

Review

Aristotle looking for what makes for the Good in h. life, on the way to learning what makes a Good Life

Denies that Plato was right in supposing there is a Single Good

Bec. there are many diff. kinds of goods, with nothing that necessarily joins them together (like the Good Itself).

We cannot know the moral good with certainty of scientific subjects (like math).

Good for humans is a matter of practical wisdom

Bec there are many goods in the world (one for every kind of thing, allied with its 'function' or way of existing) and many details about each to be known only through sense experience and action.

Asks: Is there a specific good associated w/ human life?

H. life has many goods, but is there one for which all the others are sought?

Yes: eudaimonia (happiness)

Asks: What is eudaimonia?

can't be pleasure/honor/wealth

=well-functioning human

Asks: What is this "human function"?

=activity of soul in accordance with, or not w/out, rational principle" (reason).

Asks: What makes it "well"-functioning?

excellence, but not just momentary (one swallow doesn't make it spring),

and in accordance with "the best and most complete" since it is the end of all other goods we seek.

Asks: What is excellence?

virtue...*ajrethv* (means both moral excellence and skilled excellence)

two kinds: moral and intellectual

Asks: Why two kinds?

Human soul has irrational and rational parts. So consider the soul's parts:

nutritive: entirely irrational...excellence not possible here

appetitive/desiring: partly irrational, but "listens to reason" in the continent person. This

is what is associated with moral excellence

reason: rational, associated with intellectual excellence

Asks: So what is eudaimonia, after all?

"activity of the soul in accordance with complete excellence"

entirely defined in terms of good functioning for a human

Book II: 3 questions.

1. what kind of thing is virtue? See II.5

2. How is it attained?

3. Is it one or many?

A. It could be a passion (emotion), faculty (capacity) or state (disp).

B. Why can't it be an emotion?

1. We aren't blamed for having emotions but for giving it to them
2. Feelings such as anger and fear are not by choice, but virtues are by choice.

C. Why can't excellence be a capacity? Because we're not called good or bad because we are capable of feeling angry or of reasoning, but because of what we do with our natural capacities.

D. So excellence must be a state or disposition: the disposition or habit of e.g. acting courageously is courage.

E. Intellectual excellence owes its existence to teaching. We don't worry about that yet.

F. Moral excellence comes about by habit. We become a certain way by habituating ourselves so that we ARE thieves, etc. Example.

G. The virtues A talks about here are courage, moderation (temperance), generosity, and justice. See II.3: if we train children to take pleasure in acting virtuously, we can use the natural desire for pleasure to habituate them to virtuous action.

H. So is it one or many? It's one: you cannot be perfectly virtuous and lack any of the virtues. You cannot be perfectly moderate and be cowardly, for ex, because you will choose some immoderate thing out of cowardice at some time. So in this sense Plato is 'right that virtues are one. But in another sense, the commonsense understanding, A thinks it's common to see people who are brave soldiers and unable to be moderate, etc.

I. The unity of virtue, its perfection, lies in the exercise of reason as practical wisdom. Not Plato's wisdom but *phronesis* (VI. 13, p. 430). The state of excellence implies existence of practical reason. So why do we need reason? To find the mean.

IV. Virtue as a mean: II. 6

A. See 1106b18-25.

B. Not golden mediocrity, but right act for the circumstances. Not mean as act but in the state of mind.

Lecture 4/29 & 5/1

Questions of the day:

- (1) How can Aristotle be right that WE may not know if we're happy?
- (2) Is he wrong to attempt to define and argue for an objective standard of morality?
- (3) Is he right about what happiness is?
- (4) Does his linking of happiness to virtue (excellence) work?

001-11/11

I. Review

- A. Definitions of human good and function on p. 371.
- B. Defn. of happiness p. 374.
- C. Defn. of excellence p. 383, also p. 382.

II. Now to questions:

- (1) How can Aristotle be right that we may not know if we're happy?
 - (a) prom king
 - (b) Moonie
- (2) Does his linkage of happiness to virtue work?
- (3) Is his account of virtue correct?

