morally good". But insofar as the thief could say: "If I weren't a thief I couldn't be me", he could surely be said to be a self-actualised thief. A Mafia "Godfather" might even be said to be concerned with law, justice and order within his own particular society, in terms of the values of that society. In view of an argument put forward in favour of ethical relativism,⁽⁷⁰⁾ it may be suggested that the rightness of any action depends on one's perspective.

It is perhaps because of this possibility that Aristotle did delimit his discussion on function to that of man as man. Yet it is held that the particular calling of each individual plays an integral part in his self-realisation.

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Of course our understanding of human nature is far from complete despite the recent contributions of the biological and humanistic sciences. Maslow's interpretation of the concept of self-actualisation is, like that of Aristotle, merely one possible view. But attention has been drawn to Maslow in order to point out the "modernity" of that concept and the continuing relevance of the Aristotelean model, as well as to illustrate what is held to be an extremely important factor in ethics, namely the inter-relationship between man's nature, self-actualisation and the performance of morally good actions. Both Aristotle and Maslow are aware of that inter-relationship.

FOOTNOTES

1. N.E. 1145a9.
 2. Gauthier: Op.cit. p.20.
 3. Ibid.
 4. See Chapter 3:5.
 5. See Chapters 2, 3 and 4.
 6. N.E. 1145a9.
 7. This is the same sort of argument found in some forms of mysticism which require a purging of the soul of so-called "lower" elements.
 8. N.E. 1174b18.
 9. N.E. 1141b8.
 10. N.E. 1177b3.
 11. Politics 1333a15.
 12. Ibid. 1324a24.
 13. Ibid. 1260a12.
 14. Ibid. 1277b12.
 15. N.E. 1168b31.
 16. Politics 1260a18.
 17. N.E. 1095a2-5. N.E. 1179b29.
 18. Politics 1134a12-28.
 19. N.E. 1094b6. See Introduction.
 20. Metaphysics 981b16-24.
 21. Ibid. 982b22.
 22. Amadio: Op.cit. p.1164.
 23. M.M. 1198b17.
- It should be noted that not all commentators accept such arguments. Monan, for example, would reject this solution. Rejecting what he calls the "rickety amalgam" in Book X of the Nicomachean Ethics in which Aristotle does make some attempt to fuse the life of secondary happiness with contemplation, Monan argues that the only way to achieve a coherent account of happiness is to reject contemplation altogether as constituting a component of it. Monan's thesis is that Aristotle's treatment of contemplation belongs to an earlier period of thought which preceded the development of Aristotle's account of practical wisdom and the moral virtues (cf. Jaeger: Op.cit. p.334). Monan accordingly interprets happiness in terms of the "integrated activity of both intellectual and moral virtues" (p.132). This interpretation excludes the Nicomachean Ethics for happiness there is situated in the activity of the theoretical intellect. Monan says that happiness as "complete" virtue is to be identified with nobility as described in the Eudemian Ethics. There Aristotle says that "nobility then is perfect goodness." (E.E. 1249a18). In other words, the supreme good is to be found in the integrated virtues which comprise the virtue of nobility (p.153). Only this conclusion, according to Monan, presents us with a unified good for man in terms of the complex of virtues

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in the Eudemian Ethics.

Monan: Op.cit.

We have argued that Aristotle's arguments on happiness do present problems for interpretation. It is not possible to argue for a unified structure comprising perfect happiness, and secondary happiness as a direct means for its achievement. Nevertheless, in view of the argument given on function as the coming to be of man's essence, it is held that contemplation must stand as the chief good for man, despite the attendant problems of such a conception. Furthermore the idea of an evolutionary development within Aristotle's thought has been rejected. It has been argued that Platonic and empirical elements are often juxtaposed within single works.

