GROWING UP HAPPY:
ARISTOTLE'S THEORY OF MORAL EDUCATION

by

Lucia Randolph Dow

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Philosophy
University of Toronto

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Growing Up Happy: Aristotle's Theory of Moral Education

Doctor of Philosophy, 1998
Lucia Randolph Dow
Department of Philosophy
University of Toronto

My thesis examines Aristotle's ethics, focusing on his theory of moral education and how it is influenced by his conception of moral excellence. Moral excellence is complex and requires that the parts of the soul be in good condition and in the right relation to each other. The excellent person achieves harmony of thought and desire, which enables him to act consistently for the sake of the noble. Aristotle's model of the acquisition of moral excellence is a developmental one in which the student gradually progresses toward excellence. The child is naturally oriented toward excellence, but his natural capacities must be guided by society and family in order for excellence to be achieved. Aristotle's views on the child's nature and development make nature, habit and teaching all necessary parts of the educational process. In my dissertation, I stress the importance of Aristotle's teleology and concept of nature for his program of moral education, the influence of family and the polis on the child's development, and the interdependence of character and intellectual development.

Moral education occurs in two stages: initial habituation, which is found in the process of education discussed in the Politics, and final habituation, which is found in the lessons contained in the ethical works. The first stage of education exhibits a certain naturalness and relies on a positive starting point and a good social context. The educator
uses the child's impulses toward pleasure and honor and his relationships with family and friends to guide development. Several types of instruction are employed during initial habituation, including musical training, play, imitation, tragedy and repetition of actions.

Moral education requires intellectual training as well as habituation. In addition to helping him to acquire *phronesis*, philosophical justification of the nature of the best life (of the sort found in the ethical works) motivates the student to try to achieve excellence and helps him to perform those acts which will bring the non-rational part of his soul into good condition. This knowledge unifies the student's desires and enables him to consistently choose noble acts, to perform his function and to achieve moral excellence.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have amassed numerous debts, both academic and personal, during the time it has taken me to write this thesis. I wish now to thank the people who have helped me in various ways over the past several years. My supervisor and my advisor, Brad Inwood and Judith Baker, have been unfailingly supportive and patient throughout the time it took me to discover what I wanted to say and then to say it. Brad was everything one could ask for in a supervisor. He was always available to discuss even trivial matters and was able to be critical and encouraging at the same time. His insistence that I had to learn Greek if I wanted to do justice to my topic and his help with that task gave me the confidence to study Aristotle and to be sure of what I was saying. Brad’s ability to reflect on the philosophical issues involved in moral education as well as those related to ancient philosophy helped me to develop my views about Aristotle and to see how his ideas compared with those of other Greek philosophers. I only hope that I can successfully emulate his example if I have an opportunity to supervise students.

Judith’s capacity for analyzing the philosophical content of my thesis and for raising challenging questions is remarkable. She has a unique ability to appreciate Aristotle’s positions and to evaluate them from the inside which combines sensitivity to the history of philosophy with thoroughgoing knowledge of ethics. She was an invaluable resource to me as I developed the central arguments in the thesis and continues to be as I contemplate future work. I am truly fortunate to have had an opportunity to work with two such good philosophers and pleasant people.

There are, of course, other intellectual debts. Although they came to my project rather late in the game, I benefited from the involvement of both Lloyd Gerson and Donald Ainslie. Lloyd’s challenges to my interpretations and my efforts to respond to them no doubt strengthened the arguments presented in my thesis and made me rethink aspects of Aristotle’s philosophy I had previously taken for granted. The few conversations I had with Donald forced me to define my position on Aristotle against those of other scholars in the field and helped me to clarify my own thinking about
Aristotle's moral psychology in particular. In addition, he asked interesting questions throughout the process which have helped me to think of Aristotle not only as a figure to be studied, but also as someone who can be questioned and criticized. There are others at the University of Toronto who have helped me in various ways. Tony Kostroman served as a sounding block and inevitably kept me on my toes, whether with respect to Aristotle's ethics, analytic philosophy, or my attempts to make sense of continental philosophy. Laura Shanner offered advice to me about numerous job related things and solidified my interest in and respect for bioethics. The graduate department and various graduate coordinators were unfailingly supportive, especially at some very difficult times.

I also owe a word of thanks to two people at Trinity College (CT). Helen Lang, my undergraduate advisor, encouraged me to consider graduate school and offered her advice and support at various points during my days as a graduate student. She set a fine example for an undergraduate first learning about philosophy and continues to be a source of support and information about the world of philosophy. I also wish to thank John Williams, a professor of Classics at Trinity, who first recognized my interest in philosophy and offered numerous words of wisdom as my freshman advisor.

My greatest debt of all is to my parents, Bob and Mimi Dow, who never questioned my decision to pursue a doctorate in philosophy and who offered their financial support during the last years of my degree. They have never pushed me to be "practical" and have allowed me to pursue my dreams even when it was not obvious where they would take me. I'm lucky to have parents who understand the important things in life and who have taught me to do the same. My brother, despite his teasing me about my head being in the clouds, appreciated the value of what I was doing and offered his moral support about life in grad school. I only wish Robby were here to see the final results.

Next to my family, Tim has been the most important source of support to me. He has stood by me through the worst times and it is wonderful to be able to share my happiness with him now. His advice about how to finish a thesis, as well as other aspects of being a graduate student, and his patience with me as I inevitably missed deadlines, became frustrated and questioned myself was extraordinary. I have a wonderful group of
friends both here in Toronto and elsewhere who have encouraged me and cheered me on: Tom and Diane (the Friday night sanity check), Mary Leone (who was wise enough not to offer Cristina as research experiment in moral education), Tony, Sheila, Paul, Bob/Rob and Ande, Janice, Tamara, Catherine, Brian and Roni (our golfing partners), Kevin, Kirsten, Rebecca, Aileen, Mary R., Steve, Rich and Toni, Sven and Suzanne, Mel, Shana, Jenny, and others. The friendship of all of these people, as well as that of those mentioned above, has truly meant a lot to me as I’ve made my way through my degree.
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INTRODUCTION

Although he lived in the fourth century BC, many of Aristotle's ideas about ethics are still appealing to contemporary philosophers. This is likely at least in part due to his important insights about the role of emotion and character in conduct. Many philosophers, particularly virtue ethicists, look to Aristotle's theory as a starting point for reasoning about human action and human relations despite the fact that several of the ideas which underlie his claims about moral excellence and excellent action do not appear to be viable today. For example, his beliefs that humans are naturally oriented toward the good and have a natural desire to learn are not widely accepted by contemporary philosophers. In addition, his view of the teleological nature of pleasure would be questioned today. However, Aristotle's recognition of the complexity of human action and the influence of both affective and intellectual responses on action make Aristotle's views appealing and more realistic than many other approaches to ethics, which focus primarily on only one aspect of human action. In this thesis, I will examine one aspect of Aristotle's moral theory which reflects the integration of intellect and character and seems to be particularly promising for contemporary ethics: his theory of moral education.

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1. Anscombe, Foot and McDowell pointed out the benefits of focusing on character and virtue many years ago. More recently, ethicists such as MacIntyre, Slote, Stocker, Solomon and Hursthouse look to Aristotle to ground their approaches to moral theory. The renewal of interest in virtue theories is attested to by such recent collections as Virtue Theory, ed. Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Virtue Ethics: A Critical Reader, ed. Daniel Statman (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997).

2. Aristotle held other views which might be considered objectionable by contemporary philosophers, like his view about the defective nature of women and slaves. These beliefs, however, are not an integral part of his system of moral education and rejecting them does not call the rest of his theory into question.
Aristotle’s theory of moral education is one aspect of his ethical theory which has received comparatively little attention from scholars over the years.\(^3\) Initially, scholars focused on Aristotle’s statement that moral education proceeds through habituation and offered a mechanical interpretation of Aristotle’s theory of moral education which sounded somewhat behavioristic. In the 1970’s and 1980’s this traditional interpretation was challenged by scholars such as Burnyeat, Sorabji and Sherman.\(^4\) They argue that moral education must have an intellectual component in addition to habituation. More recently, Cooper has explored the role of *thumos* in moral development.\(^5\)

Burnyeat focuses on the role of pleasure in helping to account for how practice leads to knowledge. He claims that coming to take pleasure in morally excellent acts helps us to learn that they are excellent and to choose them for their own sakes. He describes the process of habituation and suggests that moral education is really a process of coming to find the same acts pleasant, noble and good. Although Burnyeat gives an


excellent account of certain aspects of Aristotle’s theory, no work of such limited length could treat the topic comprehensively. In particular, his work focuses solely on one aspect of how an agent learns what is good and does not explicitly address how he or she comes to value excellence and hence to act on these judgments. Burnyeat focuses on the final stages in education and does not take up crucial elements in early education.

Cooper’s overview of the process of education is similar to Burnyeat’s, as he acknowledges. Both describe the process as one in which non-rational desires form an attachment to excellent activity which thereby allows the agent to form an intellectual attachment to it. However, Cooper differs from Burnyeat in claiming that thumos and not epithumia is primarily responsible for forming an attachment to the kalon. Cooper’s work on the role of the thumos is fairly speculative and relies on an interpretation of Aristotle’s moral psychology which we will see is not tenable.

Sherman addresses the issues of moral development and education in Aristotle in her doctoral thesis and in her book, The Fabric of Character. In her thesis, she aims to establish the nature of Aristotle’s theory and to place it within the context of other Greek philosophy and drama. Sherman argues that the process of moral education is not like that of learning a skill, but involves a complex set of factors, both intellectual and emotional. She states that moral education is accomplished largely through training the emotions using family ties, music and tragedy. In The Fabric of Character, Sherman’s project is broader in that she addresses the general notion of character in Aristotle, not simply character development. Here she focuses more closely on Aristotle’s theory and its inner workings, but does not provide a complete picture of Aristotle’s theory of moral
education. In particular, her account of the end stages of education and intellectual
development are sketchy. Although she comments on the importance of intellect and on
intellectual development which occurs concurrently with habituation, Sherman does not explain how *phronesis* is attained or how the student achieves the stability of character required of a morally excellent person.

Gerard Verbeke addresses moral education specifically and at length in *Moral Education In Aristotle*. This work articulates many important elements in Aristotle's theory of moral education and provides a good description of the various factors underlying it. However, Verbeke's work, which is derived from a series of lectures, does not go much beyond a general description of the processes and influences involved in moral education. He skirts the issue of how the processes are supposed to work and instead provides a general account of them. Complete though this description is, it leaves the reader with many questions about what the ideas in it mean and how successful moral education is to be achieved.

In this thesis, I will take a broad perspective on Aristotle's conception of the process of moral education and put it in the context of his views on moral excellence and moral development. Examination of any detailed theory of moral education, like Kohlberg's, reveals that there is significant interplay between a philosopher's theory of the good, his or her theory of moral development and human nature and his or her theory

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of moral education. A view about the good determines the end point of moral education. "Moral development" is used to describe the psychological and developmental processes which occur as an individual matures. A theory of development and human nature determines the resources on which a theory of education can draw and the factors it has to accommodate. A theory of moral education is prescriptive: it explains how to go about making individuals into good moral agents. It takes presuppositions about development and uses them to develop a methodology for bringing about changes in an individual so as to help him or her to reach the endpoint of development, moral virtue.

We should not be surprised to discover that Aristotle's theory of moral education is strongly influenced by his views on moral excellence, as well as his views on human nature. The fusion of intellect and character in moral excellence dictates that moral education must foster development in both of these areas. Examination of the process of education reveals that there is significant interplay between development of character and intellect and that the elements of the educational program will influence both of these parts of the soul. Aristotle's theory of development presupposes that humans naturally possess the material of excellence and naturally develop toward it, but that they do not achieve it without guidance. This suggests that Aristotle's response in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1 to the question of whether moral excellence is achieved through nature, intellect or training does not fully reflect Aristotle's complete theory. As we will see, Aristotle believes that all three are essential for a successful education. Because of the

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complex nature of moral excellence, which requires that the various parts of the soul be in good condition and the right relation to each other, moral education is multi-faceted and requires nature, teaching and habit.

Aristotle does not present a systematic account of moral education. My examination draws together his comments from a variety of sources, primarily the two works on ethics (the Nicomachean and the Eudemian), the Politics, the Poetics, and the Rhetoric. Although these works are not all intended to convey Aristotle's views on ethics, the ideas he expresses in them are directly relevant to his beliefs about various issues, like the nature of emotions and the different components in the program of education. We may construct a fairly comprehensive account of Aristotle's views on moral education from these sources.

My inquiry will proceed as follows. First, I will examine Aristotle's views on eudaimonia and moral excellence, showing that excellence was an important part of a eudaimôn life. Regardless of the final determination of whether the eudaimôn life is one of theoretical or practical activity, it contains moral excellence. Therefore, Aristotle had reason to care about moral excellence and moral education. Moral excellence is a hexis of the affective part of the soul which enables a person reliably to choose and perform actions according to reason. It is manifested in action and concerns the experience of pathê, which are intentional and cognitive. The person who is morally excellent

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8 The Rhetoric, in particular, must be regarded with caution as it is intended to serve as a manual for an orator. However, insofar as it contains advice about how to manipulate emotion and about how various age groups differ from each other it does reflect Aristotle's views rather than those of contemporary Athens.
consistently performs acts which fulfill his function, acting according to reason. In order to attain moral excellence, a person must be able to choose well, which requires intellectual excellence and unity among desires. The excellent person achieves harmony of thought and desire, which enables him to act consistently for the sake of the noble.

Following the initial examination of moral excellence and *eudaimonia*, I explore Aristotle's conception of human nature and development. Aristotle believes both that humans are naturally oriented toward excellence and that they naturally possess the emotional and rational capacities necessary to attain full moral excellence. Aristotle's model of the acquisition of moral excellence is a developmental one. Natural capacities help the student to evolve toward maturity, but this evolution must be properly guided by society and family or it may result in non-virtuous states. Aristotle's views on the child's nature and development make nature, habit and teaching all necessary parts of the educational process. Examination of non-virtuous states reveals developmental problems people are commonly subject to and how they influence character.

In the central chapters of the thesis, I reconstruct Aristotle's theory of moral education. Moral education occurs in two stages: initial habituation, which corresponds to the formal education discussed in the *Politics*, and final habituation, which corresponds to the lessons contained in the ethical works. The first stage of education, which shapes both character and intellect, exhibits a certain naturalness and relies on a positive starting point and a good social context. In guiding development, a moral educator is able to take

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9 As a woman living in the twentieth century, I find Aristotle's belief that attainment of moral excellence was limited to men is somewhat disconcerting. Nevertheless, I have decided to adhere to Aristotle's explicit statements and not to revise his philosophy in light of my beliefs about the nature of women. Thus, I will refer to the student of ethics and the person of moral excellence as "he" throughout my work.
advantage of a child’s natural desire to attain pleasure and to avoid pain, his desire for
honor and to avoid shame, his desire to understand, and his philial relations. A variety of
types of instruction are employed during initial habituation, including musical training,
play, imitation, tragedy and repetition of actions. These lessons work together to develop
and shape emotions, as well as to promote reasoning about action. At the end of this
process, the student has a broad range of emotions which respond well to circumstances
as well as an attachment to excellence. He begins to determine for himself what actions
to perform and to identify with his abstract view of the end. He has also begun to assume
responsibility for his own actions, but does not act consistently for the sake of the noble.

In the final chapter, I argue that a student’s moral education must be completed by
philosophical study of ethics, as found in Aristotle’s ethical works. This completes both
character and intellectual training. Although the elements employed during formal
education continue to have some influence over the student’s development, they are not
sufficient to bring him to full moral excellence. From his study of ethics and its
philosophical justification of the good life, the student becomes motivated to strive to
attain excellence. This motivation enables him to adopt an abstract perspective on action
which posits the kalon as the end of action. This, in turn, increases his ability to perform
individual kalon acts, unifies his desires, and helps to stabilize his hexis. The student
attains moral autonomy and can decide for himself what actions are required. He is
capable of legislation and no longer needs to rely on society’s laws to determine what is
just. His understanding of the nature of the best life (which is acquired through
intellectual training) enables the student to consistently choose *kalon* acts, to perform his function and to achieve moral excellence.

My approach to the study of Aristotle’s theory of moral education, which places it in the context of his views on excellence and development has two distinct benefits. First, it reveals the importance of Aristotle’s conception of human nature for moral education, in addition to the roles of intellect and training in the process. We will see how much Aristotle’s account depends on his views about pleasure, honor and the rational capabilities and desires of humans. Without these presuppositions, Aristotle’s theory would not be successful. This is an aspect of his theory which has not received much attention in the past, but which is crucial for the success of Aristotle’s program.

The second result of my examination is that it lends support to an interpretation of moral excellence according to which the non-rational and rational parts of the soul work together in action, with neither dominating the other. We see that during education, both reason and emotion are nurtured. Emotion is not pushed into the background or made submissive to reason, as an intellectualist interpretation might suggest. Rather, it is fostered by, and in turn fosters, moral development. However, reason is also developed during moral education. Aristotle places a premium on acting according to reason and on the possession of *orthos logos*, which demonstrates the importance of reason for moral excellence. During moral education, character and intellect influence each other and come together. This view of the process of education suggests that in a morally excellent person character and intellect continue to work together to promote excellent activity.
CHAPTER ONE: MORAL EXCELLENCE AND EUDAIMONIA

I. INTRODUCTION

Aristotle states that the purpose of ethical inquiry is to assist people in living eudaimôn lives. Examination of his views on eudaimonia reveals that excellence of character is required for a eudaimôn life. In this chapter, we will see how Aristotle’s views about the good life require moral excellence as a constituent and how they inform his views about excellence. According to Aristotle, excellence of character is the excellence of that part of the soul which does not itself reason, but is capable of listening to reason: it is a hexis of desires (δρέξεν) and feelings (πάθη). Possession of this excellence, along with that of the reasoning part, enables an individual to perform his ergon and thereby to attain eudaimonia. The person who is morally excellent manifests a unity of thought and desire which ensures that he acts according to reason. Because of the importance of moral excellence with respect to the human ergon and, therefore, to eudaimonia, we may assume that Aristotle was interested in the process of moral education, which would help people to achieve excellence of character.

II. EUDAIMONIA AND EXCELLENCE

Aristotle’s main goal in the ethical treatises is to help people to achieve eudaimonia. This is the clear implication of Nicomachean Ethics II.2, “[s]ince, then, the present inquiry does not aim at theoretical knowledge like the others (for we are inquiring
not in order to know what excellence is, but in order to become good..." (1103b 27-29). but this interest is implicit throughout the first books of both the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle is concerned to discover the nature of *eudaimonia* (cf. NE I.2 1094a 18-26, EE I.1 1214a 13-21). He is thus interested in *eudaimonia* not for the sake of knowledge, but because knowing about *eudaimonia* will help people to live *eudaimôn* lives: his investigation is a practical one. An examination of Aristotle's views on *eudaimonia* and the relationship of excellence to the *eudaimôn* life will reveal the importance of excellence - both moral and intellectual - to Aristotle. My treatment of Aristotle's views on *eudaimonia* will be far from comprehensive; in particular I will not attempt to resolve the tension between his descriptions of *eudaimonia* in Books One and Ten of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹ My primary focus will be to explicate the role excellence plays in *eudaimonia* and to show how Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia* influences his account of moral excellence and moral psychology.

Before moving to Aristotle's arguments about the exact nature of *eudaimonia*, one of the assumptions underlying Aristotle's analysis should be discussed. He assumes throughout the ethical works (and in the *Politics* as well) that people will only be able to achieve *eudaimonia* in a *polis*. He claims that humans are by nature social - relations with others are important to them - and that they will live in communities, "...by self-sufficient we do not mean that which is sufficient for a man by himself, for one who lives


² I will touch on this issue, however, with respect to my interpretation of *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7.
a solitary life, but also for parents, children, wife, and in general for his friends and fellow citizens, since man is [political] by nature (ἐπειδή φύσει πολιτικῶν ὁ ἀνθρωπός)...." (NE I.7 1097b 8-11. I have changed Urmson's translation of πολιτικῶν as "social" to "political." Cf. IX.9 1169b 17-21, X.8 1178b 5-6). Aristotle's discussion of friendship confirms that he believes humans to be social. He states that no one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all of the other goods (NE VIII.1 1155a 5-6). In the Politics, Aristotle explains that the state arises naturally because humans naturally form relations with others (Pol I.2, esp. 1252b 28-1253a 18). The good life Aristotle describes, then, will be one which takes place in a community and which includes ties to and relationships with other members of the community.

According to Aristotle, the state plays an important role in promoting the good life. Aristotle includes his treatment of the good life for individuals as a sub-discipline of the more general discipline of politics, which is about the end (τέλος) of states (πόλεις) (NE I.2 1094a 26-b 11). This classification presupposes that one of the ends of the state is to promote the good of the individual. This connection between ethics and politics is reinforced in the last chapter of the Nicomachean Ethics, where Aristotle follows Plato's approach in the Laws and refers questions of the education of children to the legislation of the state which is treated in the Politics. In the Politics, Aristotle states that the goal of his inquiry is to consider what kind of community is best for those who are most able to realize their ideal life (Pol II.1 1260a 25-26). He later repeats that the state exists for the sake of the good life of its citizens (Pol III.9 1280a 31-32, 1280b 33-1281a 4).
These statements about the goal of the state, along with the remarks that Aristotle makes in the ethical treatises about man's social nature, indicate that he believes that society will have an important influence on the quality of life the individuals in it lead. Because of the nature of political science, which aims at creating good societies in order to help individuals live *eudaimôn* lives, states exercise a normative influence on the lives of their citizens. The laws and culture they establish will be created with an eye to promoting *eudaimonia* and will set standards for behavior. According to Aristotle, we can therefore expect a good society, which sets the right standards, to exert a positive influence on moral development. In fact, he presupposes such a society in his treatment of moral education. The exact nature of the influence of the *polis* will be examined in detail when I discuss moral education and the role of society in it.

Granted the importance of the *polis* to living a *eudaimôn* life, we may now take up the issue of what this life consists in. After a preliminary examination of common views about different kinds of lives which shows that there is no agreement as to which life is *eudaimôn* (NE I.5, EE L4-5), Aristotle approaches the issue in a more systematic way, by

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3 Aristotle presents the lives of enjoyment, of politics and of contemplation as the three most commonly chosen and suggests that the investigation of the *eudaimôn* life should focus on these. After dismissing the life of pleasure, he makes a few comments about the political life, proclaims the discussion sufficient and postpones the discussion of the contemplative life. The comments he makes about the political life are not sufficient to rule it out however. He rejects the idea that honor is its goal and suggests instead that excellence might be the goal of the political life. He goes on to say that excellence will be too incomplete because it is possible to have it but to be inactive or to suffer great misfortunes. (NE I.5 1095b 22-1096a 5). The fact that Aristotle goes on to examine the life of excellence in great detail (after explaining that the end should be conceived of as a kind of activity) suggests that he has not ruled out the possibility that the political life is *eudaimôn*. The treatment of excellence in the rest of the treatise can be seen as a refinement of the initial understanding of the political life. This interpretation of the ambiguity of Aristotle's comments is also supported by the reference in NE X.7 and 8 to the lives of the politician and the philosopher as being characterized by different types of activities. Kraut makes a similar argument in order to establish a connection between Aristotle's projects in NE I.5 and X.7-8, see pp. 17-19 (Richard Kraut, *Aristotle on the Human Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989)). Reeve takes the opposite position, arguing that Aristotle rules out the political life in I.5 and that the rest of the treatise is about the life of study, see pp. 151 n. 18 and 157 (C. D. C. Reeve, *Practices of Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)).
examining the nature of the good. In Nicomachean Ethics I.7 Aristotle describes different attributes of the complete good (τέλειον ἄγαθόν), shows that they apply to *eudaimonia* and concludes from this that *eudaimonia* is the good that all men seek.