III. Discussion of issues from last to first question

- A. Is he right that all are one if they are perfect, that our reason will produce practical wisdom and thus perfection of all virtues at once? How could we have prac. wis. and not be virtuous in every way?
- B. He thinks that happiness is, again, an activity of soul in accordance with complete virtue (excellence). If not, what is it? Is it possible to define H with reference to something else? On what grounds?
- C. Again, his arg. is that the chief good for us is H, we all say, so it must be what makes us good. And if virtue is what makes us good and makes us do our work (function) well, isn't that H?
- D. Could it make us feel happy, anyway? And Aristotle adds need for external goods, so that we would include friends, family, fellow citizens and suff. \$ to have this life.

IV. Cases

- A. Prom king: is he happy being thought a fool, if he never knows? Is the standard something that can be measured by someone outside, or does it depend on the person (subjective)?
- B. Moonie: may feel happy. Overworked, no privacy, unable to marry person of choice, do job he wishes- must serve Moon. Use others

for their \$ for cause, no link to previous family or friends. Yet he will say he's happy serving this cause. Autonomy, virtue, Two questions: is H a feeling state? Can one be wrong?

- C. Moonies or other cult members often say later that they weren't happy. What's different now? Use of reason, autonomy, being owner of your life

V. Book III

- A. Virtue is concerned with feelings and actions. Praise and blame are bestowed on vol. ones, pardon and pity on invol. So vol/invol distinction is nec. for inquiry into virtue and legal matters. 1109b30, p. 387.
- B. Invol: those things which take place from force or owing to ignorance. Either moving principle is outside of agent, or he is ignorant of relevant facts of situation.
- C. Vol: the moving principle is in agent herself and she is aware of particular circumstances of action.
- D. Interesting cases are mixed: sheer physical restraint isn't a problem. What you do when caught in a hurricane isn't your fault or good.

VI. Mixed cases: vol and invol

- A. Threats, bribes, others pressures, situations. 1110a11, actions have aspects of both.
- B. Ship's captain and jettisoning cargo: vol. But word covers both what we call intention and will, so captain does it intentionally but unwillingly.

VII. Ignorance

- A. Of material facts, 1111a11-- of indiv. case
- B. Of universals, of law, what's generally morally or legally requisite.
- C. Here, ignorance doesn't always excuse: if you're negligent in finding out law, or get drunk, you'r culpable and are blamed. 1110b25, also 1113b30. We punish a person for being ignorant if we think him or her resp. for ignorance.

I. Review of important points

- A. Aristotle's aim in NE is discussion of good for humans, and it's H.
- B. Definition of H: I.13-- "an activity of soul in accordance with complete excellence" (virtue).
- C. He has objective standard of H, a ruler he can use for all people to measure their H. So he'd better have some account of virtue
 - (1) that applies to all people
 - (2) that he can use to justify selecting some states of character over others.
- D. Definition of virtue: pp?????. If the function of a human is to act with reason, then the definition of virtue must apply to a reasoning being, must refer to reason. So there is a possibility of acting with CHOICE, and some acts are chosen. Must make the voluntary/involuntary distinction.
- E. Book III structure:
 - C.1-4: vol/invol, choice, deliberation
 - C.5: the genus of virtue
 - C. 6-9: courage
 - C. 10-12: temperance or moderation

II. Chapter 1

- A. Opening: excellence is concerned with passions (emotions) and actions. These also have means. Read about anger in passage at II.9.
- B. Why care about this at all? Because we praise and blame people according to whether or not they act invol/vol. Nec. for laws.
- C. Definition of invol: 1110b1: without qualification (clearest, unquest. case) when the cause is in the external circumstances and the agent contributes nothing.
- D. Definition of vol: 1111a23, p. 390: the vol. is that of which the source of motion is in agent herself, and the agent is aware of the particular circumstances of the action.
- E. Non-vol: acts that are done from ignorance, with no regret for act.

III. Examples and restrictions

- A. Pleasant and noble objects do not have a compelling power (p. 389); if they did, all acts would be invol. because we act for what is pleasant and noble in all we do. So the pleasant and noble does not make all acts invol.
- B. Acts done out of anger or appetite are not invol, or else we'd say children and animals would act invol- but they don't.
- C. Acts under duress are not all invol. Mixed. Throwing over cargo: we say that person acts because must move himself, but it's invol. in that no one would choose such an act herself.