24. Hardie: Aristotle's Ethical Theory, Chapter II.
Hardie: The Final Good in Aristotle's Ethics.
in Moravcsik (ed.) Aristotle.
25. Hardie: The Final Good in Aristotle's Ethics, p.300.
26. Ibid. p.317.
27. E.E. 1214b8.
28. N.E. Bk.VI:8.
29. Politics Bk. VI:2.
30. N.E. 1099b16.
31. N.E. 1142a8.
32. Hardie: The Final Good in Aristotle's Ethics p.299.
33. Dostoyevsky: Op.cit.
34. Barnes: An Existentialist Ethics pp.6-7.
35. E.E. 1216a27. N.E. 1095b12.
36. Kenny: Happiness.
In Fineberg (ed.): Moral concepts p.48.
37. See Chapter 6:2.
38. N.E. Bk. X.
39. N.E. 1169b16.
40. N.E. 1170a8.
41. Politics 1324a25-32.
42. Jaeger: Op.cit. p.435.
43. N.E. 1139a26.
44. N.E. 1141a21.
45. Politics 1325b23.
Despite this admission Aristotle does, in reply to his own query as to which life is more desirable, namely that of the active citizen or that of the philosopher, reject each as an extreme. Each man must strive towards the perfection of his reason, but insofar as even the philosopher is a man, he has social and political commitments. The good state contains examples of both kinds of happiness.
46. N.E. 1101a12.
47. Maslow: Motivation and Personality. p.341.
48. Ibid. p.342.
49. Ibis.
50. Ibid. p.343.
51. Ibid. p.342.

52. Ibid. p.340.
53. Ibis.
54. Ibid: Chapter 5.
55. "It is clear that the whole hierarchy of basic needs is prepotent to the metaneeds, or, to say it in another way, the metaneeds are post potent (less urgent or demanding, weaker) to the basic needs. I intend this as a generalised statistical statement because I find some single individuals in whom a special talent or a unique sensitivity makes truth or beauty or goodness, for that single person, more important and more pressing than some basic need." Maslow: The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, p.323.
56. Maslow: Motivation and Personality, p.83.
57. There may, of course, be exceptions. Maslow lists seven possibilities. For example, in some individuals self-esteem seems to be more important than love. There are many "innately" creative people in whom "the drive to creativeness" seems to be more important than any other need.
Maslow: Motivation and Personality, p.98.
58. N.E. Bk. IV:3.
59. Maslow: Motivation and Personality, p.91.
60. N.E. Bk. IX:8.
61. "Happy" is used here in the Aristotelean sense of well-being or well-doing.
62. Politics 1260a13.
63. Maslow: The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, p.307.
64. Ibid. p.301.
65. Ibid. p.325.
66. Ibid. p.324.
67. See Chapter 9:2-4.
68. Maslow does not make it clear whether one's meta-needs are ever completely fulfilled. Presumably, however, they are not. The self-actualised individual would constantly seek these higher needs in the practising of his calling.
69. Chapter 2.
70. See Chapter 5:4:2. Berger and Luckmann: Op.cit.

CHAPTER 10 : THE NOTION OF A FINAL END

Let us now examine the well-known sentence which occurs at the beginning of the Nicomachean Ethics in the light of some of the points already elucidated :

"If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this) and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good." (1)

Aristotle seems here to be putting forward two ideas. Firstly he is arguing that however long or short is the chain of activities, that is, activities directed towards ends which then become means to further ends, that chain must culminate in something which is desired for itself alone and not for the sake of anything else. As Hardie puts it, "if we wish to avoid infinite regress, it must be allowed that, if there is anything which is desired but not desired for itself, there must be something which is desired for itself." (2)

This, however, is not all Aristotle is contending, for he does also assume that all chains of activity culminate in the same final end which he says is the chief good, happiness. Furthermore he is claiming that "there is a single end which is aimed at in every choice of a human being." (3)

Commentators on Aristotle have generally accepted the Aristotelean argument for the need for a final end but have queried his equating of such a final end with happiness. Kenny, ⁽⁴⁾ for example, has shown that Aristotle's contention could be regarded as a logical truth, or an empirical observation or as a moral imperative. Which of these is it ?

10:1. The contention as a logical truth ?