The first characteristic of the complete good is that it is the *telos* of action. From this Aristotle extrapolates that if there is some *telos* of all action, this will be the good of action in general and if there is more than one, each of these will be the good of action: "[s]o if there is an end [telos] for all that we do, this will be the good achievable by action, and if there are more than one, these will be the goods achievable by action " (NE I.7 1097a 22-24). He refines this assertion in subsequent lines by explaining that some ends are more complete (teleion) than others. He asserts that if there is only one complete end, this will be what we are seeking, but if there are many we seek the most complete: "ὡστε εἰ μὲν ἐστιν ἐν τῷ μόνῳ τέλειον, τοῦτ’ ἂν εἰὴ τὸ ζητούμενον, εἰ δὲ πλεῖον, τὸ τελειότατον τούτων" (NE I.7 1097a 28-30). A thing is most complete if it is chosen only for itself and not for the sake of something else. Aristotle continues, saying that *eudaimonia* seems most to be this kind of thing because we choose such things as pleasure, honor, reason and the other excellences for its sake and we never choose it for the sake of anything else (NE I.7 1097a 30-1097b 6). In so far as it appears to be the most complete end sought in action, *eudaimonia* satisfies one of the criteria of the good.

Aristotle then proceeds to show that *eudaimonia* also appears to be the good in light of another characteristic of the good: self-sufficiency (NE I.7 1097b 6-8). After explaining that by self-sufficient he means that which, when taken by itself, makes life
choiceworthy and lacking nothing, Aristotle asserts that *eudaimonia* is considered to be this sort of thing. He says that it is most desirable when taken by itself, although he acknowledges that when goods are combined they become more choiceworthy. Since it is most self-sufficient, Aristotle contends, it satisfies the second criterion of the good. From the fact that *eudaimonia* is both most complete and most self-sufficient, Aristotle concludes that it must be the end of action (NE I.7 1097b 15-21).

Following this, he attempts to determine more specifically what *eudaimonia* consists in. Aristotle reasons from the distinctive *ergon* of man to a conception of what *eudaimonia* must consist in. This line of reasoning appears in both the *Eudemian Ethics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The arguments in both works have been carefully reconstructed and analyzed by Hutchinson. I am not concerned here with the precise development of the argument, but rather with the way Aristotle reasons and the conclusions he draws. Since most attention has focused on the *Nicomachean Ethics* version of the argument, I will concentrate on this. However, as Hutchinson argues, this version of the argument is a more compressed version of the one which appears in the *Eudemian Ethics* and therefore should be understood in light of it.

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4 There is considerable disagreement over how to interpret these criteria of the end and whether they allow for there to be more than one component of *eudaimonia*. This disagreement extends to the interpretation of the function argument and Aristotle’s characterization of the human function. I will treat this debate below, after I have presented my interpretation of the function argument.

5 The *Eudemian Ethics* version is found in EE II.1 at 1218b 38-1219a 33.


7 Ibid. p. 40, pp. 52-53. Hutchinson asserts that although the *Nicomachean Ethics* version is compressed, the arguments are basically in agreement.
Aristotle argues that the good for a human being, as for a flautist, a sculptor and all craftsmen, is in its function - if it has one (1097b 24-28). He claims that the function of man, which is peculiar (idios) to him, is some life of the part which has reason and describes it in the following way:

λείπεται δὴ πρακτικὴ τις τοῦ λόγον ἔχοντος· τούτου δὲ τὸ μὲν ὡς ἐπιπειθὲς λόγος, τὸ δ’ ὡς ἔχον καὶ διανοούμενον. διττῶς δὲ καὶ ταύτης λεγομένης τὴν κατ’ ἑνέργειαν θετέον· κυριώτερον γὰρ ἀντίθετα δοκεῖ λέγεσθαι. εἰ δ’ ἐστὶν ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς ἑνέργεια κατὰ λόγον ἢ μὴ ἄνευ λόγου...

There remains, then, an active life of the element that has a rational principle (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); and as this too can be taken in two ways, we must state that life in the sense of activity is what we mean; for this seems to be the more proper sense of the term. Now if the function of man is an activity of soul in accordance with, or not without rational principle...

(NE I.7 1098a 3-8; cf. Republic I 352e - 354a)

He then explains that in all other cases the function of a thing and of an excellent thing are the same in kind; the latter has superiority according to the excellence of the thing, in addition to its function (1098a 8-11). The function of a good person, then, will be to perform the human function well - that is, according to the proper excellence of humans. Thus, Aristotle concludes that the human good is activity of the soul (the human function) according to excellence. If there is more than one excellence, the good will be the best and most complete of these (κατὰ τὴν ἀριστητὴν καὶ τελειωτὰτην) (NE I.7 1098a 16-18).

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8 Some scholars have questioned whether humans have a peculiar function and what justifies Aristotle in claiming that the human function is reason and not, e.g., senseless violence. They also object to Aristotle’s inference from function to what is good for a person. In “Aristotle’s Function Argument,” Whiting explains the basis for these objections and defends Aristotle’s function argument against them (Jennifer Whiting, “Aristotle’s Function Argument: A Defense,” Ancient Philosophy, 8 (1988), pp. 33-48). For a similar defense of the importance of the ergon argument, see also Achtenberg (Deborah Achtenberg, “The Role of the Ergon Argument in Aristotle’s Ethics,” in Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy Vol. IV: Aristotle’s Ethics, ed. John P. Anton and Anthony Preus (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 59-72).
Aristotle's description of the human function, along with the two criteria of the good presented in the first part of the chapter have caused extensive debate as to whether Aristotle believes the *eudaimôn* life includes more than one component. The two sides of the debate, the "inclusivists" and "exclusivists," or "dominant end theorists" disagree over whether *eudaimonia* is composite. The outcome of this debate is then taken to have strong implications for intellectualism, the view that holds that Aristotle identifies *eudaimonia* exclusively with contemplation.

If Aristotle is taken to be an exclusivist in Book One, the value placed on contemplation in *Nicomachean Ethics* X is held to show that moral excellence cannot be part of *eudaimonia*. Taken to an extreme, this view holds that moral excellence is only instrumentally valuable with respect to *eudaimonia*. At present, virtually no one holds the position that the person living the life of contemplation does not also need the moral excellences. Moreover, most intellectualists argue that these excellences are more than just instrumentally valuable. However, it is difficult to see how moral excellence can be

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9 Hardie first coined these terms, which have framed the discussion ever since (W. F. R. Hardie, "The Final Good in Aristotle's Ethics," in *Aristotle: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. J. M. E. Moravcsik (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday & Co., 1967), pp. 297-322; this is a reprint of an article which originally appeared in *Philosophy*, 40 (1965)).


11 Cooper advances the view that the moral excellences would not be needed in *Reason and Human Good* (John Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975). References will be to the second edition (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1986)). However, he modifies it in "Contemplation and Happiness," (John Cooper, "Contemplation and Happiness: A Reconsideration," *Synthese*, 72 (1987), pp. 187-216). His argument in *Reason and Human Good* does not depend on an exclusive reading of Book One; rather he argues from Aristotle's late *De Anima* psychology that a strict intellectualist interpretation is called for because man is identified solely with theoretical *nous* in *Nicomachean Ethics* Ten and therefore would not need the practical excellences. See pp. 190-195 of "Contemplation and Happiness" for a discussion of Cooper's different views. Kenny (Anthony Kenny, *The Aristotelian Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978)) accepts Cooper's arguments in *Reason and Human Good* for intellectualism (pp. 208-209), but expresses doubt about Cooper's claim that the person
upheld as independently valued on an exclusive reading of I.7, which is the foundation of most intellectualist interpretations of Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia*. Since this chapter defines the criteria for inclusion within *eudaimonia*, if it does not support the inclusion of the moral excellences, it is difficult to imagine where they will be justified in the remainder of the work. Aristotle seems to be content with the account of *eudaimonia* developed in I.7 and following this chapter does not return to the question of what counts as a *eudaimôn* life until the final book, although he does add detail to his account of *eudaimonia* throughout the ethics.

Fortunately, an exclusive reading of the chapter is not decisive and we are not left in the position of hunting for another source of justification for the importance of moral

leading the theoretical life will not also possess the moral excellences (p. 214). Kenny does not state his own view as to the role of moral excellence in *eudaimonia*. Among those who currently hold an intellectualist position, both Kraut, op. cit., and Heinaman (Robert Heinaman, "Eudaimonia and Self-sufficiency in the Nicomachean Ethics," *Phronesis*, 33 (1988), pp. 31-53) assert that moral excellence will be important for *eudaimonia*. Heinaman claims that "perfect *eudaimonia*" consists in contemplation alone, but asserts that moral action has "...intrinsic value independently of any contribution it may make to contemplation, even though it is not a component of perfect *eudaimonia*..." and implies that it will be part of the total life of a *eudaimôn* person (see pp. 51-53). Kraut goes to great lengths to establish the importance of moral excellence despite the fact that *eudaimonia* is said to consist solely in contemplation (see Chapters One and Three). Although I do not find his arguments on this topic persuasive, it is clear from them that Kraut recognizes that moral excellence must be important to Aristotle, even if Kraut's interpretation fails to show why it is important. Reeve, op. cit., asserts that study is complete *eudaimonia*, but that *phronesis* is required as well. The goal of *phronesis*, Reeve argues, is to promote the life of study - it is instrumentally necessary for it (see section 28, pp. 149-159). Reeve's arguments about this are problematic and difficult to decipher - in the course of establishing his view, he takes it that many things "cannot be otherwise" without explaining why this is so.

12 Kraut, op. cit., claims that the function argument is meant to promote both theoretical and morally excellent lives and thus interprets Aristotle as an inclusive intellectualist (see pp. 251-253). I do not agree with his emphasis on deliberation as what characterizes the morally excellent life. He suggests that the reason we perform morally excellent acts is they manifest and promote the end of excellent deliberation (unfortunately, he does not explain how e.g., courage promotes practical reasoning. Maybe excellence leads us to value things correctly and not to get distracted by irrelevant considerations). This does not reflect the intrinsic value which, in my opinion, Aristotle attributes to moral excellence (see 6.3-4, pp. 322-334). Although Kraut recognizes that both kinds of lives are promoted by the function argument, he claims that "best and most complete" at 1098a 17-18 refers to excellence in theoretical reasoning (pp. 239-241). He associates the different kinds of excellence with what he calls primary and secondary *eudaimonia*. Excellent practical reasoning will be manifested in secondary *eudaimonia* and excellent theoretical activity will be manifested in primary *eudaimonia*. 
excellence for eudaimonia. Over the years, numerous arguments in favor of an inclusive interpretation of eudaimonia have been presented. I will not present a sustained argument in favor of an inclusive interpretation here. I will, rather, indicate several reasons to prefer an interpretation of the good life which includes both moral and theoretical excellence. These reasons support my claim that moral excellence will be an integral part of eudaimonia. First, as Hutchinson explains, the reference to “best and most perfect” in 1098a 17-18 should be parallel to one found in the Eudemian Ethics version of the argument, where perfect means total and not highest. The statement should therefore be regarded as supporting an inclusive rather than an exclusive interpretation of eudaimonia. Moreover, in the arguments in I.7 there is no mention of any division within the reasoning part of the soul: the distinction mentioned is between

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13 The following is a representative sample of different types of arguments presented in favor of an inclusive interpretation of Aristotle’s views on eudaimonia. Ackrill examines Aristotle’s conception of eudaimonia as a self-sufficient, final end and argues that these characteristics do not imply that it will be an exclusive end (J. L. Ackrill, “Aristotle on Eudaimonia,” in Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics, ed. Amelie Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) pp. 15-33). Rorty argues that contemplation can occur in either the theoretical or the political life and that therefore the conflict between the two kinds of lives is only apparent (Amelie Rorty, “The Place of Contemplation in Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics,” in Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics, ed. Amelie Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) pp. 377-394). Keyt, op. cit., takes another tack: he argues that what is being supported is a form of “moderate intellectualism” in which theoretical activity is one but not the only component of the best life. His argument depends upon the plausible view that θεωρητικός βίος may include more than just contemplation; it is simply characterized as primarily contemplative. On Keyt’s view, which he terms the “superstructure” view, theoretical activity is pursued only after minimum standards set by morality are met (p. 370). Whiting takes on Cooper’s arguments for an intellectual interpretation and claims, contra Cooper, that Aristotle does not identify man with theoretical nous in Book X and that therefore moral excellence is a component in eudaimonia (Jennifer Whiting, “Human Nature and Intellectualism in Aristotle,” Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie, 68 (1986) pp. 70-95). Roche argues that a close examination of Book One will reveal that Aristotle is proposing an inclusive view of eudaimonia (several of the points in his analysis are similar to the considerations I advance in my analysis of the relation of excellence to eudaimonia). He believes that the decisiveness of the inclusive view in the first nine books of the NE stands against the intellectual nature of Book Ten and that in light of Aristotle’s inclusive position in the earlier books, effort must be made to interpret the problematic passages in Book Ten in such a way that they are compatible with an inclusive reading (he does not, however, provide any such interpretation) (Timothy D. Roche, “Ergon and Eudaimonia in Nicomachean Ethics I: Reconsidering the Intellectualist Interpretation,” Journal of the History of Philosophy, 26 (1988) pp. 175-194).

14 Hutchinson, op. cit., pp. 54-55.
the part which reasons and the part which is obedient to reason. The "reasoning part" must include both practical and theoretical reasoning; the arguments which refer to activity according to reason would therefore support both lives of moral excellence and lives of theoretical excellence. There thus seems to be no foundation at this decisive point for the opposition between practical and theoretical excellence which the exclusivists seek to resolve.

A further indication of Aristotle's attitude toward the life of moral excellence is the fact that he proceeds to examine it in such detail. If it were not necessary for the happy life it would be difficult to imagine why he would analyze moral excellence so extensively. Moral excellence is assumed to be necessary for eudaimonia throughout the treatise. Finally, even in Book Ten of the Nicomachean Ethics, where Aristotle's tendency toward the theoretical life is the strongest, he does not deny that moral excellence will be a component of the best life. After declaring in X.7 that complete eudaimonia will be activity according to excellence of nous, he notes that because of the nature of humans the life in accordance with moral excellence is also considered eudaimôn, although in a secondary way (NE X.8 1178a 9-10, 19-24) The life being discussed throughout the treatment of the eudaimôn life in the latter part of X.8 (1178b 33-1179a 32), although called eudaimôn primarily because of its theoretical activity, is

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15 See, for example the numerous places (e.g., NE II.6 1106a 22-24, VI.12 1144a 6-9) where Aristotle asserts that moral excellence "is the state which makes a man good and which makes him perform his function well." We know from NE I.7 that performing one's function well is equivalent to attaining eudaimonia. I take these comments as indicating that moral excellence makes a person perform his function well in more than just an instrumental sense: morally excellent action is part of what the distinctive human function is. Intermediate action, which is characteristic of moral excellence, is identified as that action which achieves one's function.
found to contain moral as well as theoretical excellence. For example, Aristotle affirms Solon's description of the eudaimōn man as having done the noblest acts and having lived temperately (NE X.8 1179a 9-12). Thus, the theorētikos bios does not contain exclusively theoretical activity and the treatment of eudaimonia in Book Ten does not undermine the inclusive interpretation of eudaimonia. The distinction between the lives of contemplation and moral excellence is a matter of emphasis - the eudaimōn life will contain both. Theoretical contemplation is most characteristic of eudaimonia, but the best life will contain practical excellence as well.\(^\text{16}\)

The first chapters of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, particularly I.7, reveal many important details about eudaimonia. First, it is identified as an activity. The best life will be one of action, which fulfills the distinctive human ergon. Secondly, we see in the function argument the introduction of a distinction which will be critical to the understanding of excellence, that the life of reasoning is comprised of two elements: one which reasons for itself and one which is obedient to reason. The function argument tells us that both of these will be necessary for excellent human action and thus for eudaimonia. Eudaimonia is achieved when man performs his function, acting with or not without reason, according to his proper excellence.

Aristotle comes back to the conception of eudaimonia developed in the function argument in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13. He opens the chapter with a direct reference to the conclusion of the function argument: "...[s]ince happiness is an activity of soul in

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\(^{16}\) I have not addressed the exact relation between the two lives and whether there is a hierarchy between them. I believe the relation is roughly as follows: the theoretical life is privileged over the practical, but practical excellence does not exist for the sake of theoretical excellence.
accordance with complete excellence..." ([ἐ]πεὶ δ' ἐστὶν ἡ εὐδαιμονία ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια τῆς κατ' ἀρετὴν τελείαν) (NE I.13 1102a 5-6).\(^{17}\) He continues, stating that an examination of excellence will help attain a better understanding of *eudaimonia*. According to the arguments in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7, the human function is activity of the soul in accordance with rational principle, which has two parts: one which is obedient to reason and one which reasons (I.7 1098a 7-8, 3-5). *Eudaimonia* is achieved when this activity is carried out in accordance with human excellence (I.7 1098a 7-17). Since *eudaimonia* is achieved when an individual performs his distinctive function in accordance with his excellence, Aristotle claims that understanding more about the human excellence will further the understanding of *eudaimonia*. The resulting investigation reveals a moral psychology which will be influential in determining the nature of moral excellence.

Aristotle begins with the assertion that the good being sought is human good and that this will be an activity of the soul (rather than of the body); moreover, *eudaimonia* has already been described as an activity of the soul (NE I.13 1102a 14-17). With this by way of introduction, Aristotle begins his examination of the soul with the caveat that the soul must be studied only to the extent necessary for the investigation at hand, “for further precision is perhaps something more laborious than our purposes require” (NE I.13 1102a 23-26). In fact, in the next lines (a 26-27), he expresses willingness to rely on an outside

\(^{17}\) The phrasing here matches that at 1098a 16-18 almost exactly, with the exception that Aristotle here refers to *eudaimonia* as being activity in accordance with excellence, where in I.7 he referred to the good in this way. Since Aristotle holds that the good is *eudaimonia* this difference in wording need not concern us; he is clearly referring back to the conclusion of the function argument here.
treatment (ἐξωτερικὸς λόγος) as the basis for the discussion.\textsuperscript{18} Aristotle even appears unconcerned about whether the parts of the soul he describes are actually divisible or not. This comes across most clearly in the \textit{Eudemian Ethics} version of the argument, where Aristotle says, “[i]t makes no difference whether the soul is divisible or indivisible, so long as it has different faculties...” (EE II.1 1219b 32-34). Aristotle is clearly signaling that he is not undertaking a complete analysis of the soul here. His interest is limited to that part (or those parts) of the soul which are relevant to activity; this is what is of interest to the student of politics. Therefore, we should not expect Aristotle’s comments here to be particularly systematic: his interest in psychology is limited by the scope of his inquiry, as he says. It is framed by the question he is pursuing, one about what kind of excellence is relevant to activity of the soul.

The way the soul is presented reflects Aristotle’s aim. He advances a bipartite conception of the soul which divides the soul into two parts: a non-reasoning (ἀλογος) part and one which reasons (λόγον ἔχον). The bipartite division and its relation to Aristotle’s mature psychology have been heavily analyzed. One topic of inquiry is how to understand Aristotle’s bipartition of the soul. It does not seem to me that Aristotle’s bipartite division of the soul is derived from the Platonic tripartition (\textit{Republic} IV 439a - 441c, cf. \textit{Timaeus} 69b - 72d). Although a form of bipartition existed in which the \textit{thumetic} and \textit{epithumetic} parts of Plato’s tripartite soul are collapsed into a single part,

which is then opposed to the reasoning part of the soul, this does not correlate to the
distinction Aristotle draws in his discussion of the soul.\textsuperscript{19} As Vander Waerdt argues,
Aristotle uses different vocabulary (\textit{αλογον}, \textit{λόγον} \textit{εχον}) from the traditional tripartite
vocabulary to refer to the parts of the soul according to his division.\textsuperscript{20} As we will see,
Aristotle's emphasis here is on the combination of thought and desire in action and not on
the different types of desire, which is what tripartition focuses on. Thus, his division of
the soul does not seem parallel to either Plato's tripartite division or the bipartite division
of it.\textsuperscript{21}

A second question which arises is whether this division of the soul is repudiated
in Aristotle's later psychological works. Since Aristotle argues against adopting a
bipartite division of the soul at \textit{De Anima} III.9 432a 24-b 7, many scholars have wondered
whether Aristotle is criticizing his own division of the soul in the ethical works. Some
say that the object of criticism in the \textit{De Anima} is not Aristotle's own views, but those of
a different group of Academics.\textsuperscript{22} However, there are strong reasons for accepting that

\textsuperscript{19} The details of theories of bipartition in the early Academy are sketchy. Much of the evidence comes
from the later Platonic dialogues (\textit{Laws} and \textit{Timaeus}) and from early Aristotelian works (\textit{Topics}). For a
summary of the evidence, see Rees, "Bipartition;" Vander Waerdt, n. 6 (P. A. Vander Waerdt, "Aristotle's
Criticism of Soul Division," \textit{American Journal of Philology}, 108 (1987), pp. 627-643); and Fortenbaugh,
of Aristotle's Bipartite Psychology," \textit{Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies}, 11 (1970) 233-250) and

\textsuperscript{20} Vander Waerdt, pp. 631-632. Aristotle later refers to different kinds of desire as \textit{epithumetic} and
\textit{thumetic}, which may suggest to some that he was adopting a Platonic division of the soul. I will argue
below that the division of desires is limited to action which falls short of excellence and that this distinction
does not apply to the moral psychology of the excellent person, which is characterized more properly
simply by thought and desire. It should not be taken as the basis of Aristotle's moral psychology.

\textsuperscript{21} Thus, although I agree with Fortenbaugh's conclusion that Aristotle's bipartition was not derived from
Platonic tripartition, I come to this conclusion for reasons different than his. See Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle's

\textsuperscript{22} See, for example, ibid., pp. 242-250.
the *De Anima* passage is critical of Aristotle's own bipartite psychology, as Vander Waerdt points out.\textsuperscript{13} What Aristotle is doing in the *De Anima* passage is arguing against any psychology which is grounded on divisions of the soul which are based on the explanation of human action. Since Aristotle makes explicit in the ethical treatises that his discussion of soul is limited to the parts of the soul needed to explain action, his bipartite psychology is as much the subject of criticism as the various Academic versions of bipartition and tripartition. Aristotle's demonstration that moral psychology is not an adequate account of psychology *per se* need not, however, be interpreted as a retreat from his moral psychology. The bipartition of the ethical treatises is well suited for its purposes, but should not be extended to purposes for which it was not intended.\textsuperscript{24} We may, then, accept this bipartite division as Aristotle's considered view on the parts of the soul involved in action.

Aristotle remarks that one aspect of the non-rational part, that responsible for nutrition and growth, is common to all living things and not specifically human. He leaves the nutritive faculty to the side since it has no part in human excellence (NE I.13 1102a 32-1102b 12). It is clear that only those parts of the soul which are relevant to action are of interest to Aristotle.

Aristotle notes that there is another part of the non-rational part of the soul, which he calls a "nature" (ἐσθικε δὲ καὶ ἀλλη τῆς φύσις τῆς ψυχῆς ἀλογος εἶναι) (NE I.13

\textsuperscript{13} Vander Waerdt, op. cit., pp. 630-632. Much of Vander Waerdt's argument for this position takes the form of a refutation of Fortenbaugh.