IV. Ignorance

- A. Note: it's not Socrates' view that vice is ignorance. Specific.
- A. Can act invol. or non-vol. out of ignorance. One acts in ignorance if one acts from another CAUSE, as person who gets drunk and then doesn't know what he or she is doing.
- B. Wicked/blamed distinction: we think a wicked person (bad character) is ignorant of what he ought to do. But act is vol. Blame a person who is ignorant of universal: of moral law.
- C. Types of ignorance: of who he is, of what he's doing, of what or whom he's acting on, of the instrument, of to what end. See p. 390 for ex

V. Cases

- A. Is this too harsh? Autonomy and rationality of agent considered.
- B. Millgram.

Review and Moonie ex: who accepts subjective/objective standard of H?

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VI. C. 2

- A. Choice is not strictly = vol, as choice involves rationality, having reasons for acts.
- B. So children and animals are vol., but they lack choice.

I. Review

- A. Human function: an activity of soul in accordance with, or not without, reason (371).
- B. Human good: an activity of soul in conformity with excellence and , if there are more than one exc., in conf. with the best and most complete.
- C. So: is friendship a good that is intrinsic to the life of a human? DO INTUITION POLL TO GET STARTED.

II. General

- A. Friendship or philia covers much more ground for A than for us. It includes relations with family, other citizens, marriages, business relationships.
- B. A emphasizes the practical and active element in relationships, as usual.
- C. Central idea: we like and do well by another person for her sake, not for our own. So diff. kinds of friendship reflect diff. circumstances. Gen. defn: any relationship characterized by mutual liking (well-wishing and doing well for sake of other).
- D. Only here in IX does A express himself directly on the nature and importance to eudaimonia of taking an interest in other people, merely as such and for their own sake.
- E. Recognize a friend: Rhet.

III. C. 4

- A. Opening: defining characteristics. Also, friendship is for sake of the intellectual element in oneself, which we think is the person
- B. But 1166b12: is this true, that the bad person cannot be a friend even to himself? Pirates as friends.

IV. Kinds of friendship

- A. Three types are called according to objects of love.
- B. Of utility: the friends love each other not for person herself but in so far as they gain some good for themselves.
- C. For pleasure: they love person not for his character but because of pleasure shared (drinking buddies).
- D. In these, one is fond of friend because of what is useful (good) or pleasant for oneself.
- E. IMP: the friendship is based on what is coincidental to person, not intrinsic character.
- F. So far we have these. What's missing?
- F. The complete fr. is that of good people similar in virtue; they wish goods in the same way to each other insofar as they are good in themselves. Not coincidental to friend, but result of intri. nature

V. Book X

A. Structure: c. 1-5 on pleasure, and what is pleasure for humans, is happiness pleasure. Then 6-8 on the answer to the question of Book I: what is happiness? It seems to be divided between 2 answers: life of moral virtues in human society, or life of intellectual virtue. then c. 9, leading to Politics.

I. Review

A. C. 1-5 on pleasure. Now 6-8 on a new answer to what H is.

B. Book I

1096a4, 367: third life is contemplation

1098a16, 371: human good= activity w excellence, and note best and most complete excellence

1099a6, 373: the happy life is pleasant

1099a32, 373: needs external goods

1102a1, 374: H=activity of soul in accordance w complete excel

1103a4, 375: there are 2 kinds of excellence, intellect and moral

II. Chapter 6

A. So H is not a state but the end of human nature, or goal or purpose or function.

III. Chapter 7

A. Opening: 469- the highest excellence, that of the best thing in us.

What's that?

Reason. Activity is contemplation.

B. Second paragraph, too. Activity of wisdom is pleasantest, self-suff, and loved for its own sake. Isn't that how we defined H?

IV. Chapter 8

A. Opening: in a secondary degree the life of moral virtue is happy.

B. 1178b8, 472: complete H = contemplation. And the gods are most happy and blessed, and they can't be morally virtuous.

V. Questions

1. Isn't I inconsistent with X? What's the use of having all the discussion of moral virtue if contem. is best?

2. Is this believable? How can the best life for humans in general be to think?

3. Was Einstein happy?

4. If it would help you contemplate, should you rob a bank to get the \$?

VI. Solution

A. 1098a16: one best and most complete virtue?

B. Complete H= only one of the constituents of H, not H as a whole. Most complete H is contemp, but its's not all of H.

C. However, it's in use of reason that we are most like gods, use what's in us, what we think we are (1178a1-2).

D. so H= life devoted to exercise of all virtues but w emphasis on theoret as proper to us and best to us.

E. So where does this leave final arg?