It certainly is not a truth of logic. O'Connor,⁽⁵⁾ Geach,⁽⁶⁾ and Anscombe⁽⁷⁾ all point out that it is fallacious to reason from saying that all actions have one and only one final end, to conclude that all actions have the same final end. As Anscombe puts it, "There appears to be an illicit transition in Aristotle from 'all chains must stop somewhere' to 'this is the somewhere where all chains must stop.'"⁽⁸⁾

Hardie, however, denies that Aristotle is guilty of this fallacy, that is, that he intended the assertion as a logical truth. For Aristotle does acknowledge the possibility of there being more than one final end.⁽⁹⁾ He admits too that honour, pleasure and reason are sometimes sought for their own sake.⁽¹⁰⁾

Kenny⁽¹¹⁾ points out that, in fact, it does seem false that it is logically necessary that there should be one end which is sought after in each choice. For even if we define this end in a vague way, for example, "the satisfaction of our wants", it would still be a fallacious argument. There are, as Kenny puts it, "as many different satisfactions as there are desires to satisfy."⁽¹²⁾

10:2. The contention as an empirical observation ?

Is the passage therefore intended as a statement of an empirical fact ? It is clear from what has already been said that this contention cannot be an empirical truth. We have seen from the various discussions in this thesis, that vicious, incontinent and unnatural men are all eliminated from the claim made in the passage quoted at the beginning of the conclusion.

Von Wright suggests that Aristotle sometimes seems to write as if he were advocating the doctrine of

psychological /

psychological eudaimonism which Von Wright defines as follows :⁽¹³⁾

"The doctrine ... that every end-directed human act is undertaken ultimately for the sake of the acting agent's happiness we shall call psychological eudaimonism."

But as Von Wright points out, to hold such a view would be contradiction for Aristotle does admit pleasure, for example, as an end in itself. Furthermore Aristotle does also say that sometimes the performance of a courageous act aims at self-sacrifice.⁽¹⁴⁾ We have also seen that the desire for happiness in the secondary sense does not specifically occur as the major premise of the practical syllogism. Nor is it possible for the activity of contemplation to do so in terms of the theoretical/practical reason dichotomy in Aristotle's thought.

Von Wright interprets Aristotle's contention about a final end as follows :

"I would understand Aristotle's so-called eudaimonism in the following light: among possible ends of human action eudaimonia holds a unique position. It is that eudaimonia is the only end that is never anything except final. It is of the nature of eudaimonia that it cannot be desired for the sake of anything else." ⁽¹⁵⁾

We would agree with Von Wright. But is Aristotle not saying something more than this ? This question then leads us to examine whether Aristotle's contention is a moral imperative.

10:3. The contention as a moral imperative ?

The point made very often in this thesis is that men do not naturally seek secondary happiness. Aristotle mentions that there are several kinds of life of which the life of pleasure is dominant and characteristic of the majority.⁽¹⁶⁾ Few men are naturally virtuous, hence the need for correct training. If we think of secondary

happiness /

happiness in terms of a planned existence, it is clear that few people do so in terms of the performance of morally good actions. That this is so is also clear from the discussion by Aristotle on the function of man. Since the Aristotelean definition of function excludes the majority who live by their passions, the vicious, the incontinent, as well as slaves, women and those performing unnatural actions, man's function does not consist in implying and following the rule supplied by practical wisdom. There is therefore a gap between man as he is and man as he ought to be. Man as he is would appear to be man dominated by his passions,⁽¹⁷⁾ man whose acts are directed towards apparent goods. Man as he ought to be is man as morally virtuous. In other words, man's function ought to be an activity of the soul which follows or implies a rational principle. Man ought to direct his actions towards morally good ends, and choose the right means to attain those ends. He ought to plan his life so that he lives in accordance with moral virtue and practical wisdom. This "ought" is not a Kantian concept of duty. Men ought to become virtuous for their own sakes as well as for the benefits the good man brings to his fellows and the state as a whole. Not only does the life of moral virtue imply that the morally good man is at harmony with himself, his actions exemplifying the mean and affording him pleasure, but it is only such a man who can use to greater heights and attain perfect happiness through contemplation.

Aristotle has claimed that happiness is attainable and achievable.⁽¹⁸⁾ Not all are secondarily happy and it is arguable that only a few intellectually gifted individuals will achieve the ideal state of contemplation, and then only for short periods of time. But a man ought also to aspire towards perfect happiness; he should strive to live in accordance with what is best

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in him.⁽¹⁹⁾ For perfect happiness is the most pleasurable of all activities, being most akin to that of the prime mover.