1102b 13). This part shares in reason in a way, insofar as it can obey reason. Aristotle reasons from the phenomenon of incontinent action, where a person can reason correctly about what to do but does something different, to the conclusion that this part of the soul can either resist or obey reason (NE I.13 1102b 14-24; cf. EE II.1 1219b 40-1220a 4). Again, he expresses no interest in how this part differs from reason (NE I.13 1102b 25). What is important to him is to establish that there is a part of the soul which plays a part in action and is capable of obeying reason, but which is not rational insofar as it does not itself reason.

Aristotle then presents a summary of his arguments in which he recounts the relevant distinctions he has made with respect to the soul. He reviews the distinction made between the different parts of the non-rational part of the soul. In this summary, he emphasizes that one part of the non-rational part of the soul does share in reason in a way. He says:

...τὸ δ’ ἐπιθυμητικὸν καὶ ὅλως ὀρεκτικὸν μετέχει πως, ἡ κατηκούσα ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ καὶ πειθαρχικόν· οὕτω δὴ καὶ τῷ πατρῷ καὶ τῶν φίλων φαμέν ἔχειν λόγον, καὶ οὐχ ὀσπερ τῶν μαθηματικῶν...εἰ δὲ χρῆ καὶ τοῦτο φάναι λόγον ἔχειν, διὸ ἕσται καὶ τὸ λόγον ἔχον, τὸ μὲν κυρίως καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ, τὸ δ’ ὀσπερ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀκοουστικὸν τι.

...but the appetitive and in general the desiring element in a sense shares in it, in so far as it listens to and obeys it; this is the sense in which we speak of paying heed to one’s father or one’s friends not that in which we speak of “the rational” in mathematics...And if this element also must be said to have reason, that which has reason also will be two-fold, one subdivision having it in the strict sense and in itself, and the other having a tendency to obey as one does one’s father. (NE I.13 1102b 30-1103a 3)

25 The text, which reads "πῶς δ’ ἔτερον, οὐδὲν διαφέρει," is not definitive as to what this non-rational part of the soul is being opposed to. Since the previous sentence discusses how this part resists and opposes reason it seems likely that Aristotle is here dismissing the question of how this part differs from reason and not the other part of the non-rational part of the soul or, as Ross’ translation suggests, all of the other elements in the soul. Irwin retains the ambiguity in his translation.
This description contains a number of important points. First, we should note that what is distinctive of this part, according to Aristotle’s comments is not that it is non-rational, but that it is desiderative (orectic). Aristotle has put a label on what is distinctive about the part of the soul that is non-rational, but capable of listening to reason: it is that part of the soul which desires. This will be important when he introduces his views about excellence. Moreover, the division between these parts of the soul is not absolute; they appear to be able to influence each other.

A second noteworthy feature of this passage is Aristotle’s willingness to classify this part of the soul as rational. Aristotle’s remark at 1103a 1-3 is properly taken as a conditional statement which demonstrates his willingness to regard the part of the soul which obeys reason as rational (cf. NE I.7 1098a 5-7) and not as introducing a division within the properly reasoning part, as between e.g., theoretical and practical reasoning. This further suggests that the exact nature of the division between the non-rational and rational parts of the soul (whether these parts are actually separable or not) is of little consequence to him. What is of consequence, however, is that there are parts of the soul which can be in agreement, their proper relationship, or which can be in conflict. Aristotle explains that in the continent person, the desiderative part of the soul is persuaded (πεθορεξείς) by reason (I.13 1102b 26). He then describes the best relationship between these two parts of the soul as one in which the desiderative part of the soul is in

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26 This part is characterized in the *Eudemian Ethics* as being the seat of orexis and pathē.

27 Although this influence has been shown in only one direction, we will see below that the non-rational part also influences the rational.

harmony with reason: "...presumably in the temperate and brave man it is still more obedient; for in them it speaks, on all matters, with the same voice as reason" (ἐτὶ δ' ἵσως εὐηκοώτερόν ἐστὶ τὸ τοῦ σώφρονος καὶ ανδρείου· πάντα γὰρ ὁμοφωνεῖ τῷ λόγῳ) (NE I.13 1102b 27-28). His use of ὁμοφωνεῖν here suggests that in the morally excellent person the desiderative part of the soul does not have to be persuaded by reason because it is already in complete agreement with it.

Aristotle's analysis of the soul has revealed two types of excellence which are relevant to excellent performance of the human function. According to I.7, the characteristic human activity lies in a certain type of activity and the arguments in I.13 show that excellence in this activity depends on the excellence of different parts of the soul. Aristotle will pursue his investigation of excellence from the perspective of the causes of excellent action (excellence of these two parts of the soul) and not just the actions themselves. In order to achieve eudaimonia the different parts of the soul must be in the right relationship. Eudaimonia thus requires excellence in two areas: reasoning and listening to and obeying reasoning. When these parts attain their excellence, they will be in harmony, their proper relation. Aristotle's treatment of the parts of the soul in this chapter shows that the human function is in a sense natural and that achieving it with excellence requires the perfection of elements every person possesses and not the generation of new abilities.

Aristotle's treatment of excellence emerges directly from this investigation of the soul. He states that the human excellences will be divided in the same way (e.g. in terms of the part that reasons and the part that is capable of obeying reason), identifies different
excellences with parts of the soul and observes that both intellectual and moral excellence are commonly recognized (NE I.13 1103a 3-10). The fact that these two human excellences are derived directly from the investigation of soul, which is linked to function, confirms that both moral and intellectual excellence will be required for eudaimonia.\textsuperscript{29} This, in turn, verifies that moral excellence will be a topic of genuine interest to Aristotle and that he had reason to be concerned with how individuals became morally excellent.

III. MORAL EXCELLENCE

In Nicomachean Ethics II.5, Aristotle addresses the question of what kind of thing moral excellence is. He lists three candidates: it may be either a pathos, a dunamis or a hexis. Aristotle’s selection of these possibilities indicates that he regards moral excellence as a kind of quality: these are three of the four kinds of quality listed in the Categories (Cat 8). His views are clearer in the Eudemian Ethics. Although he does not treat all of the possibilities, he says there explicitly that moral excellence is a kind of quality (EE II.2 1220a 37-1220b 20).\textsuperscript{30} In the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle argues by elimination that moral excellence must be a hexis.\textsuperscript{31}


\textsuperscript{30} Moral excellence is a quality because qualities are responsible for a thing’s being qualified in some way. A qualification, Aristotle explains in the Metaphysics, is an attribute of changeable substance in virtue of which, when it changes, it is said to alter. These kinds of qualities are said to include excellence and badness (Meta V.14 1020b 9-25). According to the Categories, qualities are not transient. They refer to something relatively stable in a thing (Cat 8. 9b 33-10 a 10). It is correct to consider moral excellence to be a quality because moral excellence is said to cause the soul to act in different ways. It is believed to be something stable which is responsible for the soul’s acting well - this will be the qualification which the quality of excellence causes. My understanding of the introductory lines of NE II.5 has benefited greatly from Hutchinson’s detailed treatment of them. See Hutchinson, op. cit., pp. 14-20.

\textsuperscript{31} Aristotle asserts that excellence and vice cannot be pathê for three reasons: we do not praise and blame pathê, but we do praise and blame excellence and vice (cf. NE I.12 1101b 10-1102a 4), thus they seem to
The fact that moral excellence is a *hexis* of soul means that it will make the soul either well or ill disposed. Aristotle states in *Metaphysics* Five that a *hexis* is "...a disposition according to which that which is disposed is either well or ill disposed, either in itself or with reference to something else" (Meta V.20 1022b 10-11). We learn from the *Categories* that *hexis* are fairly permanent and difficult to change (Cat 8 8b 28-35). By showing that moral excellence is a *hexis*, Aristotle has also shown that moral excellence is something stable and that it is the source of an evaluative state. He will later draw on this, remarking that moral excellence is the object of praise.

In introducing the things moral excellence might be, Aristotle explains that the kind of *hexis* in question will be "...the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions, e.g. with reference to anger we stand badly if we feel it violently or too weakly, and well if we feel it moderately; and similarly with reference to be different kinds of things. Secondly, he states that excellences are choices or not without choice, but *pathê* are felt without choice. Finally, we are said to be moved by *pathê*, but excellences and vices are said not to move but to dispose us. (NE I.5 1105b 29-1106a 6). The arguments against *dunameis* go much the same way. In fact, Aristotle refers to the first reason, that excellence and vice are praised and blamed, as something which sets them apart from *dunameis*, which are not praised and blamed. Moreover, he adds, *dunameis* are natural but excellence and vice do not arise naturally (NE I.5 1106a 7-10). Once he has eliminated the alternatives, he proclaims excellence to be the only remaining one, *hexis*. In the *Eudemonic Ethics*, Aristotle provides positive arguments for this same conclusion. These arguments are based on the nature of excellence and what kind of thing in the soul would satisfy these conditions (EE II.2 1220b 7-20).

32 Describing moral excellence as a *hexis*, which is a specific kind of disposition, raises a difficult question which I do not have space to adequately address here. A disposition is defined by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* Five as an ordering of parts which can be with respect to place, capacity or kind (Meta V.19 1022b 1-3). We are left, then, to understand in what sense the soul will have parts and how they are properly ordered. Given his description of the parts of the soul in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13, the parts will probably be distinguished with respect to capacity (see e.g., his description of the nutritive part of the soul as a capacity at I.13 1102a 32-1102b 12). It is less clear, however, what the proper ordering will be. Aristotle’s emphasis on acting according to reason suggests that reason will be the leading part, but there is little information in the text about the details of the ordering of the soul.

33 Much of Hutchinson’s book focuses on trying to understand how moral excellence is a *hexis* and the implications of this for Aristotle’s views on excellence. See Hutchinson, op. cit., esp. Chapters 3, 4, and 6.
the other passions” (NE II.5 1105b 25-28). He continues in the next chapter, explaining what sort of state it is:

ρητέον οὖν ὅτι πᾶσα ἄρετή, οὔ ἄν ἡ ἄρετή, αὐτὸ τε εὖ ἔχον ἀποτελεῖ καὶ τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ εὖ ἀποδίδεσιν...καὶ ἡ τοῦ ἄνθρωπου ἄρετή εἰη ἄν ἡ ἐξίς ἄφ᾽ ἥς ἁγαθός ἄνθρωπος γίνεται καὶ ἄφ᾽ ἥς εὖ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἔργον ἀποδύσει.

We may remark, then, that every excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well....the excellence of man also will be the state which makes man good and which makes him do his own work well. (NE II.6 1106a 15-24)

Putting these two facts together, we see that moral excellence is a *hexis* which makes a person well or badly off with respect to his or her *pathē*, where “well” and “badly” are determined by whether the person achieves his or her function. According to *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13, the *pathē* must be in agreement with reason in the case of moral excellence (if they simply obey reason, the state will be one of continence). Moral excellence, then, is a state of the soul which makes the individual experience *pathē* correctly. This, in turn, affects actions and enables him or her to achieve the human function, acting according to reason. Moral excellence, excellence of the desiderative part of the soul, must be the tendency to experience *pathē* that are responsive to reason and not in conflict with it; this will enable an agent to act according to reason. This preliminary characterization of excellence of character is confirmed by Aristotle's description of it in the *Eudemian Ethics*. He says there that states are responsible for whether affections are in accordance with reason or the reverse (EE II.2 1220b 18-20).

It remains implicit in the account of excellence in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.5 that it is concerned with action. The reader may understand this to be the case on the basis of the function argument in I.7, but Aristotle does not come out and say as much in this
formal treatment of excellence (he does, however assert that moral excellence is concerned with actions and passions in both II.3 and II.6). He does make the domain of excellence explicit in the Eudemian Ethics where he says that the function of the soul will be an activity and that the excellence of the soul will be the same, concluding that the activity of excellence must be the best thing of the soul (EE II.1 1219a 25-33). The definition of excellence offered in Nicomachean Ethics II.6 is somewhat broader than that in the Eudemian Ethics and contains elements which have not yet been discussed. Aristotle says there that “[e]xcellence, then, is a state concerned with choice, lying in a mean relative to us, this being determined by reason and in the way in which the man of practical reason would determine it.” (NE II.6 1106b 36-1107a 2). Through the reference to choice, we see again that excellence will be closely bound up with action.

These comments suffice to give an outline of moral excellence, but many important details about Aristotle’s account, some of which appear in the definition cited above, must be filled in in order to reach a comprehensive understanding of Aristotle’s conception of moral excellence. I will divide the discussion according to two primary features of excellence: that it has to do with the pathê and that it is associated with choice and action. Each of these general areas will, in turn, reveal further details about the nature of excellence.

A. MORAL EXCELLENCE IS A HEXIS OF PATHÊ

Aristotle provides only brief explanations of what he understands pathê to be in the ethical works. In Nicomachean Ethics II.5 he says that “[b]y [pathê] I mean appetite
(epithumia), anger (orgê), fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, hatred, longing, emulation, pity, and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure and pain (δλως οίς ἐπεταὶ ἡδονὴ ἦ λύπη)..." (NE II.5 1105b 21-24). His list in the Eudemian Ethics is shorter and the general description of pathê is more detailed than that found in the Nicomachean version: “[by pathê] I mean such things as anger (thumos), fear, shame, [appetite] (epithumia) - in general anything which, as such, gives rise usually to perceptual pleasure and pain (δλως οίς ἐπεταὶ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ ἡ αἰσθητικὴ ἡδονὴ ἦ λύπη καθ᾽ αὐτό)" (EE II.2 1220b 12-14; Woods' translation; I have switched his translation of epithumia from "desire" to "appetite."). These descriptions show two things: that in the ethical works, at least, “pathos” extends to a range of affections which is wider than just emotions and that pleasure and pain are parts of pathê. The terms “pleasure” and “pain” should be understood in more than just a physical sense. The pleasure or pain that is part of a pathos is not physical, but rather stands for the affective component associated with a pathos, the feeling one gets when one is, e.g., truly afraid or joyful. The link with pleasure and pain (which also appears in the Rhetoric account) is an intrinsic one: as the Eudemian Ethics passage suggests, the pleasure or pain is part of the pathos itself. It is not an accompaniment to the pathos, but is actually caused by whatever is said to cause the pathos. This comes across more clearly in the Rhetoric, where pleasure and pain are often included as part of the differentia of various pathê.

Aristotle’s account of pathê in the Rhetoric agrees with and expands upon those found in the ethics with one exception: when he describes the individual pathê in Book Two Chapters One through Eleven, he seems to include as pathê only what we would
consider emotions. Leighton makes much of this difference, arguing that Aristotle’s “true” theory of the pathē appears in these chapters and that pathē are limited to what we call emotions. His arguments that Aristotle justifiably excludes types of desire in this more technical account are not persuasive, however. In particular, his claims that epithumia is not capable of being changed by reason or of altering judgment appear to distort the nature of the desire and to downplay important passages (e.g., NE I.13 1102b 30-34) where Aristotle explicitly says that desire is capable of listening to reason. Since epithumia is a species of desire, it must also share in reason. I do not think desires like epithumia are purposely excluded from the treatment of the pathē in the Rhetoric (especially given Aristotle’s reference to epithumia as part of emotion at Rhetoric II.12 1388b 34-35). Moreover, these desires share many of the characteristics attributed to pathē: Aristotle discusses the proper object of desires in the ethical works, which suggests that it is possible to change them. In addition, they have a cognitive aspect due to their responsiveness to reason and they are oriented toward objects. As we will see, these are all attributes of pathē. Therefore, I will treat Aristotle’s comments in the Rhetoric as applying to desires and emotions alike. Aristotle’s concentration on emotions in Rhetoric II.1-11 is most likely driven by his rhetorical purposes there: inciting emotions is relevant to persuading a jury. This does not mean that they are the only true pathē.

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34 The comments he makes here are in accord with his remarks in the ethics. Aristotle’s objective in this part of the Rhetoric is to teach the orator how to elicit pathē in his audience rather than to recount common views about pathē. Because his goal is to explain how to cause different pathē, we may assume that he is here advancing his own views about pathē and not merely those which were prevalent in society. Thus, applying the Rhetoric’s treatment to the ethical context is not problematic in this case.

Aristotle’s introductory remarks about pathè identify several important properties which pathè possess. He explains what they are and how they are differentiated:

The [pathè] are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments, and that are also attended by pain and pleasure...We must arrange what we have to say about each of them under three heads. Take, for instance, the emotion of anger: here we must discover what the state of mind of angry people is, who the people are with whom they usually get angry, and on what grounds they get angry with them (Rh II.1 1378a 19-25).

The three criteria which distinguish pathè are the feeling that is associated with them, their object and their basis. Each of these characteristics will be relevant to the role of pathè in moral excellence. In addition to the attributes listed here, pathè seem to have a motivational force which will be relevant to their role in action.

The accounts of the various pathè which follow the definition confirm what it suggests: that pathè are both intentional and cognitive. They are intentional because, according to Aristotle, pathè are oriented toward some thing or state of affairs external to the agent (represented in the general account above by “who the people are with whom they usually get angry”). With respect to pathè, “cognitive” indicates that the pathos rests on some kind of grounds, or emerges from a kind of belief. By “belief” I mean belief in

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36 That pathè are both intentional and cognitive has been extensively argued by others and I will not present a detailed argument for this position here. See, for example: Leighton op. cit.; Nussbaum, Therapy of Desire, Chapter Three, “Aristotle on Emotions and Ethical Health” (Martha Nussbaum, Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996)); and Sherman, “Emotions in Aristotelian Virtue” (Nancy Sherman, “The Role of Emotions in Aristotelian Virtue,” Boston Area Colloquium on Ancient Philosophy, 9 (1993), pp. 1-33).

37 Although Aristotle often uses language of perception in describing the judgments pathè emerge from, it is correct to view them as being cognitively based and as being grounded in beliefs rather than appearances. This does not imply that the belief which grounds a pathos is necessarily a true one; what it does, rather, is
an extended sense, where it represents some judgment (not necessarily in the form of a proposition) which the agent takes to be true. This belief does not necessarily have to be articulated, or conscious; it reflects his assessment of the state of affairs. For each of the pathē he treats (I will use envy as an example), Aristotle lists what the grounds are (pain at the good fortune of others), who it is felt towards (equals who have some sort of prosperity we lack) and what the state of mind is (the desire to have what our equals have) (Rh II.10 1387b 21-1388a 28, cf. II.9 1386b 16-20). The pathos is directed at some object, in this case a person's equal, and is based on the belief that this person has something which the envious person desires and does not have, for example wealth or honor. The fact that a pathos rests on a belief about a particular state of affairs is what makes pathē cognitive. That they are directed at some object makes them intentional.

The cognitive, intentional nature of pathē means that it will be possible to evaluate a person's pathē. They may be found to be based on false beliefs or to be in response to the wrong objects. Thus, in the case of envy, for a minor league hockey player to feel envy at the salary recently negotiated by Mark Messier would be wrong

testify to the firmness with which it is held. This position is treated at length by both Nussbaum, Therapy of Desire (pp. 85-86) and Sherman, “Emotions in Aristotelian Virtue” (pp. 13-15). Sihvola argues for a different position, claiming that for Aristotle emotions do not necessarily require beliefs (Juha Sihvola, “Emotional Animals: Do Aristotelian Emotions Require Beliefs?” Apeiron, 29 (1996), pp. 105-144). However, he argues for an expanded notion of phantasia which allows for some kind of assent to appearances (pp. 118-120); this expanded notion incorporates the cognitive content which is ascribed to belief in my account. Thus, the cognitive component of emotion, which is what I am interested in, is affirmed on Sihvola’s account as well. I think that it is more accurate to describe this cognitive element as a belief in the case of emotions which will be relevant to moral excellence because of the kind of effect it has on the agent and the possibility of changing it, which Sihvola recognizes. Sihvola’s argument leaves space for this position; his claim is that not all emotions require belief (in particular animal emotions do not), not that belief is never the cognitive component (see pp. 137-142). In fact, he acknowledges the role of belief in the Rhetoric account and with respect to the emotions I am discussing.

38 Pleasure and pain are similarly characterized as being true or false and as being based on opinion in the Philebus. See Philebus 37e - 40e.
since Messier is not an equal and hence he is the wrong person for the minor leaguer to envy. Although Eric Lindros, another superstar, might legitimately envy Messier’s deal, the minor leaguer cannot. Thus, the minor leaguer’s feeling, although it meets two of the criteria of envy, will not be true envy and his pathos is not considered to be “true” envy.

A second way in which a person might feel envy incorrectly is with respect to its grounds. One way in which this happens is if the person culpably misjudges the situation, as if Eric Lindros hears that Messier has a new contract, but it turns out not to be true. In this case, our evaluation of Lindros’s pathos will depend on how reliable his source was and whether Lindros should have known if the source was not reliable—was it Messier’s agent or a sportswriter well known to be unreliable? If the former, the pathos seems justified (even though the belief underlying it is not true); if the latter, it is not justified since it should be obvious to him that the grounds are not sufficient. A second way in which the grounds can be wrong is if what is envied is not, in fact, worthy of envy. So, for example, it would be wrong if Lindros were envious of Messier’s superstar status since that is something which he too possesses and which does not seem to be a limited resource given the ever increasing number of “superstars” in professional sports. What this tells us is that the beliefs which underlie pathē may be evaluated and, perhaps, changed. Changing the beliefs constitutive of a pathos would presumably change the pathos itself.39 This is a fact about pathē which will be of significance in my account of moral education.40

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39 Aristotle’s remark that excellences are choices or involve choice in Nicomachean Ethics II.5 (1106a 3-4) seems to confirm the possibility that pathē might be altered. Kosman (L. A. Kosman, “Being Properly Affected: Virtues and Feelings in Aristotle’s Ethics,” in Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics, ed. Amelie Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 103-116) and Sherman, Fabric of Character, both
In addition to their intentionality, a second characteristic of pathē is relevant to understanding moral excellence and its association with action. According to the Rhetoric, pathē affect judgments. One way in which pathē may affect judgment is indicated within Aristotle’s explanations of various pathē: it appears as though experiencing certain pathē precludes the possibility of experiencing others. Feeling envy, for example, means that a person will be unable to pity the person whom she envies (Rh II.11 1388a 25-28). According to this account of pathē, if I envy a co-worker for receiving a promotion that I had hoped to get, the affect of this emotion will render me incapable of feeling genuine pity for her when I learn that her father has died. 41 In this case, my pre-existing emotion actually prevents me from reacting to salient features of the present situation correctly and thus from feeling the emotion which it calls for.

However, pathos’ effect on judgment seems to be more widespread than just blocking certain emotions. Given the context in which the discussion in the Rhetoric is taking place (Aristotle is giving advice about how to persuade a jury), this statement should be understood to refer in a general way to people’s interpretations of the various situations they encounter. The best way to understand this claim is that pathē affect judgments indirectly, through their influence on the way a person regards a situation.

explore the question of how pathē may be controlled and look to Aristotle’s views on habituation to explain this phenomenon.

40 I will take up the possibility of changing the pathē and how this would be accomplished in more detail in Chapters Three and Four.

41 It seems possible to me that in this case I could recognize intellectually that my co-worker was deserving of pity and even act as though I pitied her, yet be prevented by my envy from feeling the emotion in the deep way in which we expect a person to feel pity. Thus, although I might recognize that pity is in order, I could not truly be said to pity my co-worker.
Aristotle’s views on thought and perception and the roles the senses and imagination (phantasia) play in perception might help to explain how pathê influence judgment. His ideas on the role of perception in thought are complicated, but seem to be generally as follows. Sense-perception provides raw data which imagination then frames in a certain way; these images then serve as the basis of thought and hence of judgment. Thus, imagination is in a sense like sense-perception and appears to be the medium through which thinking occurs (see DA III.3, 7-8). This description is oversimplified, but captures the relevant features of phantasia: it is grounded in sensory experience and plays a role in judgment. Aristotle nowhere says that pathê are or create phantasia, yet it seems likely that if they influence judgment as Aristotle says they do, they must do so in the same way phantasia do, especially since pathê represent a belief about the world. Pathê would thus affect judgment by framing the agent’s experience in a certain way and coloring his perception.

Aristotle explains that “[w]hen people are feeling friendly and placable, they think one sort of thing; when they are feeling angry and hostile, they think either something totally different or the same thing with a different intensity...” (Rh II.1 1377b 31-1378a 1). Unlike with opposing pathê, in this case the influence of pathê extends to any given

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43 In the Rhetoric the pathê are said to be caused by phantasia. Even on the interpretation which I reject, which construes “phantasia” here as perceptual, this would not imply that the pathê themselves are phantasia, but only that they are caused by imagination. Nevertheless, there is a pronounced perceptive aspect to pathê.

44 Sherman describes this kind of role of emotion in perception. See Fabric of Character, pp. 44-50.
situation or judgment. Thus, for example, I will view a crying baby differently depending on what *pathos* (if any) I am feeling. If I am angry, I am likely to be unsympathetic to the child and to consider her an annoyance. If I am feeling kindly, I will likely view the situation quite differently: I will see the baby as someone in need and interpret her cries as an opportunity to help. Aristotle’s example of *thumetic* acrasia bears out this line of interpretation: the *thumetic* acretic, who is angry, immediately perceives a situation as calling for revenge and begins to act accordingly (NE VII.6 1149a 31-33).\(^4^5\) His anger affects his perception of the situation and he acts without reasoning about what to do. Thus, the way we perceive a given situation will be controlled to a large extent by the emotions we are experiencing. These emotions can be either positive, as when I feel kindly toward the crying baby, or negative, as when I am angry in the same situation. The role of *pathē* in shaping perception will be important with respect to action.

Moreover, the ability to experience a wide range of emotions will help a person to respond well to different situations. That is, if he or she has a rich set of emotions the individual will be moved by situations and will be able to appreciate them for what they are. For example, it is through having an appreciation of what circumstances merit pity that I may recognize situations which call for pity. According to Aristotle, if I do not

\(^4^5\) Leighton, op. cit., proposes an interpretation similar to this with which I am largely in agreement (pp. 212-216). However, his approach attributes certain expectations to emotions which influence how a situation is perceived. This attribution seems unnecessary to me - what Leighton calls the expectation just is the emotion. He says “George is expecting *(dokein, De Somnis 460b6)* fearful events to occur. The object *per se* can be taken for the firing of a gun; and, through expectation, the loud sound is heard, though misheard, by being put together *(suntithemenon, ibid., 460b 13)* as a gun firing.” (p. 214) This interpretation rests on translating *dokein* as “expecting” where it can be taken much more naturally as “appears.” Those in the grip of fear do not think fearful things will happen - true fear is not something we feel with respect to a future event (this feeling is more appropriately labeled apprehension), it is a response to some present stimulus. Thus, if George is afraid now, this colors his interpretation of events in the present and he will be under the impression that something fearful is now occurring (that a gun is firing). His fear does not bring with it any expectations of the kind Leighton ascribes to it.
believe bad things may happen to me, I will not be able to experience this emotion and will not respond appropriately when I encounter someone who has suffered something terrible (Rh II.8 1385b 14-19). Yet clearly pity is to be expected in such a situation. Thus, without the proper emotional background I will not be able to recognize important features of situations or to respond to them in the right way. As Aristotle says, it is important not only to perform the correct act, but also to do it in the right way. This suggests that among other things, the person must have the right emotion when she or he acts.

The final characteristic of pathé which is relevant to the discussion of moral excellence is their role in motivating action. I will briefly sketch out what it is about pathé which gives them motivational force. For Aristotle, desire (orexis) is a source of motivation and acts as the efficient cause of the agent’s action (cf. DA III.10 433a 18-21; DMA 7 701a 34-701b 1). So showing that a pathos is or involves desire shows that it is motivational. Aristotle’s list of pathé in the ethical treatises includes both epithumia and thumos, both of which are themselves types of desire. In addition, several of the pathé include a desire within them. In the definition of anger, for example, Aristotle states that it includes a desire for revenge (Rh II.2 1378a 30). More generally, in the De Anima, Aristotle says “[t]o perceive then is like bare asserting or thinking; but when the object is pleasant or painful, the soul makes a sort of affirmation or negation, and pursues or avoids the object” (DA III.7 431a 8-10). According to the Eudemian Ethics definition of pathé they involve perceiving something as pleasant or painful and should, on this

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46 I will discuss Aristotle’s views on desire and its role in action in more detail in the following section.
account, give rise to pursuit or avoidance. Their connection with pleasure and pain, then, makes pathē a source of movement.

When we combine the understanding of the pathē derived from the Rhetoric with a few additional remarks made in the ethical works, we will have a fairly complete picture of what it means to be well or badly off with respect to pathē. In Nicomachian Ethics II.6, Aristotle explains that striving for the intermediate in pathē and actions will be the most effective way for individuals to achieve their function (NE II.6 1106b 8-16ff). This is not a theory of moderation nor one of quantitative intermediacy - in the course of his discussion Aristotle introduces a number of criteria which govern whether an action or pathos is considered to be intermediate, several of which (e.g., "in the right way") simply cannot be interpreted quantitatively (NE II.6 1106b 21-23). What Aristotle is saying here is that a certain range of pathē, those which are intermediate, will be those which enable a person to fulfill his or her function. This is a theoretical argument which will play a role in education, but which does not provide specific information about how to

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47 Although the perception of pleasure or pain is mentioned explicitly only in the Eudemian Ethics, the fact that pleasure and pain are mentioned as parts of pathē in each of the other definitions justifies taking this De Anima remark to apply to them.

identify intermediate pathē. The standard by which it is determined whether a pathos is intermediate is the logos of the phronimos, which is a concept which never gets fully explained. Hints (but much less detail than we or Aristotle’s students would like) about what will be intermediate in pathē are provided elsewhere in the text.

At this point, it remains unclear exactly how excellence with respect to pathē is connected to reason and why the logos of the phronimos should serve as the standard of the mean. Irwin suggests that with respect to moral excellence, the phronimos is analogous to the craftsman mentioned at 1106b5. As a good craftsman has knowledge of his art and how it is achieved, so the phronimos has knowledge of excellence in action and how it is achieved. The logos of the phronimos will embody his perception of the end and his knowledge about how it is achieved. This logos, or principle, guides the phronimos’ judgment about which actions or feelings are called for (this will constitute the intermediate). For the phronimos, the logos will embody a correct perception of the end, or good, to be achieved in action. The phronimos’ judgment sets a standard for which pathē are considered excellent because he is able to correctly determine what sort

49 I will return to this argument and the contribution it makes to moral education in Chapter Four.

50 See, for example, NE II.2 and II.9. The discussions of the individual excellences will also provide some detail as to what the intermediate consists in for different pathē. Curzer’s complaints about the hollowness of this advice are overstated. Aristotle does not present rules here, but general guidelines. See “Aristotle’s Bad Advice,” (Howard Curzer, “Aristotle’s Bad Advice About Becoming Good,” Philosophy, 71 (1996), pp. 139-146).

51 Irwin, Nicomachean Ethics, p. 314 (Terence Irwin, trans., The Nicomachean Ethics (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985)).

52 This conception of the phronimos has not yet been argued for; I will argue for it in the following section.

53 That “logos” here indicates a kind of principle or rule and not the faculty of reason has been argued by Gauthier and Jolif. They argue (following Stocks, Lord, and Burnet) that the dative following the passive voice of ὅπιςεῖν indicates not a faculty but a norm. See Gauthier and Jolif, op. cit., pp. 146-149.
of response is appropriate to a given situation. Moreover, his conception of the end will not only guide his reasoned response, it will also shape the cognitive content of his pathê. If his comprehension of the end alters his evaluative judgments, this will have an effect on his pathê. As he understands the proper place of, e.g., sex in the best life, he may begin to have a different attitude towards it; presumably he will begin to desire it only when it is appropriate. His desire would then be considered to be intermediate.

From the idea of the mean and the phronimos as its standard, we may infer that being well off with respect to pathê will involve hitting the mean, or standard set out by the phronimos. This, in turn, implies that the pathos must be felt in response to its proper object, for the right reasons, in the right amount and so forth. The conditions Aristotle lists in Nicomachean Ethics II.6 (at the right time, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way) correspond closely with the characteristics of pathê which Aristotle describes in the Rhetoric (their characteristic feeling, their object and their foundation). That is, his descriptions of the pathê seem to tell us what constitutes experiencing the emotion in the right way. Aristotle provides a similar kind of description of the various excellent hexeis in Books Three and Four of the Nicomachean Ethics. For example, in his treatment of good temper, the excellence concerning the pathos of anger, he explicitly lists the criteria of the mean and says that those who satisfy them are praised, implying that they have excellence with respect to this pathos (ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐφ’ οἷς δεῖ καὶ οἷς δεῖ ὁργιζόμενος, ἢτι δὲ καὶ ως δεῖ καὶ ὅτε καὶ ὅσον χρόνοιν ἐπανείτατι) (NE IV.5 1125b 32-33). This suggests that the Rhetoric's conditions under which a pathos is correctly felt are the same as those which constitute its
excellence. So, when one consistently experiences the right *pathos* correctly and at the right time, one will have achieved the corresponding excellence. This is significant because it indicates that the process of achieving excellence in a given area consists in refining *pathê*, not in eliminating them.

B. EXCELLENCE CONCERNS ACTION

In his analysis of action, Aristotle is particularly interested in actions on which we bestow praise and blame. The acts for which we are praised and blamed are those for which we are responsible and those which indicate the presence or absence of excellence.⁵⁴ This line of reasoning is clear in *Eudemian Ethics* II.6:

...since excellence and vice and the resulting deeds are in some cases commended and in others blamed (for blame and commendation are not given to things which occur of necessity or by luck or in the course of nature, but to all things we ourselves are a cause of; since for things that someone else is the cause of, he gets the praise and blame), it is evident that excellence and vice have to do with those things of which a man himself is the cause, a starting-point of actions. So we must determine of which a man himself is the cause, and a starting-point. Now we all agree that all those things that are voluntary and in accordance with an individual’s choice he is a cause of...So it is evident that both excellence and vice must concern the things that are voluntary. (EE II.6 1223a 9-21; Wood’s translation)

Aristotle’s investigation of voluntary actions is conducted with an eye to determining which actions man is morally responsible for, presumably because these will help to understand and evaluate character.

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⁵⁴ See Meyer for an insightful, detailed treatment of Aristotle’s conception of moral responsibility. Meyer argues that although Aristotelian agents are not radically free in a modern sense, they are sufficiently responsible for their actions for his view to constitute a theory of responsibility. (Susan Sauve Meyer, *Aristotle on Moral Responsibility*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993)).
Voluntary actions are those actions the moving principle of which is in the agent and which are done knowingly (NE III.1 1111a 23024). This group of actions includes both those done under duress (as when a ship’s captain throws his cargo overboard in order to save the ship in a storm) and those done from anger and appetite (NE III.1 1110a 4-33, 1111a 25; cf. EE II.7 1223a 29-b 30, II.8 1225a 2-19). Following his preliminary discussion of voluntary action, Aristotle comments that a certain group of voluntary actions, those which are chosen, will be the best evidence of character (NE III.2 1111b 4-6; cf. EE II.11 1228a 12-16, Rh I.8 1366a 13-15). Choice is distinguished from other kinds of voluntary actions by the presence of thought, i.e. deliberation (NE III.2 1112a 15-17).

According to Aristotle, choice requires both thought and desire, but is identified with neither. In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle describes it as deliberative desire of things which are within a person’s power (ἡ προοίμεσις ἃν εἶη βουλευτική ὀρέξις τῶν ἐφ’ ἡμῖν) (NE III.3 1113a 11). He explains that it is not of ends, but of what will contribute to ends (NE III.3 1112b 15-19). Thus, when an agent chooses, he or she has some end in view and then deliberates about how to bring it about in action. The end, or object of desire, is the source of movement and serves as the final cause of movement (DA III.10 433a 13-28). It is important to remember, however, that saying that the object of desire is the cause of movement does not preclude reason from playing a role in the formation of desire and the selection of ends. The desire provides motivation to act

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and reason determines which act will most efficiently bring the agent to his or her end.\footnote{Aristotle says that agents deliberate about things which are toward ends (βουλευόμεθα δ' οὖ περὶ τῶν τελῶν ἀλλὰ περὶ τῶν πρὸς τὰ τέλη) (NE III.3 1112b 11-12). As Cooper and Sorabji (among others) have demonstrated, things which are toward the end will not be limited to instrumental means (Cooper, \textit{Reason and the Human Good}, pp. 19-22; Sorabji, op. cit. pp. 201-205). Deliberation may include determining the constitutive parts of the end, as well as refining one’s understanding of exactly what the end consists in. Thus, to take an example of Aristotle’s, one stage of deliberation about how to attain a covering is to recognize that a cloak is a covering (DMA 7 701a 15-20). This step in the deliberative process is one of determining more precisely what the end consists in or of refining the understanding of it. We should interpret Aristotle’s statement that deliberation is not of ends as indicating that for any given process of deliberation an end is posited as desirable and that an agent does not deliberate about whether that end should be sought (cf. Sherman, \textit{Fabric of Character}, pp. 71, 83). This requirement does not imply that an agent cannot deliberate about e.g., what would count as achieving the end, as well as about the most efficient means by which to bring it about. It simply asserts that once an end has been posited an agent does not deliberate about its desirability. See Wiggins, “Deliberation,” pp. 222-227 (David Wiggins, “Deliberation and Practical Reason,” in \textit{Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics}, ed. Amelie Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 221-240); Dahl, Chapters Three and Five (Norman Dahl, \textit{Practical Reason, Aristotle and Weakness of the Will} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984)); Nussbaum, \textit{Fragility}, Chapter Ten (Martha Nussbaum, \textit{Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)) and \textit{Love’s Knowledge} Chapter Two (Martha Nussbaum, \textit{Love’s Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) (this appeared previously as “Discernment of Perception”)); and Sherman, \textit{Fabric of Character}, Chapter Three for interpretations of practical reasoning which draw upon this expanded notion of what is deliberated about. While I agree with Wiggins’ and Nussbaum’s arguments about deliberation including determination of constituent parts of the end, they go further than I do with respect to deliberation about the end. Wiggins, in particular, seems to stretch Aristotle’s meaning in Book Six of the \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} when he ascribes selection of ends to \textit{phronesis} and the intellect (see e.g., Wiggins, “Deliberation,” p. 230).}

Once deliberation determines an action a person can perform, deliberation is concluded (NE III.3 1112b 15-19). The actions determined by deliberation are the objects of choice; these will be the actions which are most indicative of character (NE III.3 1113a 3-12).

Because choice is determined by both the agent’s ends and the way he or she reasons about how to attain them, it reveals character most accurately. Choices reveal how a person reasons about complicated situations as well as how he or she selects one among many possibly disparate ends - e.g., whether to keep a promise to a friend or to promote personal gain - as that which should be pursued. Simply observing someone’s actions will not necessarily differentiate between characters. A person may be acting
under compulsion so that an act which would normally be a sign of a vicious character would not be so. Similarly, acts done in ignorance, although possibly voluntary, will not reliably indicate character. Finally, even seemingly excellent actions will not necessarily serve as a sign of excellence: an enigmatic person might perform the same act as an excellent person, but does not merit the designation of excellence. Only by determining the choice from which the action resulted will characters be properly differentiated. Both enigmatic and excellent persons reason well about what action to perform, but only the excellent person has the right end (EE II.11 1227b 14-24).

In *Nicomachean Ethics* II.4, Aristotle asserts that a person of moral excellence always acts from choice (NE II.4 1105a 31-32). According to the analysis of choice in Book Three, we should expect all of the excellent person’s choices to emerge from the process of deliberation (cf. NE V.8 1135b 8-11). However, in his discussion of courage, Aristotle remarks that courageous actions which are performed on the spur of the moment are considered to indicate character better than those which are the result of calculation:

...also it is thought the mark of a braver man to be fearless and undisturbed in sudden alarms than to be so in those that are foreseen; for it must have proceeded more from a state of character, because less from preparation; for acts that are foreseen may be chosen by calculation and reason, but sudden actions are in accordance with one’s state of character. (τὰ προφανὴ μὲν γὰρ κἂν ἐκ λογισμοῦ καὶ λόγου τις προέλαβο, τὰ δ’ ἐξαίρητας κατὰ τὴν ἔξιν) (NE III.8 1117a 17-21)

Although Aristotle is reporting popular views here, he does appear to agree with them, as he is including this observation as an indication of why people think sanguine men are brave: they share this characteristic with brave men. Due to the speed of the response, it is clear that the agent will not have deliberated about his action since deliberation is
conducted slowly (NE VI.9 1142b 2-5). In this case, it is just those acts which do not allow for reasoning and choice which are taken to indicate a person's character.

Aristotle's acceptance of this example indicates that in some cases he will be willing to agree that an excellent agent may perform excellent acts which are not the direct result of deliberation. This is not to say that the intellect makes no contribution to these acts. It may indeed be responsible for the agent's quick judgment about what action to perform. The person's intellectual excellence might help him to recognize just what action is required in the situation without having to explicitly reason about it or his previous deliberations might shape his present response. However, this kind of reasoning ability does not satisfy the role of deliberation in choice which is articulated earlier in Nicomachean Ethics Book Three. Deliberation was said to proceed from an end set by boulēsis through a reasoning process and to culminate in the recognition of an action that could be performed. In this case, the reasoning process is clearly not so explicit and so it should not be regarded as a typical case of deliberation.

Aristotle's account of moral excellence as requiring choice and his claim that choice requires deliberation must be less stringent than they initially appear if he is

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57 Sorabji's claim that there is something like deliberation in this case is not convincing. See Sorabji, op. cit., p. 205. The reasoning that is involved in spur of the moment judgments does not fit the description of deliberation found in Nicomachean Ethics Books Three and Six. Although there is a reference to quick deliberation in Book Six Chapter Eight, this is a comment about the relative speed of deliberation (as compared with other instances of deliberation) and not a claim that deliberation can be completed in an objectively short amount of time.

58 Cooper argues that these acts will nonetheless be chosen; they will simply not be calculated. See Cooper, Reason and Human Good, p. 7. See also Sherman, Fabric of Character, pp. 81-82 for a similar interpretation.

59 A similar situation is alluded to in the De Motu Animalium account of practical reasoning, where Aristotle states that sometimes agents may act without calculation (DMA 7 701a 26-29).
willing to classify this kind of courageous action as excellent. Cooper suggests that the requirement of deliberation be understood more broadly, so that it will accommodate more than just the kind of calculation described in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3. Since many excellent acts do not seem to be the result of this kind of deliberation and Aristotle's own theory of moral development allows that some aspect of learning what to do relies on habituation rather than deliberation, Cooper argues that Aristotle must have asserted a different, weaker connection between decision and deliberation. He proposes that we take the requirement of deliberation to mean that "moral decisions are always backed up by reasons which, when made explicit, constitute a deliberative argument in favor of the decision" and not as an indication that each choice is itself the result of deliberation.60 This view maintains the role of the intellect in justifying choices while eliminating some of the troublesome features of the assertion that choice requires deliberation.

Since excellent acts are characterized primarily as chosen, understanding the constituents of excellent choice, right desire and thought, and how they are combined in action will help us to understand more about moral excellence and the morally excellent person. This examination will reveal that desire and reason together form the choices of the morally excellent person. Not only is choice comprised of the union of these two elements to such an extent that *prohairesis* may be considered either desiderative thought or deliberative desire, but each element helps to shape the other. The excellent person's affective response will influence his judgments about what action to perform and his comprehension of the end will influence his desires. The morally excellent person's

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60 Cooper, *Reason and Human Good*, pp. 7-10. Of course in cases where it is not evident what should be done the agent will deliberate.
prohairesis represents a combination and agreement between two elements which are often, in non-excellent action, opposed to each other: thought and desire. Aristotle's acceptance of two different ways of describing prohairesis testifies to their synthesis in choice.

Excellence in thought is relevant to excellent action in two ways. First, phronesis has a distinctive characteristic which promotes excellence in action: the person of practical wisdom has orthos logos, a correct conception of the end of life which enables him to find truth with respect to things which can be otherwise. This quality will help a person to select the right ends and to understand why they are the best ends. The understanding of the phronimos will also help to shape his desires correctly. Secondly, phronesis ensures that reasoning about particular actions and choices will be carried out well. One of the characteristics of phronesis is excellence in deliberation, which enables agents to determine the best way to achieve ends.61

In Nicomachean Ethics Book Six, Aristotle says that the phronimos has a general understanding of what is best for man which he aims at in action (NE VI.5 1140b 4-5). This knowledge extends beyond particular situations; in fact Aristotle claims that the phronimos grasps universal truths about human experience: "[n]or is practical wisdom concerned with universals only - it must also recognize the particulars; for it is practical, and practice is concerned with particulars" (NE VI.7 1141b 14-16; cf. NE VI.8 1142a 12-

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61 This ability is not limited to phronesis. Aristotle states that another rational ability, cleverness, is also able to determine which means promote ends (NE VI.12 1144a 23-28). Phronesis differs from cleverness in that it is oriented toward the best ends. We will see below that this distinction is not simply a verbal one; with his understanding of the best life the phronimos adopts particular ends which best promote eudaimonia.
17). The kind of universals Aristotle is concerned with here are general truths about what is good for man, like truths about what kind of meat is healthy. This group of truths should also include moral truths.

These truths would be learned by induction from experience, as is suggested in a difficult passage in Chapter Eleven of Book Six, where Aristotle appears to be saying that *nous* grasps the particular facts from which universals are reached (NE VI.11 1143a 35-b 6; cf. Meta I.1 980b 26-981a 13).62 This process of induction from experience helps to explain why young people are not considered practically wise: as Aristotle points out in the following lines, age and experience help people to perceive things correctly and, presumably, to correctly comprehend them. Because older people have a wealth of experience to draw upon, they will be more likely to have grasped universal truths about what is best for man and hence they will be better able to determine what action is best in a given situation.63

In order to be of genuine service in practical reasoning, it seems that the universals derived from experience must be integrated into some broad conception of the best life. In order to order experience properly and make sense of it, a person must have some set of concepts in light of which to analyze his experience; in the case of practical experience, these will be some kind of ethical concepts. By using these concepts, the

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62 Dahl argues for this interpretation of the passage, as well as for the claim that universals are learned through induction. See Dahl, op. cit., Chapter Three and Appendix One. Cf. Wiggins, "Deliberation," pp. 236-237 for a similar reading of this passage.