There is, therefore, a gap between man as he is and man as he ought to be. Bridging this gap is achieved through the acquisition of both moral and intellectual virtues. But Aristotle's starting point is arguably man as he ought to be.

This view is therefore at odds with that expressed by Mure,⁽²⁰⁾ for example, who holds that "Greek ethical theory starts from what is, not from what ought to be." In short, it is held that Aristotle does violate his so-called empirical starting point.⁽²¹⁾ His work is a moral imperative; it deals with what ought to be the case.

FOOTNOTES

1. N.E. 1094a18.
2. Hardie: Aristotle's Ethical Theory, p.16.
3. Kenny: Happiness, p.43.
4. Ibid.
5. O'Connor: Op.cit. p.60.
6. Kenny: Happiness : quoting Geach, p.44.
7. Anscombe: Intention, p.34.
8. Ibis.
9. N.E. 1097a23.
10. N.E. 1097b2.
11. Kenny: Op.cit. p.45.
12. Ibis.
13. Von Wright: The Varieties of Goodness, p.89.
14. N.E. Bk. III:6. N.E. 1169a20.
15. Von Wright: Op.cit. p.90.
16. E.E. Bk. I:V 9-13. N.E. Bk. I:5.
17. N.E. 1095b17.
18. N.E. 1096b34.
19. N.E. 1177b34.
20. Mure: Aristotle, p.127.
21. N.E. 1095b6.

CHAPTER 11 : CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to explain why Aristotle's thought does not constitute a "systematic treatise." Indeed it has been pointed out that there are fundamental inconsistencies in Aristotle's arguments which preclude his ethics "enunciating a single straight-forward doctrine."

Having attempted to effect a clear distinction between metaphysics and ethics, in opposition to the unified thought of Plato, Aristotle did nevertheless retain the Platonic ideal of man's ultimate end and perfect happiness as the intellectual activity of the contemplation of metaphysical truths. However, without the Doctrine of the Forms to justify the ideal life of the philosopher, it is logically possible in Aristotle's thought that a wicked man become an excellent philosopher. However, such an admission would render Aristotle's ethics totally incoherent. Thus although the life of moral virtue is characterised by practical reason and essentially moral standards of value, it must nevertheless in some, albeit indirect way be a necessary prerequisite for contemplation, characterised by theoretical reason and metaphysical standards of value.

This argument may be elucidated by a consideration of the teleological nature of Aristotle's ethical thought. Actions may be said to derive their worth in terms of their relationship to the end or good of that activity. In the metaphysical sense, the word "good" means complete and hence Aristotle speaks of the possibility of a good thief, that is a thief who lacks nothing insofar as he has achieved his own particular excellence. However, this goodness or excellence of a thief is not generally held to be desirable or moral goodness. Hence Aristotle does introduce what does seem to be an inappropriate distinction between good and bad actualities in his

discussion /

discussion on the metaphysical notion of completeness. This distinction is, however, understandable since man as a rational being is perfectly capable of choosing what is morally evil just as well as what is morally good. The opening sentence of the Nicomachean Ethics does seem to assume that the ends chosen will always be good actualities. However, one of Aristotle's central tasks was to clarify precisely what activities would ensure a morally desirable end as well as one which was good from the "neutral" perspective of completeness. This task involved a consideration of man's function.

In defining man's function as implying and following a rational principle, Aristotle is, in fact, telling us what men ought to be like. When function is then treated in terms of excellence, the inclusion of moral virtue and practical wisdom are made to follow. However, following Siegler, it has been suggested that Aristotle's argument on this crucial point is fallacious. For whilst he draws an analogy between the harpist and man as man, the excellence of the former is a metaphysical one. Insofar as a man can act rationally, deliberately choosing evil ends and cunningly planning those means which will ensure the attainment of such ends, he may be said to be acting with a metaphysical excellence and he will become the complete evil man. But since Aristotle's concern in an ethical work is to ensure that man's activities will be directed towards morally desirable ends, he makes an illicit transition from the metaphysical goodness of the harpist's function to the morally desirable goodness of man. For the crucial role of moral virtue is to direct man's activities towards noble ends; practical wisdom ensures that the correct means will be chosen to achieve these ends.