63 For an interesting general discussion of experiential knowledge and its epistemic status, see Frede (Michael Frede, "Aristotle's Rationalism," in Rationality in Greek Thought, ed. Michael Frede and Gisela Striker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 157-173). Although Frede's primary focus is not on the ethical works, his distinction between the epistemic status of knowledge and what causes knowledge has interesting implications for ethical knowledge.
person of practical wisdom will be able to give coherence to his lived experience and to form a vision of the best life. The reference to the logos of the phronimos as the standard for the mean in Nicomachean Ethics II.6 alludes to some kind of overarching view of the best life, as we saw above, as do Aristotle’s remarks about the importance of having a target to aim at in one’s life. The imagery Aristotle uses is telling: he speaks of orthos logos as setting a standard for intermediacy which serves as a mark which is aimed at:

έν πάσαις γὰρ ταῖς εἰρημέναις ἔξεσθι, καθάπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων, ἔστι τις σκοπός πρὸς ὅν ἀποβλέπων ὁ τῶν λόγων ἔχων ἔπιτείνει καὶ ἀνίησιν, καὶ τις ἕστιν ὦρος τῶν μεσοτήτων, ὡς μεταξύ φαίμεν εἶναι τῆς ὑπερβολῆς καὶ τῆς ἔλλειψεως, οὕσας κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον.

In all the states we have mentioned, as in all other matters, there is a mark to which the man who possesses reason 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 right reason. (NE VI.1 1138b 20-25)

By assimilating the standard of the phronimos to a target aimed at in action, Aristotle implies that there is some fixed conception with reference to which the phronimos judges action, not just a set of disparate universals. Having a set of targets would leave open the question which one to aim at in a given circumstance. Since the excellent person always chooses the correct action, he must have some overarching view which orders his ends.

The vision of the end is not a detailed description of the best kind of life to live. This kind of description would most likely be too rigid to accommodate the variability of life. The phronimos’ conception of the end more likely relies on some kind of theoretical understanding about what is best for man which allows him to mediate between different particular ends.64 I will argue in Chapter Four that this theoretical understanding is

64 This does not mean that ends must be commensurate in a strong sense. Part of the phronimos’ excellence will be in judging well among incommensurate ends. At the most abstract level, ends will be
generated from the kinds of lessons found in the ethical treatises. The *phronimos'* understanding of the best life promotes excellent action and helps to anchor his practical deliberations: he knows not only what are the best ends to pursue, but also why they are best.\(^{65}\) This knowledge grounds his individual judgments about particular ends and increases his motivation to perform them.

From his general conception of the end, the *phronimos* is able to determine individual ends which can be realized in action. His knowledge of the best life helps him to discern particular ends and to determine what constitutes the end to pursue in a given situation. Given the complexity of everyday life, where numerous obligations can impinge on one at the same time, the ability to determine which to satisfy is crucial to excellent activity. Because of his comprehension of the best life, the *phronimos* is able to correctly determine what end to adopt in a given situation. For example, he might be presented with a situation where he can either apply to graduate school or law school. His decision about whether to adopt the end of attending graduate school or law school will be influenced by his understanding of the nature of the best life; he will adopt that end which constitutes the best life for him.\(^{66}\) He may adopt these ends through a process of deliberation similar to that described above or the end may be immediately obvious to

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\(^{66}\) These particular ends might also be viewed as means to the more general goal of living a *eudaimon* life.
him. In either case, he will be discovering how best to achieve the good life in a given set of circumstances. It is this ability which most sets him apart from those who are not excellent.

The *phronimos'* insight into the best life, which is the defining characteristic of *phronesis*, grounds his particular judgments and ensures that he always acts for the good. His knowledge and insight impart stability to his judgments. The *phronimos'* abstract understanding of the end plays an important role in excellent action: it helps him to set determinate ends for action and to understand why these ends promote the best life. His conception, which is quite general, operates as a standard by which alternative courses of action are measured. The understanding of the end also serves as a kind of framework which orders his particular ends and desires.

The abstract understanding of the best life may have an influence on the desires of the excellent person through shaping his beliefs. This is an effect which I will explore in greater detail in Chapter Four, but it is worth noting now. Since a person's desires are to some extent shaped by his or her beliefs, we should expect the beliefs the *phronimos* has about the best life to exert an influence on his desires.

The role for excellence of practical thought which comes across most clearly in the text is its contribution to practical reasoning, which includes both deliberation and the

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67 The excellent person's understanding of the best life does not enter directly into his deliberations about how to act. That is, each time he reasons about what to do, he does not begin with his conception of the good life and deduce the best action from it. This view is adopted by Cooper and other "Grand End," or blueprint, theorists. See Cooper, *Reason and Human Good*, p. 85. On Aristotle's account reasoning is not deductive in this way - the conception of the end will not be sufficiently detailed to permit deduction in most cases and, as we saw above (pp. 48-50), the excellent person sometimes responds without stopping to deliberate about what action to perform.
practical syllogism and determines specific choices and actions. With respect to choice, Aristotle says that *phronesis* guarantees that deliberation is conducted well (NE VI.5 1140a 28-31). In his discussion of voluntary action, Aristotle describes the process of deliberation as one which takes a given end and reasons about how to achieve it, "[h]aving set the end they consider how and by what means it is to be attained; ... 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 the last" (NE III.3 1112b 15-19). For a particular end, thought determines how best to bring it about; the result of deliberation is the choice of some action as the best way of achieving a given end. When the opportunity for action arises, the person should act. As I noted above, the process of deliberation is not limited to the discovery of means; it may also refine the agent's understanding of the end. The ability to do this well, excellence in deliberation, is a kind of correctness in thinking where a person expediently reaches the right conclusion in the right manner, through the right inference, or process of deduction (NE VI.9 1142b 22-28). The person who has practical wisdom will thus be able to deliberate excellently with reference to a particular end.

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68 In "Deliberation," Wiggins argues persuasively that there is a continuity between the account of deliberation in *Nicomachean Ethics* Three and the treatments of practical reasoning in Books Six and Seven.

69 There has been considerable discussion about the nature of the outcome of practical reasoning. There is disagreement as to whether to regard the conclusion as a proposition or an action. Charles argues in Chapter Two that the outcome is a proposition (David Charles, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Action* (London: Duckworth, 1984)); Nussbaum argues the contrary, that the conclusion is an act (see *De Motu*, Essay Four). Another issue, which seems to underlie the previous question, is whether Aristotle recognized the possibility of future intentions. Different approaches to show that Aristotle’s model of practical reasoning did allow for future intention can be found in Cooper, *Reason and Human Good*, I.2-3, Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, Chapter Three and Nussbaum, *De Motu*, Essay Four.
Aristotle offers a different model of reasoning in his treatment of incontinence and in other texts which address animal movement. According to Aristotle, a person begins with a universal premise which expresses an end and combines it with a particular premise to reach a conclusion about action:70

The one opinion is universal, the other is concerned with the particular facts, and here we come to something within the sphere of perception; when a single opinion results from the two, the soul must in one type of case affirm the conclusion, while in the case of opinions concerned with production it must immediately act (e.g. if everything sweet ought to be tasted, and this is sweet, in the sense of being one of the particular sweet things, the man who can act and is not restrained must at the same time actually act accordingly). (NE VII.3 1147a 25-31)

When the particular premise is obvious, Aristotle explains, a person does not always stop to consider it - sometimes a person acts right away without calculating (DMA 7 701a 26-29). The practical syllogism offers a more detailed account of the type of reasoning described earlier in the discussion of deliberation.

The description of the practical syllogism does not perfectly match the account of deliberation found in Book Three, but the reasoning process in each seems to be similar. In both cases one starts with a general conception, whether an end or a universal judgment, and then determines a specific action to perform based on what is practicable in a given circumstance. In the case of deliberation, potential actions are judged in light of the end, which is regarded as good, and a choice results. In the practical syllogism, a judgment about a class of actions is combined with a perception that a particular circumstance falls within the class to yield an action.71

70 The same general description of action is found in the description of action in De Motu Animalium (DMA 7 701a 8-701b 1).

71 Various other interpretations of the practical syllogism and its role in explaining action have been suggested over the years. Nussbaum argues that the practical syllogism is meant to provide a schema for a
Because practical reasoning is concerned with particular actions in specific situations, perception plays an important role in good practical reasoning. Aristotle remarks in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.8 that *phronesis* is concerned with particulars, which are objects of perception (NE VI.8 1142a 23-30). In order to reason well about what achieves his or her ends, a person must have a correct impression of the particular circumstances; this impression will be based on perception. It will be through perception that an agent comes to recognize the (morally) relevant features of a situation.\(^{72}\) Aristotle's description of the minor premise in the practical syllogism makes direct reference to the contribution of perception: in order to act, a person must recognize that circumstances call for it. This recognition is attributed to the work of perception. Having decided, for example, that I ought to do more to help the homeless, I recognize through perception that a homeless woman's request will give me an opportunity to do so and so I buy her dinner.

This kind of perception is not simple sense perception, as Aristotle notes in Chapter Eight of Book Six (NE VI.8 1142a 27-29). Rather, it refers to the general ability to classify experience and to recognize the opportunity for action. It is responsible not only for an agent's awareness of the opportunity to act on antecedently held desires as in the case of the practical syllogism, but also more generally for discerning what action will best achieve a given end. This determination requires sensitivity to the particular context

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\(^{72}\) See Wiggins, "Deliberation," p. 235-236 and Sorabji, op. cit., p. 206 for general remarks about the role of perception. Others who make more specific arguments about the role of perception in practical reasoning will be noted below.
of the action which will be conveyed via perception. The phronimos' knowledge of the end will help him to make these determinations and to order his perceptions.

Good perception requires both the intellectual capacity to comprehend salient features of a situation and good character. We saw above that perception can be influenced by pathē. If a person is unduly influenced by incorrect pathē, he or she might not perceive the situation correctly and will come to an incorrect conclusion about what to do. For example, a parent's anger and embarrassment at a child for saying something inappropriate might cause him to overlook the child's immaturity and weak judgment skills and to treat her more harshly than her actions deserve. A person of excellence will not have such a strong emotional reaction and will be able to recognize this as an opportunity to teach the child about e.g., compassion for others. Having good character and the intellectual ability to recognize opportunities to achieve ends enables the excellent person to perceive a situation accurately and to make excellent choices.

In an important way, the phronimos' prohairesis is dependent upon his intellectual excellence. His conception of the end facilitates his reasoning about what to do in particular situations and anchors his judgments about what specific ends to pursue. It also operates in the background, helping (along with excellence of character) to order

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73 This role of perception has been discussed extensively by Nussbaum. Her argument is developed in a series of works: De Motu Essay Four; Fragility Chapter Ten; and Love's Knowledge Chapter Two. See also Sherman, Fabric of Character, Chapter Two and Woods, "Intuition and Perception," (Michael Woods, "Intuition and Perception in Aristotle's Ethics" Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, 4 (1986), pp. 145-166). Woods appreciates the importance of perception and the role of the particular in moral judgment. However, I disagree with his assertion that the phronimos' knowledge of the end is to be identified with the recognition of the particular action to perform and his rejection of the role of induction.

the excellent person’s perception of his circumstances. His deliberative ability enables the *phronimos* to determine which action best promotes his end in a given situation.

Aristotle often remarks, however, that thought by itself cannot lead to action - *prohairesis* also requires some kind of desire. According to Aristotle’s account of action, desire is what moves the agent (NE VI.2 1139a 32-36; cf. DA III.10 433a 22-25). Although the object of desire is the source of motion, desire is the efficient cause of motion. When discussing the choice of the person of practical wisdom in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says that it must manifest right desire (ἡ ὑρεξίς ὁρθή) (NE VI.2 1139a 24,30). He continues, stating that desire aims at good action (ἡ γὰρ εὖπραξία τέλος, ἡ δ’ ὑρεξίς τοῦτον) (NE VI.2 1139b 3-4). This brief discussion tells us that the desire which underlies the *phronimos’* choice is the desire to act well. Thought is directed toward this end and choice is of that course of action which constitutes “good action” in a given situation. As I will argue below, in the case of excellent action choice may be made under a different description: the agent may choose an act because it is pleasant, but it will also be good.

The desires of the excellent person are wholehearted - he does not experience the conflict of desire often experienced by those who have not achieved excellence. In describing the excellent person’s relationship to himself, Aristotle states that his opinions are harmonious and that he desires the same things with all of his soul: “οὗτος γὰρ ὁμογνωμονεῖ ἑαυτῷ, καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ὑρέγεται κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν ψυχήν” (NE IX.4 1166a 13-14). In other places, Aristotle describes the excellent person’s desires and choices as being for the sake of the noble (e.g., NE III.7 1115b 13-14, III.8 1116a 29, IV.1
1120a 23-24); in Book Seven he comments that the temperate person does not feel pleasure contrary to reason (VII.9 1151b 35-1152a 4). From these comments, we envision the excellent person as someone who has a unified desire which is oriented toward excellent action (the kalon). The act which satisfies the desire to act well also satisfies his other types of desire. Because he possesses phronesis, the excellent person is able to determine correctly what the best action consists in in a given situation. Thus, in virtue of his ability to discern the kalon and his wholehearted desire for it, the excellent person is consistently able to choose and perform the best actions.

When we regard the excellent person from the perspective of his choices, we form the image of a person with the intellectual and motivational capacity to reliably select excellent actions. His thought and desire fix on the same actions. This person acts in light of his accepted end and his desires are determined by his character and reflect his end. We see in this person a unity of thought and desire which makes Aristotle’s lack of concern as to the exact nature of choice understandable - when thought and desire come together in excellent choice it really makes no difference whether choice is intellectual desire or desiderative thought (διό ἢ ὑρεκτικὸς νοῦς ἢ προαιρεσίς ἢ ὑρεξίς διανοητική) (NE VI.2 1139b 4-5). Aristotel’s interest here and in his treatment of the

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The unity between thought and desire is reflected in the difficulty in classifying boulēsis according to the division of the soul Aristotle describes in Nicomachean Ethics I.13. In I.13, Aristotle explains that the division relevant to performance of function is between desire and reasoning. One’s function is best achieved when the desiderative part of the soul is in harmony with reason. On this division, boulēsis would appear to fit in both parts: the desiderative because it is a form of desire and the reasoning because it is rational. Indeed, in other texts it is ascribed to both parts: in the De Anima and the Rhetoric it is described as the desire of the rational part of the soul (DA III.9 432b 5, Rh I.10 1369a 1-4), but in the Politics it is associated with the non-rational part, since it develops prior to reason (Pol VII.15 1334b 18-24). Aristotle urges against dividing orexis in the passage from De Anima and uses the inevitability of its division to criticize tri- and bipartition of the soul (see Vander Waerdt, op. cit., pp. 639-642 for an analysis of Aristotle’s arguments in this passage). Boulēsis seems to cut across the division of soul which is relevant to excellent action. In the excellent person, this division fades and thought and desire come together, making
choices of the excellent person focuses on how character and reason come together in the choices of the morally excellent person. This account of the choices of the excellent person reflects the unity between thought and desire: his choices are determined by the rational and non-rational parts of the soul together. This description of the excellent person's choice is consistent with Aristotle's division of the soul in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13.

The unification of two elements which are traditionally opposed to each other (thought and desire) in the morally excellent person's choice also occurs with respect to the desire of the excellent person. Whereas in most cases epithumetic, thumetic and rational desires fix on different objects and therefore conflict with each other, in the person of moral excellence they fix on the same objects. Aristotle's views on pleasure, the kalon and the good guarantee that a soul which is in excellent condition will find each of these desires best satisfied in the same object. Thus, in the case of moral excellence, not only do the objects sought by the different types of desire not come into conflict with each other, they necessarily coincide. This strong agreement, or unity, between different types of desire in the excellent person allows us to characterize a single occurrent desire by more than one label - a single desire may be e.g., bouletic and epithumetic. As with choice, excellent desire manifests agreement where there is usually conflict and allows

the characterization of boulēsis less problematic. See my discussion of the division of the soul above, pp. 23-28.


This interpretation of pleasure will be defended in Chapter Three.
for blurring of distinctions between different types of desire which may be relevant to cases of non-excellent action.

In the discussions of choice and action in Nicomachean Ethics Book Three and Eudemian Ethics Book Two, Aristotle employs the traditional Academic division of desire, as found in the Platonic dialogues. The Academic division of desire emerges from Plato's treatment of the soul in the Republic and other dialogues. In Republic IV, Plato argues for the existence of three parts of the soul: the rational, the desiderative and the spirited. Each of these parts is characterized by a different type of desire (435c-441d; cf. 602e-604d and Phaedrus 246a-248c). The different desires are defined in large part by their opposition to each other: "each desire in itself is of that thing only of which it is its nature to be" (Republic IV 437e). The desire for pleasure, then, will be only for pleasure and not for any other end. Each desire not only seeks its characteristic object, but also rejects the objects of the other types of desire. According to Plato, a single desire cannot satisfy the description of more than one type of desire: it must be appetite or wish or thumos. In Plato's Ethics, Irwin describes the division as follows: "...in dividing the soul he [Plato] does not appeal simply to conflicting desires, those that in fact tend to move the agent in incompatible directions; he appeals to desire that oppose other desires by explicitly rejecting them..."78 Although each of the parts of the soul has a different end, they can be brought into harmony, which represents the best condition of the soul. When the parts are in harmony and each performs its own function, the soul is led by reason and achieves unity (Republic IV 441e-444a; cf. IX 586d-587a).

In *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three, Aristotle identifies three kinds of desire as being relevant to action, *boulēsis*, *epithumia* and *thumos*.\(^79\) The types of desire are differentiated by the types of object they pursue.\(^80\) *Boulēsis* is characterized as desire for the end, or good (*NE* III.4 1113a 15-16; III.5 1113b 3). *Epithumia* is desire for pleasure and *thumos* for revenge (*NE* III.2 1111b 16-17, Rh I.10 1369b 11-16). *Boulēsis* is associated with the rational part of the soul and *epithumia* and *thumos* are associated with the non-rational part.

In his technical account of choice, Aristotle apparently grants that since things are chosen with a view to an end and the desire of the rational part of the soul, *boulēsis*, is for ends this will be the kind of desire relevant to choice; he states, "[t]he end, then, being what we wish for (ὁντος δὴ βουλητὸ δὲν τοῦ τέλους), the things contributing to the end what we deliberate about and choose..." (*NE* III.5 1113b 3-4, cf. EE II.10 1226b 2-4). On this interpretation, rational desire is for an end about which we then deliberate and for the sake of which we choose actions. Aristotle has already shown that *epithumia* and *thumos* are not the proper kinds of desire to serve as the foundation of choice and *boulēsis* seems to fit the role nicely:

Those who say it is appetite (*epithumia*) or anger (*thumos*) or wish (*boulēsis*) or a kind of opinion do not seem to be right. For choice is not common to irrational creatures as well, but appetite and anger are. Again, the incontinent man acts with appetite, but not with choice; while the continent man on the contrary acts with choice, but not with appetite. Again, appetite is contrary to choice, but not appetite to appetite. Again, appetite relates to the pleasant and the painful, choice neither to the painful nor to the pleasant. Still less is it anger; for acts due to anger

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\(^79\) Desire is likewise divided into three parts in other texts. See, for example, *Rhetoric* I.10 1369a 1-4; *Politics* VII.15 1334b 21-24; *De Motu Animalium* 6 700b 23-25, 7 701a 30-701b 1. The division also appears in the *De Anima* III.9, 10 and 11 but Aristotle does not explicitly endorse it in this context.

\(^80\) Cf. *Phaedrus* 253c - 254e.
are thought to be less than any other objects of choice. But neither is it wish, though it seems near to it... (NE III.2 1111b 11-20)

We will see below, however, that this fit is not as good as it initially appears to be.\(^{81}\)

If one attempts to analyze the *phronimos’* choice and desire according to Aristotle’s discussion of these topics in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three or *Eudemian Ethics* Book Two, problems arise because this discussion presupposes a more general context and is meant to apply to non-excellent action.\(^{82}\) The treatment in these books follows the Academic tripartite division of desire and describes situations where there is conflict between desires or between reason and desire. Since the morally excellent person does not experience these conflicts, the account offered in Book Three is not well suited to describe his choices.

Based on the fact that the morally excellent agent always acts from choice and on the initial description of choice and action, it appears as if the chosen acts of an excellent person should all come from *boulēsis* since the choices of an excellent person are described as being for the right end (NE VI.2 1139a 32-1139b 4). On an Academic account, where desires are divided according to their objects and the desire characteristic of choice is taken to be desire for the end, the desires of the excellent person should be

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\(^{81}\) The following discussion identifies the difficulties of applying the Academic division of desire to the morally excellent person’s desire, but does not provide a definitive solution. While I think the solution must be roughly as indicated here, the details of my position have not yet been fully worked out.

\(^{82}\) In the discussion of spur of the moment choices above we have already noted one: that some of the choices of the excellent person do not appear to be the direct result of deliberation. This difficulty was resolved by allowing the possibility of a broader notion of deliberation, where it extends to previous deliberation and to the excellent person’s ability to formulate a deliberative argument in support of his action. Thus, the excellent person’s choices may be made against the background of his prior deliberations about and understanding of the end, even where explicit deliberation does not occur. This way of accommodating deliberation is similar to the way we allowed that *pathē* might be chosen (see footnote 39 above): in both cases the attribution of the relevant term (deliberated or chosen) is justified in light of prior activity of that type (deliberation or choice).
considered *boulēseis* since *boulēseis* are for the end, or good. If we accept this sharp division of desires, we must identify all of the occurrent desires which move the excellent person as *boulēseis* since these are the desires which are oriented toward the end.\(^83\)

Classifying the excellent person's actions as emerging from *bouletic* desire does not seem accurately to reflect the quality of the occurrent desires underlying all of his actions, however. The excellent person's desires will all be characterized as *boulēseis* because he is described as always acting for the sake of the end and from choice. Presumably, however, he continues to have non-rational desires and to satisfy them (cf. NE VII.14 1154a 17-19).\(^84\) He continues to perform acts which are appetitive in nature: he enjoys eating, sex and other such activities. The morally excellent person is described as a normal person who experiences a range of feelings (*pathē*) which are associated with the non-rational part of the soul. What sets the morally excellent person apart from others is not that he does not experience feelings, but that he does so properly: his desires and emotions agree with reason because they all fix on the same objects and actions (cf. NE II.5 1105b 25-28; EE II.2 1220b 18-20). In his treatment of temperance, Aristotle specifically refers to the excellent person's appetitive element as "harmonizing with reason" since both aim at the *kalon* (διὸ δεῖ τοῦ σῶφρονος τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν συμφωνεῖν τῷ λόγῳ: σκοπός γὰρ ἀμφότερον τὸ καλόν, καὶ ἐπιθυμεῖ ὁ σῶφρων ὃν δεῖ καὶ ὡς δεῖ καὶ ὡς... (NE III.12 1119b 15-17). This comment clearly implies that not

\(^{83}\) I follow Mele's distinction between occurrent desires, which are those which directly account for motion, and dispositional desires, which are not oriented toward specific actions. See Mele, "Aristotle on the Roles of Reason," pp. 124, 136.

\(^{84}\) I will speak in terms of appetitive (*epithumetic*) desires, but these points will apply equally to *thumetic* desires.
only does the temperate man retain *epithumetic* desires, but also that they and not *boulēsis* are what is relevant to this excellence. Moreover, they are described as oriented not just at pleasure (which must be presupposed since they are *epithumetic* desires), but also at the *kalon*.

The excellent person clearly continues to have desires on which he acts (and hence chooses) which are non-rational in origin, for example the desire for food. If we adopt the Academic division of desires which distinguishes sharply between different sorts of desire, we must account for the desire motivating the excellent person’s distinctively appetitive actions in some way. If we want to say that the morally excellent person has appetites he acts on, then according to the Academic division of desire we will also be committed to saying that he acts for the sake of pleasure and not for the sake of the end, contrary to Aristotle’s explicit statement that morally excellent agents always act for the sake of the end. This consequence is implausible. Therefore, if we seek to maintain the Academic division of desires with respect to the morally excellent person, we will be forced to deny that he will have appetitive desires, to re-describe the excellent person’s appetitive desires as *boulēseis*, or to assert that he is moved by two desires. As I will argue below, all three of these options are unacceptable because none successfully captures the desire underlying his choice.

One possible way to account for the *epithumetic* desires of the excellent person is to deny that they are *epithumetic* in nature. This is the route the Stoics took.\(^{85}\) This line

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of interpretation asserts that occurrent desires of the morally excellent person are caused by reason and that therefore even the desires which are traditionally considered non-rational (e.g., the desire for pleasure) are rational in the morally excellent person. Thus, the morally excellent person's desire to eat cake is perceived as being caused by his knowledge that it is good in this situation (for example, at a birthday party) and hence as being caused by reflection about the good and attributable to the rational part of the soul. On this account, the morally excellent person ceases having non-rational desires even though he continues to enjoy traditionally non-rational pleasures. This line of explanation refers to a desire's agreement with reason and takes this as a sign that the occurrent desire is caused by reasoning about the good and concludes that it is therefore rational in nature. However, this explanation is problematic: nothing Aristotle says suggests it and it is hard to accept such a radical theory without supporting evidence. So, as far as we can tell, the occurrent desire in the morally excellent person's epithumetic action has its origin in the non-rational part of the soul and is not caused by a process of reasoning about the best life.

A similar response focuses on the desire's agreement with the action determined by reason as of primary importance and re-describes the occurrent desire as boulēsis, which is the desire that agrees with reason according to the Academic division of desire. As we saw above, since the person of excellence always chooses his acts knowingly and for the sake of the end, any desire he feels will satisfy the definition of boulēsis, desire for the end. If we accept a simple account, where only one of the three types of desire may motivate action, then it appears as if we must conclude that boulēsis is the relevant type
of desire since what is considered significant is that the agent acts from choice and for the sake of the end. In this case, the actions of the excellent person which satisfy the appetites are viewed as the result not of *epithumia*, but of *boulēsis*.

This solution is clearly not satisfactory: the occurrent desires in morally excellent appetitive action are characteristically appetitive (*ἐπιθυμεῖ ὁ σώφρων...*) (NE III.12 1119b 17) as well as fulfilling the description of *bouletic* desire. It would be strange to think of an excellent agent’s desire to eat a sandwich as a rational desire just because it coincides with what is determined by his view of the end. This line of argument would attribute the motivating desire in the action to a different source (*boulēsis*) because of a secondary characteristic of the object of desire. The excellent person’s desire for food or sex should be the *same sort* of desire as the non-excellent person experiences; to describe it as rational, or *bouletic*, would be to transform it into a different type of desire simply because the object of desire agrees with the agent’s view of the end. Saying that these desires are *bouletic* suggests that they are directed toward an overarching end, which is not characteristic of the desires for food and sex. While it is true that the moral status of a person influences his response to desires and even the desires themselves, it is odd to think of the characterization of these desires as being altered because they fix on the same object as is determined in light of the agent’s understanding of the end. On the other hand, to label these appetitive actions the result of *epithumia* also seems odd since they are not in conflict with reason and according to the traditional Academic division of desires this is one of the marks of action stemming from *epithumia*.\(^\text{86}\) In the case of

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\(^\text{86}\) In “Aristotle’s Wish,” Mele acknowledges the difficulty in classifying *prohairetic* desires according to these three types, but is not troubled by it, p. 152 n. 20 (Alfred Mele, “Aristotle’s Wish,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 22 (1984), pp. 139-156).
appetitive action, the desire which the morally excellent person acts upon is genuinely appetitive, yet it will also fix on the same object which satisfies the agent's desire for the end. There is a strong connection between the morally excellent person's different types of desire which defies division. The two approaches which acknowledge actions motivated by epithumetic desire but classify them as resulting from boulēsis render inadequate accounts of the excellent person's appetitive action because they change the source of desire from pleasure to the desire for the end.

A second way of accommodating actions from appetitive desires is suggested by Sherman. She maintains that there is one occurrent desire, but claims that it must be affirmed in light of the end: "...although appetites and emotions can initiate actions by positing a practical good or end, the choice-making involved will be narrowly prudential (merely voluntary), except in those cases in which the ends are viewed as part of a more comprehensive conception of how to live well."\(^{87}\) Sherman's contention is that in order to count as prohaireseis, actions initiated by the non-rational part of the soul (as epithumetic actions are) must be perceived by the agent as cohering with his view of the end. Since we know that the excellent person chooses, on Sherman's account his appetitive actions must be performed in light of his view of the end - he must engage in some sort of conscious assessment of the act. That is, before performing the action, the agent ensures that it is not in conflict with the act determined by his view of the good life. This suggests that part of the motivation for the act is its promotion of the good life,

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\(^{87}\) Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, p. 81. Sherman makes this comment in reference to the actions of the akolastos, but they should apply to the kind of action I am discussing as well since it also originates from appetite.
which is characteristic not of *epithumetic* desire, but of *boulēsis*. The fact that the reference to the end and *boulēsis* is secondary in motivating the act weakens the notion of *boulēsis*. This process of assessment also alters the nature of the occurrent desire. Sherman's account is inadequate to maintain the division of desire and at the same time accurately describe the choice.

By requiring that the appetitive end be regarded as part of the conception of the good life, Sherman suggests that the occurrent desire which moves the agent is actually *bouletic*. In order to qualify as excellent, the action must be performed in part, at least, because it coheres with the end; without this *bouletic* element, it will not count as a choice. However, insofar as this *bouletic* desire operates in the background, or as a kind of check, it is not clear to what extent it makes sense to say that it is the operative desiderative element in the choice. It is appetite which really seems to initiate the action; the action's agreement with the agent's view of the end simply permits him to perform the action. The occurrent desire is not *boulēsis* as it is described in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three since the good life is not the end which is actively chosen. This weakens the notion of *boulēsis* by suggesting that additional motivation might be needed for the agent to perform the action. According to *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three, *boulēsis* should be sufficient to motivate action once deliberation is complete. If appetitive desire is also required in some cases, *boulēsis* does not fully account for those choices. This brings *boulēsis*' motivational efficacy into question.

Imposing the condition of consultation of the comprehensive end of life also alters the nature of the appetitive desire. It seems to be its agreement with the end of life which
justifies calling the judgment based on this desire a choice. This means that what is important is that it agrees with the good, not that it is pleasant. While this makes sense with respect to Aristotle’s account of choice in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three, it alters the quality of the occurrent desire. Appetitive desires are for pleasure and should move an agent to an action not because it is good, but because it is pleasant. Moreover, appetitive desires have an urgency which is undermined by this kind of explicit consultation of the end. So, if we were to grant that the moving desire is appetitive, we would transform it by suggesting that before acting on it, it is evaluated with respect to the good life. When an agent has a desire to drink (an appetitive desire), he does not stop to deliberate about whether acting on the desire harmonizes with his conception of the best life before acting. Rather, he just drinks (cf. *Republic* IV 439b). The traditional division of desires cannot accommodate Sherman’s account: her description requires the occurrent desire to have both *bouletic* and *epithumetic* aspects. In pursuing this line of explanation, Sherman is implicitly moving away from the Academic model on which *boulēsis* is always sufficient for action and toward a hybrid or generic type of desire of the kind I will describe below.89

A third way to account for *epithumetic* actions is to posit two occurrent desires as determining the action. Cooper takes this approach, claiming that both *bouletic* and *epithumetic* desires are operative. He says that:

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88 Of course, there may be exceptional cases where deliberation is necessary, but in most cases of appetitive action, the agent will just act.

89 Although I do not think this explanation of the excellent person’s desire works in terms of the Academic division of desire, I think it is moving in the right direction. The solution I suggest below is similar to it in some respects except that I ascribe reason a removed, developmental role whereas Sherman attributes it with an immediate, causal role.
He or she will act from his or her rational desire to so act (a *boulēsis*, i.e., a *prohairesis*), which explicitly rests on, is caused by, the reasons, as represented in deliberation and its conclusions, that he or she has for so acting. But he or she will also experience, and act from, some set of non-rational desires active at the moment, which also contribute their motive force in favor of this action.90

This position differs from Sherman's in that it requires not just reference to the end, but an actual, independent occurrent desire for it. Cooper later adds that rational and non-rational desires come into play independently of each other. Thus, the action is jointly caused by the two desires, either one of which would be sufficient on its own.91

This line of explanation is not satisfactory for several reasons. On Cooper's account, which stresses the independence of the different kinds of desire, there will be two desires which move the agent (the desire for pleasure and the desire for the end), not one. Although it is logically possible to be moved by two independent desires, I cannot imagine how this could be the case with action as described by Aristotle. In all cases where there seem to be two desires, we are inclined to look for one as ultimate. According to the Academic division of desire in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three, *epithumetic* desire is for pleasure and *bouletic* desire is for the end. On Aristotle's model of action, assessment of an agent depends on which desire is acted upon: is he acting for the sake of the *kalon* or for the sake of pleasure? If both kinds of desire come into play

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91 If Cooper's account is that the motivating desires are not sufficient to cause the action independently of each other, the efficacy of *boulēsis* will be undermined. As I noted above in my discussion of Sherman's position, *boulēsis*, rational wish for the end, should be sufficient to move the agent; requiring *epithumetic* desire in addition suggests that the fact that an act is justified in light of the end will not guarantee that the act will be performed, contrary to Aristotle's accounts of *boulēsis* and *prohairesis*. As akratic action shows, *epithumia* is also strong enough to initiate action on its own. Cooper must mean, then, that these acts have two causes and are causally overdetermined.
independently in determining action, evaluation of the agent’s character requires determining which desire is decisive in motivating the action. Saying that both desires motivated the act independently of each other does not provide an adequate description of the agent’s motivation. An observer is left wondering why the agent acted as he did. In addition to these reasons to question Cooper’s account, there is no textual indication that this was Aristotle’s position: he does not mention two occurrent desires in his descriptions of any of the individual excellences.

Cooper’s interpretation, like Sherman’s, also results in changes in the nature of epithumetic action. It is unrealistic to describe the morally excellent person as forming a wish based on his view of the good life before he acts each time he experiences an epithumetic desire. Desire of this sort usually has an immediate effect which precludes the agent from stopping to deliberate. As with sudden actions, the fact that his actions can be justified is a sign that the actions may be regarded as chosen, which requires simply thought and desire, not that they must come from bouletic type of desire. We see, then, that boulēsis might not be the desire characteristic of all of the excellent person’s actions.

The difficulties in interpreting the desires of the excellent person in terms of the three types of desire found in Nicomachean Ethics Book Three lead me to the conclusion that Aristotle moved away from the Academic account of desire found in Nicomachean Ethics Book Three in his treatment of the desire of the person of moral excellence. With sudden action, there is evidence that the requirement of deliberation is waived in some

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92 If, as I contend below, the desires do not operate independently of each other, this difficulty will be avoided.
Explicit deliberation is not called for in each case, though it may operate in the background of the morally excellent person's choices, by shaping appetite during the process of development. In this way, appetitive action will still manifest thought and desire, thought just does not take the form of explicit deliberation. Although he does not explicitly describe the desires which motivate the morally excellent person, there are indications that Aristotle retreated from the Academic characterization of desires in the case of persons of moral excellence. Aristotle refers to the morally excellent person as wishing for the good in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Nine, which supports classifying his desires as *boulēseis* (NE IX.4 1166a 14-15), however he also refers to *epithumetic* desires and the desire for the *kalon* in describing the actions of the morally excellent person in the description of individual excellences, so textual evidence is not decisive with respect to the nature of the desire. In fact, Aristotle most often refers to the desires of the excellent person generically, as being excellent desires. In the *De Anima*, Aristotle speaks of the *orectic* element as being the source of movement and is wary of dividing this element further (DA III.9 432a 15- III.10 433b 30).

As I noted above, the desire underlying the morally excellent agent's appetitive action is genuinely *epithumetic* since its object is pleasure, but also satisfies the description of *bouletic* desire because it selects the *kalon* in light of the end. The desire is most properly characterized as appetitive because its explicit object is pleasure. In cases of *epithumetic* action, e.g., eating, the good person performs the act because it is pleasant,

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93 If explicit deliberation is not required in all cases, this weakens the requirement that the desire underlying the excellent person's choice must be *boulēsis* since one reason for thinking that *boulēsis* is the relevant kind of desire is that this is the desire which is associated with deliberation.
not because it is good. Moreover, the excellent agent might be moved by his *epithumetic* desire without pausing to deliberate about the action or reflecting on whether it promotes his end. It is typical of *epithumetic* desires that they move an agent without deliberation and we should therefore also expect this to be the case when the excellent person acts from *epithumia*. Since *boulēsis* requires deliberation, the occurrent desire does not perfectly match Aristotle’s description of *boulēsis*. For these reasons - the object of the desire and the way it moves the agent - the occurrent desire will be characterized as *epithumetic*.

If we regard the morally excellent person as acting from a unified occurrent desire, which does not imply conflict between the objects sought by different types of desire, we will be able to offer a more accurate description of his *epithumetic* actions than the Academic division permits. This generic desire could have aspects which correspond to each of the Academic types of desire. We know from *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13 that the non-rational and rational parts of the soul come together in the morally excellent person (NE I.13 1102b 24-28). In the case of excellent action, the same object necessarily satisfies the desire for pleasure and the desire to perform the best action. Therefore, unlike the non-excellent agent, the morally excellent person does not experience any conflict of desire in his choice of action. For this reason, although he maintains three distinct objects of desire, there is no reason to analyze the morally excellent person’s occurrent desire according to the Academic schema. We are better off remaining at a more general level of description which does not separate desires, as

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94 Due to his successful development, he can be confident that his non-rational desires are well trained and that they will fix on their proper objects.
Aristotle does in *De Anima* III. 9-10. If we do this, our description of the desire will be able to reflect the strong harmony which exists both within the soul and between desires. The appetitive action of the morally excellent person draws on *epithumetic* motivations, but this does not conflict with his desire for the end.

The agent’s dispositional desire for the end and comprehension of it influence his occurrent desires and cause them to take on the best objects. This orientation makes the desires which motivate the agent satisfy the requirements of *boulēsis* as well as those of *epithumia*. Aristotle remarks in several places that the person of moral excellence finds the correct objects pleasant and *kalon* (NE I.8 1099a 12-14, NE III.4 1113a 31-33). Presumably, the good man’s understanding of the best life colors the things he finds pleasant, thus ensuring that they are in harmony with reason. That is, the excellent person’s desire for the end operates in the background, influencing the objects the person desires. It does not shape or validate each occurrent desire directly, as Sherman’s account suggests. Rather, the understanding of the end and desire to achieve it refines the agent’s other desires as he develops so that eventually the things he finds pleasant will be *kalon*. Thus, while the action may be motivated by *epithumia*, this is not in tension with the agent’s view of the good. If the desire is a unified one, it may manifest characteristics of *bouletic* desire in addition to those of *epithumia*, as we know it does. A unified conception of desire captures both of these aspects of desire while the Academic division cannot because it presumes an opposition between desires. On an Academic model, although the three types of desire may fix on the same objects, reason must lead the soul for virtue to be present. The fact that the objects of desire coincide is sufficient to qualify
desires as harmonious according to the Academic model. We have seen, however, that Aristotle’s account differs from this in two ways. Harmony is more than just coincidence of objects of desire and occurrent desires do not have to emerge from reason in order for a given action to be regarded as excellent.

We may regard the excellent person’s desire as unified because, when relevant, the same objects satisfy each of the types of desire he may experience. Aristotle says in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.8 that excellent action will be pleasant and noble to the highest degree and that these attributes are not severed from each other (NE I.8 1099a 21-31). This view is echoed in the *Eudemian Ethics*, where Aristotle states that “...[t]o these [good and sensible men], that which suits their habit is pleasant, and that is the good and the noble” (τούτοις δὲ ἡδέα τὰ κατὰ τὰς ἔξεις· ταῦτα δ’ ἐστὶ τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ καλὰ) (EE VII.2 1236a6; cf. 1235b 19- 1236a 5, Rh I.11 1370a 5-8). This marks a difference with non-excellent action, where what is perceived as good, as noble and as pleasant may conflict. We see that for the excellent person a single object may be desired under different descriptions (e.g., as pleasant or good) but this object will also satisfy each of the other types of desires. Although these statements are also compatible with an account of choice based on the Academic division of desires, where each independent desire may take on the same object for a different reason, they also indicate a stronger connection than simply lack of conflict and suggest an interpretation of action as resulting from unified desire with both *bouletic* and *epithumetic* elements. Aristotle’s claim that the pleasant, the noble and the good are not severed from one another suggests that the
relationship between them is stronger than just coincidence and that it might be intrinsic, as my analysis of unified desire requires.

The morally excellent person acts from one desire, which may be characterized primarily as any of the traditional types of desire, depending on the specifics of the action. In some types of action this same occurrent desire also meets the description of other desires and acting on it satisfies other relevant sources of desire. That is, the morally excellent person’s appetitive desire is such that in acting on it, he is also acting for the sake of the end. The single desire has aspects which correspond to the different types of desire: it takes on different types of objects, but is always influenced (directly or indirectly) by the conception of the end. In *epithumetic* action, the occurrent desire is regarded primarily as appetitive because its object is pleasure, it emerges from the non-rational part of the soul, and because it is not informed by explicit reference to or deliberation about the end. However, because of the excellent person’s successful development the action performed also coheres with his view of the good life and aims at the *kalon*. The unity of the morally excellent person’s desire makes it possible to regard it as both rational and appetitive (though not necessarily in all cases); this is not possible according to the Academic division. This generic description of desire provides an acceptable explanation of the morally excellent person’s appetitive action (as well as his non-appetitive actions, which the Academic division can also accommodate) which captures its appetitive component as well as its harmony with reason and the end. Attributing a unified desire to the morally excellent person also accounts for Aristotle’s
cross-categorical descriptions of his desire where, e.g., *epithumia* is described as aiming at the *kalon* rather than simply at pleasure.

Although it is not applicable to the desire of the excellent person, maintaining the division of desire into three parts is useful for Aristotle’s analysis of non-excellent action where the objects of desire are not in agreement. Aristotle draws on this division in his discussion of acrasia and encrateia particularly. There, he is able to use the idea of conflict of desires to explain a phenomenon which is widely acknowledged but difficult to explain. Aristotle explains in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Five that the acratic person acts contrary to his wish (*boulēsis*), presumably because of his appetitive desire (NE V.9 1136b 7-8). In cases of acrasia, people’s appetitive or *thumetic* desires are not in agreement with their rationally formed desires, causing them to act contrary to choice (NE VII.4 1148a 5-11, VII.7 1150b 19-25). The idea of different sources of desire accounts for the sense of conflict often experienced by people who know what they should be doing, but have difficulty doing it. The division of desire helps in the explanation of acts that fall short of excellence and will therefore be relevant to my discussion of moral education.

Aristotle’s unwillingness to follow the Academic schema in describing the desires of the excellent person marks a difference from his treatment of non-excellent action, where he uses the Academic division in part to explain how desires may conflict. This suggests that because excellent people achieve a unity between rational and non-rational parts of the soul which non-excellent people lack, the practice of labeling the desire

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95 See *Republic* IV 435e - 439e and *Phaedrus* 253d - 254e.
which is the origin of a given excellent action is not one which Aristotle considers crucial. His examination of excellent people’s choice and action focuses instead on the relation between thought and desire. When one attains moral excellence and desire becomes unified, all of the various kinds of desire are best satisfied by the kalon. There is no conflict and no need to distinguish between different kinds of desires. Because of the nature of moral excellence and the mutual influence of thought and desire in the person of moral excellence, desires which are not usually oriented toward the good, i.e., appetitive desires, are informed by the agent’s conception of the good. Aristotle generally speaks of the morally excellent person as having the right desire, desire for the noble, as he does in his description of many of the individual excellences in Books Three and Four (see e.g., NE III.8 1116a 29). I suggest, then, that we follow Aristotle’s lead and avoid attempting to analyze the desires of the excellent person according to the Academic classification.

So, although the division of desire is helpful in understanding and analyzing the choices of those who are not excellent, it does not contribute to Aristotle’s analysis of excellent choice and action. Cooper sets too much stock in Aristotle’s use of thumos and epithumia to describe desires; he draws on Aristotle’s use of these terms to argue that Aristotle accepted Plato’s tripartite soul.\(^{96}\) We have seen, however, that at most Aristotle advocated a bipartite soul. The fact that he describes different desires as thumetic or epithumetic does not mean that these desires correspond to different parts of the soul - they may instead be intended to individuate objects of desire. Moreover, we have also

\(^{96}\) Cooper, “Reason, Virtue and Value,” pp. 86-95.
seen that the division of desire does not make sense for the morally excellent person, who should serve as a paradigm.

There are strong reasons to believe that according to Aristotle what is significant with respect to excellent action is not the type of desire, but whether it is in harmony with reason. According to *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13 and the passage cited above from the discussion of temperance, Aristotle held that it was possible for epithumetic desires as well as wishes to be in agreement with reason. What should be of interest to us, as it was to Aristotle, is what it means for a desire to be in agreement with reason and how conflict between desires is eliminated.

With respect to choice and action, the claim that desire agrees with reason should be taken to mean that both thought and desire fix on the same actions or choices. Aristotle’s comments that both reason and appetite act for the sake of the *kalon* in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.12 suggest the following: in excellent action, both thought and desire select the same acts. Aristotle’s conception of pleasure ensures that the best object of pleasure, which is sought by the excellent person, will always be *kalon* and promote the agent’s good. When the non-rational part of the soul is in good condition, it desires as pleasant just those acts which the rational part of the soul deems good. This constitutes excellent action in a given situation. If this description is correct, “*kalon*” action is that action which represents the coincidence of excellent thought and right desire in a given situation. Subjectively, to the agent, the *kalon* will be regarded as “right action” or noble action. Objectively, it will be the action which manifests harmony between thought

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97 This accounts for why the *phronimos* must serve as the standard for *kalon* acts and for why the *kalon* cannot be specified with exactness.
and desire. Thus an agent may deliberate about what action is *kalon* in a given situation without thinking in terms of what manifests harmony of thought and desire. This account allows that the *kalon* may also be sought by a non-excellent person, whose understanding of the best life is incomplete. In this case, although thought and desire might come together in choice, the choice is not excellent (and really *kalon*) because of the misperception of the end. On this view, the three ends of choice articulated in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.3, the *kalon*, the advantageous (the good) and the pleasant (NE II.3 1104b 30-1105a 1), are not necessarily sought by three different parts of the soul. The *kalon*, at least, may be sought jointly by both the non-rational and rational parts.

This view puts me in disagreement with scholars who, like Cooper, say that the *kalon* is characteristically pursued by the *thumetic* part of the soul.98 In addition to the Platonic tradition which identifies the desire for the *kalon* with the *thumetic* part of the soul,99 an argument that the *kalon* must be desired by the non-rational *thumos* may be based on the following line of interpretation, which loosely follows that developed by Cooper in “Reason, Moral Virtue and Moral Value”.100 Aristotle says that moral excellence is excellence of the non-rational part of the soul and so excellence of either this non-rational part or, if it is subdivided, of the *thumetic* part and its distinctive object,

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98 Cooper is explicit on this point. He seems to be driven by the desire to associate each object of desire with a different part of the soul. See “Reason, Virtue and Value,” pp. 97, 109-114. Others who allude to a special connection between the *kalon* and the *thumos* are Whiting (Jennifer Whiting, “Self-love and Authoritative Virtue: Prolegomenon to a Kantian Reading of Eudemian Ethics VIII.3,” in *Aristotle, Kant and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty*, ed. Stephen Engstrom and Jennifer Whiting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 162-199; see p. 187), who suggests that learning to feel affection for the fine will require habituation of the *thumos*, and Burnyeat, who asserts that Aristotle followed Plato in assigning pursuit of the noble to the middle part of the soul (Burnyeat, op. cit., p. 79).