Whilst the life of moral virtue, the consistent performance of virtuous actions is good in the sense of

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being morally desirable, for the good man benefits himself, his fellows and the state as a whole, it is not good in the metaphysical sense of completeness. (Each particular moral deed is, however, good in both senses.) For secondary happiness does not constitute man's final, ultimate end. Man's rationality is not completely perfected in the performance of moral acts.

The contemplative life or perfect happiness, on the other hand, is good in the metaphysical sense of completeness. It is the final end of becoming of man as a rational being. The problem is whether it can be good in the moral sense for it is an activity to which only metaphysical standards of value are applicable. Yet it is clear that Aristotle was forced to try in some way to include the notion of desirability into his conception of contemplation in order to preclude the possibility of a vicious yet happy philosopher. He had therefore, firstly, to show that morally virtuous activities were necessary for the attainment of man's final end and, secondly, that the life of the philosopher itself was morally desirable.

In terms of the dichotomy between man's end of perfect happiness and the end of secondary happiness, characterised by different standards of value and different kinds of reason, the relationship between the latter and the former could only be indirect. The standards of value applicable in the realm of secondary happiness are essentially moral, being Aristotle's clarification of the values of his own society, although he did extend his analysis to suggest these values were in accordance with transcendent metaphysical standards having a universal application. (This contention was challenged in terms of Berger and Luckmann's thesis which supported the idea of ethical relativism.) Metaphysical standards alone apply to contemplation. Unlike Plato,

moreover /

moreover, Aristotle confined practical reason or phronesis to the realm of the doable good. Although it has been argued that the exclusion of theoretical reason from the sphere of moral action is not tenable, in terms of the Aristotelean position there can be no direct relationship between the two spheres of reason which have different objects of knowledge. Moreover, as an intellectual virtue contemplation can have no mean which would be given by practical wisdom.

The single phrase in the Nicomachean Ethics linking practical and theoretical wisdom, namely that the former provides for the latter coming into being, has been interpreted in terms of an indirect relationship. The life of secondary happiness characterised by moral virtue and practical wisdom helps to perfect man's reason. The legislators, those who are pre-eminently men of practical wisdom, have the task of creating that constitution which will encourage the inhabitants of the state to form good habits. In planning such a state the greatest opportunities for happiness for as many as possible are provided. The necessary leisure required in order to contemplate is ensured. An educational system incorporating the study of theoretical disciplines in order that the mind be filled with the necessary material for contemplation provides a further link between the two kinds of reason. In Hardie's terms, happiness in its secondary sense, as an inclusive end or planned existence, is a necessary prerequisite for happiness in its perfect sense as a dominant end.

However, these arguments are seriously weakened unless Aristotle's remarks on Thales and Anaxamander are regarded as a piece of careless writing. For he has implied that they are not also practically wise.

The desirability of the contemplative life is not completely established by Aristotle. Like Plato,

Aristotle /

Aristotle conceived of the life of the philosopher as constituting the summit of intellectual, moral and political achievement. But without the Doctrine of the Forms to provide an underlying unity to those disciplines, the justification for the philosopher's life in the moral and political spheres becomes extremely difficult within the framework of Aristotle's ethical thought. In discussing what we have called "moral obligation" it was seen that Aristotle's treatment of the good man's relation to himself and others was limited to the realm of secondary happiness. Insofar as the philosopher performs morally good actions he brings rewards to himself, his fellow man and the state as a whole. But whilst Aristotle would clearly have wished the activity of contemplation to make a contribution to the state, the nature of such a possible contribution is extremely obscure. Jaeger has argued that the contemplative life is intended by Aristotle to be regarded as creative and practical in the highest sense. But the evidence available does not support such a view. For perfect happiness, the activity of the disembodied nous is a solitary activity. Since, moreover, theoretical wisdom does not legislate for the sake of practical wisdom, contemplation is an essentially a-social, politically unproductive activity. It may therefore be concluded that contemplation does constitute man's end or good in the metaphysical sense of completeness, but that it cannot be shown to be morally or politically desirable in the larger context of the state itself. However, insofar as it does constitute man's perfect happiness, being the most pleasurable of all activities, it is desirable from the point of view of the individual himself. The conclusion that perfect happiness is a selfish activity can hardly be avoided.