99 See *Phaedrus* 253d, 254a.

the *kalon*, would constitute moral excellence. When the non-rational part of the soul follows reason and seeks the objects set out by reason it will have attained moral excellence. If the objects desired as *kalon* by *thumos* have been determined by reason, this will satisfy the definition of excellence.

Given my view that Aristotle rejected a tripartite soul, I am disinclined to accept this interpretation. Moreover, there are several compelling reasons to doubt the assignment of the pursuit of the *kalon* exclusively to the non-rational soul, whether this is construed as the *thumos* in particular or as the non-rational part more generally. Although it is traditionally associated with the *thumos*, Aristotle states that the other parts of the soul may seek the *kalon* (NE III.12 1119b 15-19; cf. NE III.4 1113a 23-1113b 1; X.5 1175b 29). This reveals that it is not the exclusive domain of *thumetic* desire. Moreover, it would be puzzling if the attribute most closely associated with excellence were distinctively non-rational. Aristotle’s formulation of the end as acting according to reason puts reason in a privileged place in determining excellence; assigning the pursuit of the *kalon* exclusively to a non-rational part of the soul would undermine this. On the account which assigns pursuit of the *kalon* to the *thumos*, the proper relation between the non-rational and rational parts of the soul will be causal: the rational part of the soul will cause the non-rational to take its proper object. When this occurs, they will be in agreement. However, there is a closer association between the non-rational and rational parts of the soul than this account depicts. The proper relation is one of harmony, where the parts of the soul are in agreement because they necessarily fix on the same objects.
We should interpret Aristotle's comment in *Nicomachean Ethics* I.13 that the desiderative part of the soul is in harmony with reason in cases of moral excellence to indicate that for a person who possesses the *hexis* of moral excellence what he wants to do is also what he thinks he ought to do and that this will be the correct choice. According to Aristotle, we should not regard each occurrent desire as being caused by reason or a view of the good life. Interpreting the relation of thought and desire as causal will result in similar sorts of problems as arose in interpreting the excellent person's desire as *boulēsis*, where it is odd to think of an occurrent *epithumetic* desire as being caused by reason. The tendency to interpret the harmony of thought and desire as indicating that our desires are caused by reason comes from confusing two levels of explanation which must be kept distinct when considering the relationship between thought and desire. The first level, which is the one being discussed presently, is how thought and desire relate in a particular choice or action: how an occurrent desire harmonizes with reason. In this case, we have seen that they are in harmony in virtue of having the same objects. The second level, which will be the subject of much of what follows, is a developmental one: how thought and desire are brought into harmony. To deny that reason causally influences desire on the former level is not to deny that it plays a role in shaping desire at the latter, developmental level.\(^{101}\)

The desire of the morally excellent person will be directed at the same thing which his reason tells him he should pursue. This person's action manifests a unity

\(^{101}\) Having desire and reason in harmony also means that desire will not incorrectly influence a person's perception of a situation. We saw above that *pathē* affect the way we view situations; when desire is in harmony with reason, *pathē* will not cause a person to misconstrue a particular circumstance and thus respond to it incorrectly.
between thought and desire which the actions of those who are not morally excellent does not. This difference is why it is useful to talk of different types of desire in the case of individuals who are not excellent: their non-rational motivation might not concur with what reason determines as good. Knowing where these different sources of desire come into conflict will assist in evaluation of the person and in subsequent moral training. According to Aristotle, excellent people, however, do not experience conflict in motivation: in any given act, the excellent person has a wholehearted motivation to act. What is notable about the choices and actions of excellent people is not a feature of their desire, but the fact that this desire is in agreement with thought. Thought and desire come together in excellent action and the distinction between the two in a given choice becomes blurred. The status of phronesis reflects the fusion of thought and desire - although it is an intellectual excellence, it is distinctive of moral excellence, a hexis of the affective part of the soul. Moreover, we have seen that although moral excellence is a hexis of the desiderative part of the soul, it also requires intellectual excellence to determine correctly which actions will achieve its ends and to help it to set these ends. The desiderative part of the soul is in excellent condition when the pathê are in harmony with reason. This occurs when pathê are correctly oriented toward their best ends. When the desiderative part of the soul is in this condition, the agent's acts will be in agreement with reason. His ergon, activity in accordance with reason, will thereby be achieved. How this hexis of pathê is achieved is the subject of moral education.
CHAPTER TWO: MORAL DEVELOPMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

We have seen how Aristotle envisaged the end of moral education: moral excellence. Before beginning detailed examination of Aristotle's program of moral education, we must examine one additional topic which also shapes Aristotle's views on moral education: his understanding of the child's nature and development. The program of moral education will take the child's nature as a starting point and attempt to bring him to the state of moral excellence, where his desires are unified and in harmony with reason.

I remarked several times in the last chapter that some aspects of moral excellence are refinements of natural abilities and responses. According to Aristotle, the attainment of moral excellence requires development of character and intellect, not the elimination or acquisition of traits and abilities. In the present chapter, I will argue for a qualified naturalistic interpretation of Aristotle's views on moral development.

Before proceeding to the discussion of moral development, we should note that Aristotle uses the term phusis in two distinct ways in the ethical works. These two uses correspond roughly to two uses described in the Physics. There, Aristotle says that things which are by nature have an internal principle of motion and rest. This can be understood in two ways: on one account nature is matter and on the other it is form (Phys. II.1 193a 28-31). Form is more properly considered a thing's nature than matter since a thing is most said to be what it is when it exists actually (Phys. II.1 193b 7-8). In Chapter Eight, form is associated with the final cause: "[a]nd since nature is twofold, the matter and the form, of which the latter is the end, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end,
the form must be the cause in the sense of that for the sake of which" (Phys. II.8 199a 30-33). We see, then, that there are two ways of understanding “nature” in the Physics: one corresponds to the matter which is changed and the other to form, which is the end toward which change proceeds.

Both of these senses of natural appear in the ethical works. Here, “natural” sometimes refers to human nature and potential (the starting point of development) and sometimes to the end toward which humans develop.1 In what follows, I am primarily concerned with human nature, which is analogous to matter in the Physics. This is the set of abilities which the child possesses or develops by nature and is the material the moral educator has to work with (cf. Phys. II.1 192b 35-193a 2). I will usually use “nature” in this sense. The second meaning of nature, where it serves as the end of change, plays a normative role in the ethical works by establishing the end toward which things develop as what is natural for them. What is (normatively) natural in this sense is an ideal or standard by which development is assessed. Examples of the normative use of natural may be found in Politics Book One and are discussed by Annas.2 In the first two of these arguments, those about the naturalness of the polis and of slavery, Aristotle relies on the notion from the Physics that what is natural is what is always or for the most part (Phys. II.8 199b 16-19). The third argument, about money-making, uses a different notion of


2 Annas, Morality, pp. 149-158.
natural, where it is an ideal and not often achieved; this use stands in tension with the
Physics account. This latter use of natural is important, however, because it serves as a
standpoint from which what is conventional may be critiqued. As Annas explains,

"[nlature as ethical ideal stands in contrast to what is merely conventional; and hence to
establish what is a natural way of dealing with some aspect of our lives...we cannot look
at what happens usually or for the most part, but must appeal to idealized

circumstance^."^ The notion of moral excellence as an ethical ideal and as independent
from convention will be important in the discussion of moral education and its end-point.
For now, however, I am primarily concerned with nature and natural development, the
first meaning of nature described.
Aristotle believes that children naturally possess or develop the aspects of intellect
and character in which moral excellence consists. Moral excellence does not come about
automatically, however. Although the child is naturally suited to the acquisition of moral
excellence, the development of his character and intellect must be properly guided in
order for him to achieve f d l moral excellence. Initially, this guidance will come through
social interaction and society's laws. If development is not properly guided, the affective
and intellectual capacities of the young person may develop incorrectly and various
problems with action and character can develop. These character problems are illustrated
by non-excellent character types. Development proceeds well when the child's natural
capacities are guided toward their proper objects by the positive influence of society and
family.

bid., pp. 157-158.


According to Aristotle, as we will see, successful development requires both nature and society and affects two areas, intellect and character. Since the process of moral development proceeds by guiding and shaping aspects of the child's nature and natural development, there is a certain amount of continuity in it. As development proceeds, the progress made in earlier stages is supplemented and built upon. We will see in the detailed discussion of moral education that Aristotle's views on the nature of the child and the changes required to attain excellence lead him to adopt a program of moral education which is itself developmental: there is continuity in a child's progression toward moral excellence and later stages of education build on previous ones.

II. THE CHILD'S NATURE

According to Aristotle, children have the same nature as adults, only in an undeveloped form. Humans are naturally directed toward excellence. Some people also have natural dispositions which orient them to excellence. These two facts about human nature indicate that humans will be naturally inclined toward excellence. In addition, children have or naturally acquire abilities and inclinations which, when developed in the best way, will constitute moral excellence. They have the capacity for the same sorts of emotions and desires as adults, and possess some of these right from birth. Although they are not born with the ability to deliberate and reason, children naturally develop this ability and hence come to act from choice. However, children do not automatically attain excellence: their desires and emotions must be trained to take the right objects and their intellect must also be trained. Aristotle's view of the nature of the child means that the
process of moral education will essentially be one of guiding the child’s development toward ends he naturally adopts, rather than one of instilling new abilities or desires in him.\(^4\)

Aristotle conceives of human nature teleologically: he believes that all people are oriented toward their good and *eudaimonia*. In the opening chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he makes an initial assertion which dictates the form of the ensuing discussion: “[e]very art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and choice, 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” (NE I.1 1094a 1-3). Aristotle claims that it is the task of political science to determine what this good is for humans since political science is concerned with the human good and knowing what the good is will help us to achieve it (I.2 1094a 18-b2, cf. I.4 1095a 14-16, I.13 1102a 5-10). He observes that it is generally agreed that in the case of man this good is *eudaimonia* (I.4 1095a 16-21). The *Eudemian Ethics* begins with a similar observation: Aristotle notes the importance of *eudaimonia* and the uncertainty regarding what it is and how it is acquired (EE I.1 1214a 1-25).

We see in both ethical works the belief that everyone seeks *eudaimonia* and, more importantly, that what constitutes *eudaimonia* will be the same for all people. Aristotle acknowledges the apparent diversity in ends which are actually pursued in practice, but attributes this to lack of understanding of what the “real” end is. People seek pleasure

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\(^4\) I thus disagree with Annas’ negative interpretation of Aristotle. She claims that Aristotle does not connect the child’s nature with nature as an end and that Aristotle holds that human nature is what must be improved on and not what guides development (ibid., pp. 144, 148). Although Aristotle does not believe that nature is sufficient for development as the Stoics do (on their account “humans develop from mere nature to what is natural for them, by a process of development which is itself natural for humans to go through” (p. 148)), he did highlight connections between human nature and the ideal which contribute to the process of development.
and honor, he asserts, on the false belief that *eudaimonia* consists in them (NE I.5 1095b 13- 1096a 5).\(^5\) He then sets out to define what the real end is. Aristotle's view is that a proper understanding of what *eudaimonia* consists in will help people to achieve it.

The initial discussions of *eudaimonia* in the ethical treatises indicate that moral education proceeds with human nature rather than against it. According to the first books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics*, everyone wants to be *eudaimôn* and once they learn that excellent activity is a constituent of *eudaimonia*, they will have a reason to seek to perform excellent acts. Whether they are aware of it or not, people have a natural desire to become morally excellent.

In addition to a general inclination to develop excellence, Aristotle holds that it is possible for children to possess individual excellences in an undeveloped form as part of their natural disposition, "[f]or all men think that each type of character belongs to its possessors in some sense by nature; for from the very moment of birth we are just or fitted for self-control or brave or have the other moral qualities..." (NE VI.13 1144b 3-6; cf. 7-10; cf. EE III.7 1234a 24-30, NE VII.8 1151a 17-18). Thus, a child might be naturally brave or naturally generous, and so forth. Because the natural excellences are part of their dispositions, these people experience affective desires correctly.

Aristotle holds that people possess, in either undeveloped or immature form, the range of abilities and qualities necessary for the achievement of excellence as well as the natural desire for excellence and naturally excellent dispositions. In several texts, notably *Metaphysics* I.1, Aristotle remarks on the naturalness of reasoning and the human desire

\(^5\) Thus, his claim is that all people intentionally or unintentionally seek the real good, although they may actively pursue the apparent good.
to understand. This ability is natural to humans, but emerges only as a child ages. In the
*Eudemian Ethics*, he says that reasoning will be in incontinent and continent agents by
nature, as long as its growth is permitted (EE II.8 1224b 30-34). These remarks indicate
that Aristotle believes that although reason is not present at birth, it is natural and will
develop with time unless something interferes with it.

People (ἄνθρωποι) also have the natural ability to reason and to learn about both
particulars and universals (*Metaphysics* I.1). According to this discussion, humans
naturally possess those capacities (memory, experience and judgment) required to
generalize from experience and to develop knowledge (Meta I.1 980b 25-981a 7).
Aristotle clearly states that there are two types of reasoning, experience and art (*technē*),
which are about individuals and universals respectively:

...experience is knowledge of individuals, art of universals, and actions and
productions are all concerned with the individual....But yet we think that
knowledge and understanding belong to art rather than to experience, and we
suppose artists to be wiser than men of experience...because the former know the
cause, but the latter do not. For men of experience know that the thing is so, but
do not know why, while the others know the “why” and the cause.6 (Meta I.1 981a
16-30)

In the case of moral excellence, we will be concerned primarily with the ability to reason
correctly about individual circumstances and hence with knowledge from experience.
Reasoning about universals and knowledge of causes may also be helpful in coming to
understand the end and in anchoring particular judgments.

Aristotle refers to the natural reasoning ability of humans in several places in the
ethical works. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.11, he notes that although people are not

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6 The closing lines about the man of experience echo Aristotle’s comments about the student of ethics in
*Nicomachean Ethics* I.4: he knows the that, but not the because.
thought to be wise by nature, they are thought to possess judgment, understanding and
comprehension by nature; he remarks that knowledge is correlated to age (NE VI.11
1143b 6-14). In the following chapter he describes another rational ability with which
humans are endowed: cleverness (δεινότης). Cleverness is "...such as to be able to do the
things that tend towards the mark we have set before ourselves, and to hit it" (NE VI.12
1144a 24-26). This reasoning takes certain ends as given and describes how they get put
into action and is sufficient for the kind of everyday reasoning described in Chapter
Seven of de Motu Animalium (DMA 7 701b 7-32; cf. NE VII.3 1147a 24-31). From these
comments we see that Aristotle believes that humans by nature possess a wide range of
rational abilities and that these abilities, although not themselves excellences, will assist a
person in reasoning about action.

According to Aristotle, although they are naturally rational children do not act
from choice, presumably because they do not yet deliberate (NE III.2 1111b 7-8). They
are not capable of the kind of reflection and future-oriented reasoning that is
characteristic of choice. Aristotle explains in Book One of the Politics that (male)
children have the ability to deliberate, but this ability is immature (Pol I.13 1260a 12-15).
As the child grows, he will begin to deliberate. When he is capable of reflective
deliberation, the child will begin to assume responsibility for his actions and to become
autonomous. These are the characteristics of the mature individual who is capable of

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7 When this faculty is combined with the right ends as determined by moral excellence it becomes
phronesis.

8 Aristotle's denial of reasoning to children in Nicomachean Ethics III.2 refers to deliberation and not to
prudential reasoning, of which they do seem to be capable (cf. EE II.10 1226b 21-25).
achieving moral excellence. We see, then, that on Aristotle’s view a child possesses the intellectual capacities necessary for the attainment of excellence; their development seems to be primarily a matter of time and is not foreign to the child’s nature.

Aristotle also holds that children experience emotions and desires which will eventually form the basis of their characters. He explains in the Politics that “anger (thumos) and wishing (boulēsis) and desire (epithumia) are implanted in children from their very birth...” (Pol VII.15 1334b 23). In young children these desires are often oriented toward the wrong objects, where this is determined by what is normatively natural. Appetitive desires are characteristically oriented toward physical pleasure and the avoidance of pain and thumetic desires toward social recognition of achievement.

The attribution of the desire for pleasure to epithumia is consistent with Plato’s treatment of it; he often refers to the epithumetic part of the soul as pulling against reason and as seeking immediate, physical pleasures (Phaedrus 253d-254e, Republic IV 435e-439e). Aristotle is not explicit about the division of the soul and especially about the role of the different parts in originating action, but in De Motu Animalium he states that epithumia, thumos and boulēsis are all capable of inspiring action (DMA 7 701a 36-b1).

In any case, he certainly agrees with Plato that the desire for pleasure is a desire of the non-rational, epithumetic part of the soul which can have considerable influence over action.10

9 I noted in the previous chapter (fn. 75) that Aristotle’s inclusion of boulēsis with non-rational desires marks a difference with his views in other works, where it is identified as existing in the rational part of the soul which emerges later in development. However, this anomaly does not work against the point I am making here, that emotion and desire are natural to children.

10 Aristotle generally seems to talk of individuals, not parts of the soul, as acting and causing action. At De Anima III.9 432a 19- 423b 4, he states that the question whether parts of the soul or the whole soul originates movement is not one which can be readily answered. However, there are places, particularly in
The desire for pleasure “has grown up with us all from our infancy” (NE II.3 1105a 2; cf. VIII.13 1153b 25, X.1 1172a 22-24). That is, all people naturally desire pleasure throughout their lives. However, this statement may be misleading: according to Aristotle, it is not the case that all people desire the same pleasures throughout their lives. Initially, children seek pleasures which Aristotle argues are not true pleasures (that is natural pleasures or pleasures without qualification) (NE VII.12 1153a 29-34, cf. EE VII.2 1236a 2-7). Usually these will be physical pleasures. In addition to seeking the wrong type of pleasure, youths are also typically excessively influenced by the desire for pleasure when determining their actions. In the Rhetoric, Aristotle explains that:

οἱ μὲν οὖν νέοι τὰ ἡθη εἰσὶν ἐπιθυμητικοὶ, καὶ οὗτοι ποιεῖν ὅν ἄν ἐπιθυμήσωσι. καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐπιθυμητῶν μάλιστα ἀκολουθητικοὶ εἰσι τῇ περὶ τὰ ἀφροδίσια καὶ ἀκρατεῖς ταύτης...

Young men have strong passions, and tend to gratify them indiscriminately. Of the bodily desires, it is the sexual by which they are most swayed and in which they show the absence of self-control. (Rh. II.12 1389a 3-6)

We see here that young people are especially swayed by their epithumetic desires - those for physical pleasure. This same fact is again asserted in Nicomachean Ethics X.9, where Aristotle says that most young people live by passion, pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain (NE X.9 1179b 10-15). Youths, then, are likely to aim primarily at physical pleasure and to determine which actions to perform based on the pleasure or pain they yield (NE II.3 1105a 4-5). 11 Although children possess epithumetic desires, as does the person of his discussion of acrasia, where he seems to suggest that the non-rational part of the soul is capable of causing action. John Cooper, in “Remarks on Aristotle’s Psychology,” places a lot of emphasis on these passages (see section two, pp. 27-30). I agree with Cooper that Aristotle believed that feeling could, and often did, guide action.

11 Cf. Nicomachean Ethics VIII.3 1156a 31-35; Aristotle says here that the sources of pleasure may change as people become older. At Nicomachean Ethics X.6 1176b 16-28 Aristotle acknowledges that different groups find different sorts of things pleasurable. He asserts, however, that what is pleasant to the good man
moral excellence, the objects they seek and their responses to these desires are quite different. While the morally excellent person seeks what is truly pleasant, the young person seeks apparent pleasures.

Thumetic desires are discussed in less detail in Aristotle's moral works than epithumetic desires, but they seem to be linked with the desire for honor and manifested in anger, spiritedness and competitiveness (NE VII.6 1149a 24-b 4). Initially, the thumetic desire for honor presents itself as the desire for recognition of an individual's status within the community. At Rhetoric I.5 1361a 28 honor is said to be a "token of man's being famous for doing good." There are two different areas in which this desire typically manifests itself: moral stature and physical strength and power. Young people initially want to be honored for the latter, but the desire for recognition of moral stature emerges as the individual grows up. The morally excellent person does not explicitly seek honor, but he does expect his stature to be recognized. As with the case of pleasure, both the object toward which the desire is oriented and the attitude toward the desire change as a person progresses toward moral excellence.

In the Rhetoric, Aristotle describes a competitive motivation for seeking honor. He asserts that young people

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12 Although Aristotle does not believe the non-rational part of the soul to be subdivided he clearly does divide desires into thumetic and epithumetic ones when he describes actions which fall short of excellence. This is evident particularly in his discussion of acrasia, where Aristotle differentiates (at least) two kinds of acrasia: that resulting from epithumia and that resulting from thumos. He refers more explicitly to thumos as a source of desire in other works. In the Eudemian Ethics, he twice refers to three types of desire (orexis): boulēsis, epithumia, and thumos (EE.II.7 1223a 26-27, II.10 1225b 24-26, but cf. Rh I.10 1369a 1-2). See Cooper, "Remarks on Aristotle's Moral Psychology," p. 40, n. 3 for a more comprehensive list of places where Aristotle refers to these three sorts of desire.
...are hot-tempered and quick tempered, and apt to give way to their anger; bad temper often gets the better of them, for owing to their love of honour they cannot bear being slighted, and are indignant if they imagine themselves unfairly treated. While they love honour, they love victory still more; for youth is eager for superiority over others, and victory is one form of this. (Rh II.12 1389a 9-14)

This kind of competitive desire may seek recognition of moral status, but it is more likely to seek a general recognition of social stature and of strength. Both of these kinds of desire for honor seek confirmation from others that an individual is doing comparatively well in areas that society values.

In his discussion of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle makes the following comment with respect to what friends expect to get out of their friendship, "...the superior [should get] more honor...for honor is the prize of excellence and of beneficence..." (NE VIII.14 1163b 2-4). This remark shows why people value honor: they take it as a sign that others consider them (or their actions) to be excellent. It thus serves as a sign that they possess these valued characteristics. Aristotle indicates that the desire to validate their views of themselves is one reason why men desire honor - they seek to be assured of their merit and to satisfy themselves that they are good (Rh I.11 1371a 8-10). Agents who have attained excellence, however, do not rely on social approval for self-worth. They do not seek honor from others as an indication of their achievement. Rather, they act for the sake of the *kalon*, recognizing that the *kalon* and not competitive goods truly merits honor.

Aristotle does not comment on whether young children experience emotions, but he must hold that emotions develop with the passage of time since they require a degree

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13 In this context, honor appears to be a commodity with which one repays benefits received (see, e.g., 1163b 13-15).
of cognition and experience children do not have. Insofar as emotions require judgments about e.g., another person’s undeserved good fortune, a person must have a conception of what is deserved in order to feel the emotion of indignation properly. However, as siblings’ jealousy of each other suggests, these kinds of judgments might begin to emerge fairly early. In fact, when he describes the youthful character in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle attributes it with a range of emotional responses: e.g., anger, courage, and love (Rh II.12 1389a 9-1389b 11). According to Aristotle’s conception of the child’s nature, then, he will naturally manifest the affective responses which are the foundation of character (good or bad). The objects these desires seek and the individual’s response to them will determine the status of the agent’s mature character. If they are oriented toward the best objects and harmonize with reason, character will be excellent.