The uneasy juxtaposition of the essentially Platonic notion of a purely intellectual activity by a

disembodied /

disembodied element of reason beside the thesis of the substantial unity of body and soul further challenges the possibility of a consistent treatise. The likelihood of a synthesis of both views seems remote.

The tenability of the concept of contemplation is weakened by the fact that the objects of that activity are not clearly formulated. Nor can it be definitely established whether contemplation involves a religious dimension. Although works like the Eudemian Ethics and De Philosophia might seem to support such a thesis, there is little or no evidence in the Nicomachean Ethics for adopting such a view.

It is clear, however, that contemplation obeys the first criterion which characterises happiness, namely it is final. It is loved for its own sake and not for any result it produces beyond the pleasure of contemplating. Indeed, if it were politically creative it could not be final. Whether it is completely self-sufficient is less certain. For it does presuppose prior theoretical study in order to discover the necessary material for contemplation. As a man, the philosopher does require "external equipment", but Aristotle insists that philosophising will need little or less than moral virtue does.⁽¹⁾ In short, contemplation is the most self-sufficient activity.

Taylor,⁽²⁾ somewhat humorously, suggests that the end of Aristotle's argument in the Nicomachean Ethics seems to forget the beginning. Indeed, Aristotle's contention that the activity of contemplation, separate from the world of ordinary social interaction, constitutes man's final end of perfect happiness is a far cry from the early characterisation of happiness as living well, or what seems to be happiness in the secondary sense. It is true, of course, that the philosopher insofar as he is a man will also be happy in this secondary sense. But it must not be forgotten that living well is only

secondary /

secondary happiness. Yet it is surely this happiness which is closest to the ordinary view which had been Aristotle's starting point. The purely intellectual activity which we may enjoy by virtue of having a divine spark within us does not seem to be the way the "general run of men" nor even perhaps "people of superior refinement" would conceive of it.⁽³⁾ Furthermore, even if we were to agree that man's ultimate end lies in a purely intellectual activity, such happiness is enjoyed for short periods of time only. It is surely secondary happiness which obeys the criterion of enduring "not for some chance period but throughout a complete life."⁽⁴⁾

Despite these criticisms of contemplation its influence on Catholicism as exemplified in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas was considerable.⁽⁵⁾

The view that Aristotle gradually abandoned the Platonic element in his thought in favour of a consistently empirical position has been rejected. In fact it has been argued that it is his reluctance or perhaps his inability to free himself from his Platonic education which underlies so many of the problems associated with man's end in the Nicomachean Ethics.

Furthermore, the consistency of Aristotle's claim that he takes as his point of departure what is the case has been challenged. It has been argued that Aristotle's conception of function is a consideration of the function of man as he ought to be. Whilst Aristotle suggests that all men seek happiness it is clear that not all men will achieve either secondary or perfect happiness.

Aristotle's discussions on various other aspects of secondary happiness have been dealt with in some detail with particular reference to the crucial role of moral virtue or the possession of a good character. His treatment of incontinence, often interpreted as incoherent, has in fact been shown to be perfectly consistent,

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though admittedly this conclusion applies only to the syllogism dealing with the tasting of sweet things. Although Adkins has denied that Aristotle deals with moral responsibility, it has been argued that this concept is covered in some detail. Aristotle's treatment is, however, not completely satisfactory because he does not follow up the implications of his admission of determining influences on a man's character to their logical conclusion. The tension between the freedom which is accorded to the moral agent and those factors which have contributed towards the formation of his character remains unresolved.

The supremely morally virtuous individual, exemplified in Aristotle's characterisation of the proud man, is infallible. Insofar as he is eminently self-controlled he will never err. Therefore implied within the Aristotelean notion of self-control is the idea that there will be a certain predictability in the performance of morally good acts. It is held that the concepts of self-control and predictability do characterise ethical behaviour. The Existentialist Barnes, for example, rejecting the extreme views of Dostoyevsky's Underground Man, argues that one must impose some sort of order or plan on one's life so that it may be characterised as "ethical". Furthermore, insofar as the need for interpersonal relations is included as an integral part of the Existential conception of authenticity or good faith, some degree of self-control and predictability in ethical acts is ensured. The Behaviourist, Skinner, who holds that moral struggles waste valuable time which the self-controlled man could far more profitably employ in what Skinner calls "more reinforcing behaviour", says that such an individual's behaviour in any contingency will always be characterised by his self-control.

The question now arises as to the content of such acts performed by individuals possessing self-control.

Existentialists /

Existentialists and Skinner do not offer a blue-print for action. The content of any moral act is contingent upon the circumstances in which the individual is placed. For Existentialists, provided one guards and respects one's own freedom and that of others, one may choose in any way. Skinner argues that the self-controlled individual can adapt to any situation. Aristotle's conception of the minor premise of the practical syllogism does imply that the way a good man actually applies a general moral rule to a concrete situation depends on his temperament as well as the circumstances of the particular situation in which he finds himself. The mean is relative to each individual. Yet whilst such acts are judged in terms of objective values recognised as such by those who have a good character and are also practically wise, Aristotle does also have an implicit conception of absolute, universal standards (comparable to the idea of natural law) which act as measures of all moral actions in any particular society. Hence it may be argued that the good state in Aristotelean terms would be so rationally organised that the eccentric and possibly some creative individuals would be regarded as behaving in a non-rational way. Certainly in terms of the Existential thesis, it is to the extent that the individual is able to free himself from the bounds of his society that he is said to be truly creative. Yet without the implicit idea of universal, rational standards of behaviour, the Aristotelean view of moral behaviour, expressed formally in terms of the practical syllogism, could have been regarded as an effective solution to the problem of discovering a compromise between ethical relativism and moral anarchy. For the acts of any individual would always exemplify the moral values of his own society. But the particular way he interpreted these values would be contingent upon his own personality and the actual situation.

Whether /

Whether infallibility constitutes a summit of moral achievement is a contentious point. MacIntyre, as we have seen, feels that the notion of fallibility is an integral characteristic of the perfect man. Existentialists, stressing the anguish and risk involved in any moral choice, would hardly conceive of the possibility of an infallible man even if he were self-controlled. Of course self-control need not imply infallibility. However, in terms of the practical syllogism, the good and practically wise man never fails to choose what is right in accordance with the rational, objective standards as clarified by Aristotle. It is an empirical question as to whether or not men are capable of infallibly moral behaviour at all times.

It is clear from the discussion above that the question of self-control and moral behaviour is related to the larger problem of the nature of man. This leads us to the concept of what has been called self-actualisation or self-realisation. For the Aristotelean view of man's happiness which may be interpreted in terms of the actualisation of his potentialities, has as its basic premise the idea that the good life for man is somehow based on the nature of man. Self-actualisation may be regarded as a metaphysical concept embodying the notion of completeness. But in terms of the views of the contemporary psychologist, Maslow, it has also been suggested that insofar as a man has actualised his potentialities as a craftsman, harpist and the like, so are his actions motivated by ethical ideals such as justice, order and goodness. Maslow⁽⁶⁾ also argues that traditional dichotomies such as that between reason and desire, or the head and the heart, are resolved in the self-actualised individual. Self control is therefore a component but also perhaps a consequence of self-actualisation.

In terms of this discussion, the relationship

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between man's nature, the notion of the actualisation of his potentialities and the performance of morally good actions is therefore of great importance in ethical thought. Our understanding of human nature is, however, far from complete. The discoveries of the sciences of physiology, psychology, sociology and anthropology will undoubtedly enlarge our knowledge and our conception of the good life will therefore have to be revised constantly in the light of such information. Hence as O'Connor⁽⁷⁾ has pointed out, Aristotle's belief that "ethics must somehow be grounded in the nature of the moral agent" constitutes an important insight. Aristotle must also be accorded much credit for being the first thinker to attempt to investigate that relationship in a systematic way.

Appendix: The meaning of the word "happiness".

How does Aristotle's concept of two kinds of happiness relate to his theory of meaning ?

In her study of language in Aristotle's philosophy, Larkin⁽⁸⁾ has investigated his theory of meaning in some detail.

Aristotle rejected the Platonic theory of Forms and the theory of a natural relationship between names and the things named.⁽⁹⁾ But he was concerned with the way words relate to things. Thus Aristotle speaks of "words as the symbols of mental experiences which are signs of things."⁽¹⁰⁾ Words, argued Aristotle, are not significant naturally, but by convention, for "letters and syllables have no natural likeness to the object named."⁽¹¹⁾

He was also concerned with the way words have meaning, especially in philosophy. As Larkin shows, Aristotle held that in order to achieve clarity in philosophical arguments it was necessary to avoid equivocation, ambiguity and metaphors.⁽¹²⁾ Yet he did not merely divide words as equivocal and univocal, for he admits that there are certain words which are midway between the two. Larkin quotes this passage to illustrate this point :

"It follows, therefore, that there are three sorts of friendship, and that they are not all so termed in respect of one thing or as species of one genus, nor yet have they the same time entirely by accident. For all these uses of the term are related to one particular sort of friendship which is primary - as with the term 'surgical' - we speak of a surgical mind and a surgical hand and a surgical instrument and a surgical operation, but we apply the term properly so that which is primarily so called." (13)

It is surely possible that the same argument

may /

may be used of the two kinds of happiness. Let us substitute "happiness" for "friendship" in the passage below : (14)

"The only remaining alternative, therefore, is that, in a sense, the primary sort of happiness alone is happiness, but in a sense both are, not as having a common name by accident and standing in a merely chance relationship to one another, nor yet as falling under one species, but rather as related to one thing."

There must therefore be a relationship between the two happinesses named. Larkin points out that Aristotle does not specify exactly what the relations between the things named must be. But "the definition of what is logically prior is included in the definition of the thing to which the name is secondarily imposed." (15) The relationship between the two kinds of happiness must lie in the fact that both are activities of the rational element of the soul. Undoubtedly perfect happiness is the primary sort of happiness. Secondary happiness is happiness not by accident or chance, it does not belong to the same species, but is related to perfect happiness insofar as it involves the exercise of man's rationality.

Hence we see that Aristotle distinguishes a third type of word apart from the univocal and equivocal. They are analogous words, what Aristotle calls *pròs hén* equivocals or words related *pròs hén*. These are "words said in many different ways in which different senses are derived from and related to a prior meaning The criterion of *pròs hén* equivocals is that the primary meaning is implicit in the definitions of all secondary meanings because there is some relation between the things named." (16)

Aquinas' (17) work on the doctrine of analogy is clearly much indebted to the pioneering efforts of Aristotle in this sphere.

FOOTNOTES

1. N.E. 1178a25.
2. Taylor: Op.cit. p.99.
3. N.E. 1095a17.
4. N.E. 1101a15.
5. Aquinas held that man's end as the contemplation of metaphysical truths and a life of moral virtue was concerned solely with man's imperfect, temporal happiness. For, according to him, man's end is supernatural consisting in the Beatific Vision of God in the next life. Man, however, cannot know this end through his reason. It is revealed to him by faith. Furthermore, Aquinas argued that man's intellect and his rational will were not fully perfected in the contemplation of metaphysical truths. Only in the Beatific Vision is, firstly, the intellect perfected in its possession of God who is the universal true and, secondly, the will perfected in its initiation of this movement towards God who is the universal good, and in the joy of attainment of God. This vision which therefore consists in man's participation in the divine nature is called connatural knowledge of God. It depends on the gift of grace for its attainment and presupposes faith and hope and can only be achieved through charity.
6. Maslow: Motivation and Personality, p.233.
7. O'Connor: Op.cit. p.60.
8. Larkin: Language in the Philosophy of Aristotle.
9. Ibid. p.11.
10. Ibid. p.96.
11. Ibis.
12. Ibid. p.67.
13. E.E. 1236a16 cf. Metaphysics 1006b10.
14. E.E. 1236b24 - a few minor modifications have been made to Aristotle's text for the sake of greater clarity in illustrating our point.
15. Larkin: Op.cit. p.69.
16. Ibid. p.100.
17. Aquinas: S.T. I Q13.

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