III. DEVELOPMENT

In his biological works, Aristotle asserts that there is a certain continuity between children and adults, whereby the end of the child’s development is determined by the nature of the adult. This use of nature corresponds not to “mere nature,” which is what I have been describing, but to its normative sense. In these cases, the individual’s nature is set by the end toward which it develops. In the *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle notes that what a thing is shapes its development: “...we must not say that each *is* of a certain quality because it *becomes* so, rather that they *become* so and so because they *are* so and so, for the process of becoming attends upon being and is for the sake of being, not *vice versa*” (GA V.1 778b 3-6; cf. II.3 736b 3-5). He identifies the final cause as the cause of
being a few lines later (GA V.1 778b 11-13). In the case of biological development the form, or final cause, determines the end point of development; this will be what is natural for it according to the account of nature in *Physics* II.1 (193b 7-18). In humans, this form is soul, which serves as the cause of movement, end and essence (DA II.1 412a 19-21, II.4 415b 9-11, 15-21). 14

Aristotle uses the same idea of the natural in the ethical works. 15 We see again that the end toward which a thing develops establishes what is natural for it. He remarks in the opening book of the *Politics* that a thing’s nature is what it is when it is fully developed and associates this with the final cause (Pol I.2 1252b 32-1253a 2). Later in Book One, Aristotle explains that a child is evaluated in light of the end: “since the child is not fully developed, it is clear that his excellence too is not his in relation to himself, but in relation to his end and his guide...” 16 (ἐπεὶ δ’ ὁ παῖς ἀτελῆς, δῆλον ὅτι τούτου μὲν καὶ ἡ ἀρετή οὐκ αὐτοῦ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ τέλος καὶ τὸν ἡγούμενον...) (Pol I.13 1260a 31-33). Since the child is immature, he is not considered to be fully responsible for his excellence. Nevertheless, Aristotle’s use of telos here suggests that he considers the child to be progressing toward some end, the attainment of

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14 In *First Principles*, Irwin describes human nature as defined by rational soul and claims that “the essence of human beings is their capacity for rational thought, desire and action...” (p. 346; see pp. 344-346) (Terence Irwin, *Aristotle’s First Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988)).

15 Tress also notes the parallels between biological and ethical accounts of development, but she interprets these sorts of development as linked (pp. 81-83). My interpretation does not draw these kinds of development together, but recognizes that they are analogous. As will become apparent in the following chapters, I also do not agree with her characterizations of moral development and moral education (Daryl McGowan Tress, “Aristotle’s Child: Development Through *Genesis, Oikos and Polis*,” *Ancient Philosophy*, 17 (1997) pp. 63-84).

16 This is Saunders’ translation. Jowett’s and most other translations are misleading. What they translate as “perfect man” appears in the text simply as the telos. Thus, Aristotle’s point is that a child is judged in light of the end toward which he is developing.
which indicates that he is considered the cause of his own excellence. Again, the end establishes when development is complete, as was the case in the biological works. We see that there is an expectation that the child will develop into a responsible moral agent and that he is developing toward this end, which is his nature. This note of expectation serves to connect the child’s nature with the end of development and suggests that there is some natural development toward the end.

Although children may by nature develop toward excellence, they will not be able to do so entirely by nature. The individual’s teleological orientation toward the good might suggest that once he learns that excellence is part of eudaimonia, he will begin to perform excellent acts almost automatically. However, this is far from the case. As we shall see in the discussion of the program of moral education, becoming morally excellent requires more than just an intellectual grasp of what eudaimonia consists in because desires arising from other parts of the soul compete with the intellect to control action. Although the natural orientation toward the good serves as a positive starting point from which the process of moral education may begin, it is not sufficient to guarantee moral excellence, even if an individual has a correct understanding of eudaimonia.

Even the natural excellences will fall short of complete moral excellence; Aristotle explains that those possessing the natural excellences lack thought (νοῦς),

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17 This view puts Aristotle in contrast with intellectual accounts offered by some modern theorists, like Kohlberg.

18 In fact, Aristotle claims that people cannot grasp eudaimonia intellectually without first having good habits. Thus, the situation I suggest, where someone knows the good intellectually but does not have good habits, seems impossible. However, we must keep in mind that these terms allow a certain variability - someone might have good enough habits to be able to have a notion (perhaps not perfect) of what eudaimonia is, but his habits might be insufficient to cause him to consistently act on his understanding of eudaimonia. This seems to be what is involved with akratic action.
which properly guides their actions. He likens having natural excellence without thought to having a strong body without sight (NE VI.13 1144b 10-13). Natural excellence is likely to lead these people astray: they will not always correctly analyze a situation and, although their intentions are good, they may perform bad acts. Once thought is acquired, in the form of *phronesis*, natural excellence may become full excellence. We see, then, that as in the case with the general orientation toward the good, even those particular excellent motives which arise naturally are not sufficient on their own to lead to moral excellence.

The idea that people are suited to develop excellence appears in other texts as well. In the *History of Animals*, Aristotle states that “...in children may be observed the traces and seeds of what will one day be settled habits...” (HA VIII.1 588a 27-28). He echoes this thought in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1, where he says “we are adapted by nature to receive them [the moral excellences], and are made perfect by habit” (NE II.1 1103a 24-25). He notes here though that these same inclinations may make people perform incorrect acts; it is therefore especially important that they be guided correctly in the habituation process so that they establish good habits, not bad ones. These passages indicate that Aristotle thinks that humans have some natural tendency to acquire excellence, but that this has to be combined with proper habituation and intellectual training in order for full moral excellence to develop.

The development of practical intellect does not seem to be as problematic as shaping desires. Aristotle notes in several places that this requires mostly experience with the events of life (I.4 1095a 2-4); this will amass as the child ages. Since humans
naturally possess the ability to learn from experience and to reason abstractly, a student will eventually be able to determine for himself which actions to perform in given situations. He will begin to act from choice. With respect to the acquisition of *phronesis*, the faculty of cleverness will be especially important. Since cleverness embodies the same type of reasoning as *phronesis* does (in fact, Aristotle says that *phronesis* does not exist without it [NE VI.12 1144a 28-29]), *phronesis* seems to be in a certain sense natural. It arises through refinement and proper orientation of a faculty humans naturally possess and not through the development of a completely new reasoning ability. Aristotle does suggest, however, that reflection on the agent's experience and understanding of what is best for man will also be necessary for the development of *phronesis* (NE I.9 1099b 18-19). Thus, students are naturally suited to learning about excellent activity and to developing the intellectual excellence of *phronesis*, although achieving it requires effort. Because of human's rational nature, the intellectual aspect of moral development and education seems to work with, rather than against, nature. This will greatly assist the student in attaining moral excellence.

As we saw above, initially, the boy's affective responses are likely not to be in agreement and to be oriented toward the wrong objects. Aristotle remarks in several places that most people are led astray by their emotions and desires. He notes in Book Two of *Nicomachean Ethics* that pleasure exerts a powerful influence on actions and causes people to act wrongly: "...it has grown up with us all from our infancy; this is why

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19 The reasoning typical of the two faculties does not appear to be co-extensive, however. As we saw in the discussion of moral excellence in Chapter One, *phronesis* also includes an element of reasoning about ends which cleverness does not.
it is difficult to rub off this passion, engrained as it is in our life. And we measure even our actions, some of us more and others less, by pleasure and pain” (NE II.3 1105a 2-5; cf., NE II.9 1109b 7-13 and NE VII.13 1153b 25). According to Aristotle, most people identify pleasure as the source of happiness and live the life of enjoyment (NE I.5 1095b 14-22). In order to attain excellence, a person must pursue not the life of enjoyment, but that which fulfills his function, acting in accordance with reason.

Most people also have the wrong attitude toward honor, which is often mistakenly identified with the best life (NE I.5 1095b 22-30). Aristotle notes that many people seek to be honored because of what they will get from it:

But it seems to be not for its own sake that people choose honour, but incidentally. For most people enjoy being honoured by those in positions of authority because of their hopes (for they think that if they want anything they will get it from them; and therefore they delight in honour as a token of favour to come); while those who desire honour from good men, and men who know, are aiming at confirming their own opinion of themselves; they delight in honour, therefore, because they believe in their own goodness on the strength of the judgment of those who speak about them (NE VIII.8 1159a 17-24).

Both of these motivations for seeking honor are considered improper. To attain excellence, a person must seek to live well for its own sake, not in order to be honored.

The young person’s desires, particularly that for physical pleasure, must be tempered, oriented toward their proper ends, and brought into harmony with reason. It is easy to remain motivated by physical pleasure or social recognition and to experience emotion incorrectly, as Aristotle acknowledges in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.9 (NE II.9 1109a 24-29, 1109b 8-12). The need for guidance is clear from the introductory remarks in Book Two of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as well, where Aristotle explains that although man is suited by nature to attain excellence, he will need training as well. A child needs
guidance in order for his natural reason and affective responses to develop well and in order to attain the harmony of desires and unity of thought and desire characteristic of moral excellence. This guidance of the young person’s development is the primary element in that person’s moral education and will be provided through the process of habituation.

The child’s intellectual and character development is guided by external forces, namely his family and society. Family and society are instrumental in ensuring that the non-rational part of the soul is brought to its full development so that it harmonizes with reason and the individual attains unity of thought and desire. In his introductory comments about moral excellence, Aristotle notes that “...legislators make the citizens good by forming habits in them, and this is the wish of every legislator; and those who do not effect it miss their mark, and it is in this that a good constitution differs from a bad one” (NE II.1 1103b 3-6). This sentiment is echoed in the last chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle discusses the importance of laws in guiding the development of character (NE X.9 1179b 32-1180a 5). He refers with approval to the Spartan state’s concern with nurturing the development of its young (NE X.9 1180a 25-30). Moreover, his inclusion of education as a topic in the *Politics* indicates that he thinks the state plays an important role in education.

The state is not the only factor which influences the development of character. The family also contributes to character formation. Families are better able to judge what

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20 Aristotle’s approval does not extend to all aspects of Spartan training, however. In *Politics* VII.4 (1338b 11-38) he criticizes the Spartans for excessive emphasis on physical training and in *Eudemian Ethics* VIII.3 he argues that they mistakenly value excellence not for itself, but for the sake of the natural goods (EE VIII.3 1248b 38-1249a 5).
is necessary for individual children and thus to tailor training to them. They also have immediate access to children and exercise influence over them because of the natural affection children feel for their families (NE X.9 1180b 4-12). The exact roles of society and family in moral education will be discussed in the following chapters. For now, though, we must recognize that character development will be successful only with the contributions of both nature and society. While the child naturally possesses the seeds of excellence, they will not grow into complete excellence without the guidance of family and society.

IV. PROBLEMS IN DEVELOPMENT

If the natural process of development is not properly guided, several different kinds of problems may result. These appear to affect primarily the non-rational part of the soul; as we noted above, the capacity for deliberation seems to develop without difficulty in most cases. Although a person will not necessarily reach phronesis, this appears to result usually from a defect in character which prevents him from recognizing the proper end rather than from lack of intellectual capacity (NE VI.12 1144a 26-37).

Several problems resulting from faulty development may be identified on the basis of the discussion of excellence in the previous chapter. Pathé which are not experienced properly might affect a person’s reasoning about action and his ability to act

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21 Aristotle nowhere says that the development of the intellect will not be problematic; the claim in the text is based on his descriptions of the non-excellent character types. Even the vicious person, who aims at the wrong end, is said to take this end under the influence of his non-rational desires rather than through some intellectual failing. In each of the non-excellent character types, the failing is ultimately attributed to character rather than intellect.
on his decision. As we have already seen, pathê may interfere with perception and cause an agent to perform the wrong action in a given situation. Incorrect training of the desire for pleasure, for example, might cause someone to perceive a course of action as pleasant when it is not really so. If the agent then performs the action, he will have acted wrongly because of his incorrect perception. Even if the agent wants to act well, if he is not capable of accurately perceiving what a situation calls for he will not be able to consistently perform the best act. His ability to perceive well depends on his pathê developing well, toward their proper objects.

Other cases of unsuccessful development of character result from having desires which conflict or from adopting the wrong ends. These cases may be illustrated by the non-excellent character types: viciousness, acrasia and encrateia.\(^\text{22}\) Investigation of each of the character types will be instructive with respect to the ways in which development can go wrong.\(^\text{23}\) There are, in particular, strong parallels between the acratic character type and young people. In *Nicomachean Ethics* I.3, Aristotle groups young people together with acratics as being guided by passion (*pathos*) (NE I.3 1095a 2-11). Thus, I am inclined to agree with Burnyeat, who regards acrasia as a case of incomplete development and as especially instructive with respect to development.\(^\text{24}\) Although young

\(^{22}\) In "Doctrine of the Mean," Urmson also looks to the different character types to elucidate what differentiates morally excellent people from those who are not (pp. 158-164). Although his discussion focuses on the doctrine of the mean and agents' actions, emotions and choices, I believe Urmson's characterizations to be largely in agreement with mine. What I am discussing is the difference in psychological and intellectual conditions which underlie the differences Urmson identifies.

\(^{23}\) I will discuss only three of the five character types Aristotle distinguishes from moral excellence, viciousness, acrasia and encrateia. The other two, bestiality and heroic excellence, seem to be largely beyond the realm of human activity and are not particularly instructive with regard to character development.

\(^{24}\) Burnyeat, op. cit., p. 85. Since the acratic manifests a settled character which is hard to change, I take "incomplete" here to refer to the telos which sets the end of development and not to the process of an
people and acratics share many of the same characteristics they are not identical: youths’ characters are incomplete in a second way, because their own process of development is not finished. Young people do not have deeply entrenched habits that make progress difficult. Acratics, on the other hand, have long standing character traits which make substantial change difficult - these people’s behavior might be modified by external forces, but they do not seem capable of radical changes of character (NE X.9 1179b 16-19; cf. NE III.5 1114a 19-21). In the case of acrasia, some progress does seem possible, but there are areas in which habits are firmly established that will not be responsive to instruction. In young people, these habits are not yet formed. This means that young people will be able to change in a way that the acratics are not. Since the moral educator will be working with young people, whose characters are not yet fully formed, insight into the kind of person he is working with and the way his pupil’s character will tend to develop if not properly guided will be of significant assistance to him. Though we need to be aware that an immature student differs from people of non-excellent character in important ways, examination of the character types yields valuable information for understanding Aristotle’s program of moral education and the shape it takes by revealing common failings which must be guarded against.

One way development may go wrong is by the agent’s taking the wrong ends, for example pleasure. These people may be able to pursue wholeheartedly the incorrect

individual’s own development. The acratic’s development is complete in the sense that his character will not change significantly, but incomplete with respect to the telos.

25 According to Aristotle, we should be able to objectively determine that these people are not living the best life since these kinds of lives will not help individuals to fulfill their functions (activity according to excellence), which is the objective good for man.
end, but even if their desires are in harmony they will not be living the best kind of life. Those who live in this way are called vicious. Of the four character types commonly found among men, viciousness is identified as the one most opposed to moral excellence.

Aristotle asserts that vicious people have adopted the wrong ends (NE VII.8 1151a 15). Rather than pursuing intermediate action, vicious people tend to pursue either excess or defect (NE II.6 1107a 3-6). They may be able to reason well about what contributes to their ends because cleverness (δεινότης) enables people to reason well about what to do, regardless of whether the ends they pursue are good or bad. Nevertheless, Aristotle describes the intellect of vicious people as corrupted (NE VII.6 1167a 15).

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26 This is a possibility that Aristotle wanted to deny, see for example Nicomachean Ethics IX.6 1167b 9-15. However, Aristotle’s statements on the issue are inconsistent - his considered view is that only the morally excellent person attains true harmony of thought and desire (cf. NE I.13 1102b 27-28, NE IX.4 1166b 4-29, NE IX.6 1167b 9-15). In other places, like the discussions of the individual vices, he allows that the vicious person could be single-minded. In addition to the uncertainty as to Aristotle’s own view, there is also disagreement as to whether it would be possible to be consistently vicious on Aristotle’s theory. See Sparshott pp. 292-294 for a defense of the view that it is impossible to be consistently vicious (Francis Sparshott, Taking Life Seriously: A Study of the Argument of the Nicomachean Ethics, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994)). Recently, commentators have begun to question whether it might be possible, after all, for someone to rationally choose and affirm the wrong ends. In Fabric of Character, Sherman shows that although it might be possible for a vicious person to consistently pursue the wrong ends and to engage in good prudential reasoning, we will be able to establish that he does not perform his function since there are limits on his rational agency because he pursues external ends (pp. 108-117). The truth of Aristotle’s claims about the vicious person encountering conflict is a separate question with little explicit evidence in the text to show how and why the vicious person would experience conflict. One line of argument worth exploring is whether Aristotle’s teleological conception of pleasure would lead to conflict: if the vicious person settles on pleasure as his end, but in the process of pursuing it engages in deliberation, he might experience the pleasures associated with rational action. According to Aristotle, these pleasures will have natural appeal to the agent. The vicious person would then be drawn by two different desires; even if he used reason to pursue physical pleasure at times he might be inclined to abandon physical pleasures in favor of more involved rational pursuits.

27 Although he briefly discusses the topic elsewhere, the primary source of information about Aristotle’s views on vice is his discussion of intemperance in Nicomachean Ethics VII. I take the general comments Aristotle makes in NE VII about the specific vice of intemperance to apply to other vices as well.

28 A vicious person may also pursue things which do not admit of intermediates; cf. NE II.6 1107a 19-26.
1150a 2-4), presumably because they use it to pursue the wrong ends and will not achieve the intellectual excellence of *phronesis*. However, vicious people are said to have chosen (προσφορούνται) their actions because they deliberate (NE VII.4 1148a 13-17). Having adopted an end and correctly selected the means to attain it, the agent will not experience regret at his action and hence will have no impetus to modify his behavior (NE VII.7 1150a 19-22). Because vicious people adopt the wrong ends they will fail to act according to right reason and, hence, will not attain *eudaimonia*.

Aristotle attributes the vicious person’s adoption of the wrong end to the effects of passion. In *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.8, he states that vice corrupts the first principle, and that the vicious person is mastered by passion (*pathos*) and comes to believe that he should pursue pleasure, which is contrary to what right reason prescribes (the vicious person will not necessarily be aware that he is acting against right reason) (NE VII.8 1151a 20-25; cf. NE VI.5 1140b 17-20). In the lines preceding this comment, Aristotle says that right opinion about first principles comes from either natural or habituated excellence (...οὔτε δὴ ἐκεῖ ὁ λόγος διδασκαλικὸς τῶν ἀρχῶν οὔτε ἐνταῦθα, ἀλλ’ ἀρετὴ ἡ φυσικὴ ἡ ἑθικὴ τοῦ ὀρθοδοξεῖν περὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν) (NE VII.8 1151a 17-19). Excellence is necessary for recognition of the first principles in action, which makes a person act for the right end. Therefore, good development, which leads to habituated excellence, is vital for securing the foundation of complete excellence, adoption of the right ends. Except for those who are oriented toward the right ends by natural excellence, people will not learn the first principles of action without good development, which makes them identify with right reason. Failure in habituation of character usually means
that a person will have the wrong ends and little chance of improvement because he does not experience dissatisfaction with his actions.

A more common manifestation of poor development is conflict of desires. People with conflicting desires may well identify intellectually with the best end, but be unable to act consistently for the sake of it. As we saw above, a child's natural desires initially fix on different objects, particularly certain types of pleasure and honor. One of the results of successful development is that these different types of desire all adopt the same object as determined by (normative) nature, the kalon. If this end is not reached, the agent will continue to have desires which conflict. This causes tension within the soul and, possibly, poor action. Since each part of the soul is capable of initiating movement (DMA 6 700b 16-25; cf. 7 701a 32-34), if a person has desires for different objects, there is no guarantee that he will act well. He is as likely to act for the sake of pleasure as for the sake of the kalon. People with conflicting desires, either acratics or encratics, are unstable and likely to perform the wrong acts.

In Book Seven of the Nicomachean Ethics and Book Two of the Eudemian Ethics, Aristotle describes the acratic individual as someone who abandons his rational calculations because of passion (νάθος), but knows that what he does is bad (NE VII.1

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29 The phenomena of acrasia and encrateia might be elucidated by Frankfurt's explanation of the will in terms of first and second order desires (Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," in The Importance of What We Care About (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 11-25). On Frankfurt's model, a person may have numerous first order desires to act and a second order desire that one of these be the desire which moves him (pp. 14-15). The agent thus identifies himself with one of his first order desires over the others. In the case of acrasia and encrateia, both types of agent would have a second order desire by which they identify with the desire to act according to reason; in acrasia this desire is not effective while in encrateia it is. One part of moral education will be causing this kind of second order desire and making it effective. Eventually, in the person of moral excellence, the first order desires will cease to conflict.
In the *Eudemian Ethics* account, Aristotle explains that the acratic person experiences a kind of inner tension because he has contrary impulses within himself. The acratic goes against his reasoning (λογισμός) under the compulsion of appetite (ἐπιθυμία). Thus, in the acratic the impulse (ὁρμή) of reason is opposed to that of desire; this leads to conflict when the agent acts (EE II.8 1224a 32-37; cf. NE I.13 1102b 14-25, VII.10 1152a 17-24). The tension between the impulses of reason and desire gives the appearance that acratic people act under compulsion. However, Aristotle asserts, acratic people do act voluntarily (and not under compulsion) because the impulse which moves them (ἐπιθυμία) is within themselves, not external to them (EE II.8 1224b 3-14). Although *ἐπιθυμία* compels the person to act against reason, the acratic's action is nevertheless voluntary because the source of the action is within the agent.

Whereas the intemperate person is persuaded that it is best to pursue pleasure, the acratic is not: this person has the right ends although his actions do not express correct

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30 This echoes a comment made in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three discussion of prohairesis, where Aristotle says that the acratic acts from *ἐπιθυμία* and not prohairesis (see NE III.2 1111b 14-15). *Ἐπιθυμία* causes an agent to pursue pleasure without choosing it.

31 In both of these discussions, Aristotle identifies a second type of acratic behavior: that of someone who is overcome by *θυμός* and hence does not perform the correct action. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Seven account, Aristotle analyzes the differences between these two types of acratic behavior in great detail. People who act in response to *θυμός*, he explains, are called acratic in some qualified sense through a resemblance to "true" acrasia (NE VII.4 1148b12-14). In a way, *θυμός* seems to listen to reason while *ἐπιθυμία* does not:

For reason or imagination informs us that we have been insulted or slighted, and anger [*θυμός*], reasoning as it were that anything like this must be fought against, boils up straightway; while appetite [*ἐπιθυμία*], if reason or perception merely says that an object is pleasant, springs to the enjoyment of it. Therefore anger [*θυμός*] obeys reason in a sense, but appetite [*ἐπιθυμία*] does not. (NE VII.6 1149a 31- 1149b 1)

*Θυμός* responds in the way that reason would normally direct, not stopping to hear that in this case a different sort of response is called for. *Ἐπιθυμία*, on the other hand, seeks pleasure which is not what is normally sought by reason.
reason (NE VII.8 1151a 12-27; cf. NE VII.9 1152a 4-9). In contrast to the vicious person, the acratic is prone to regret his actions: he enjoys getting what he desires, but suffers from the expectation of the consequences of his action (EE II.8 1224b 19-21; cf. NE VII.8 1150b 30-31). Aristotle acknowledges that the acratic person might be able to reason about what to do, but claims that this is a sign of cleverness, not *phronesis* (NE VII.10 1152a 6-15). This suggests that the acratic’s problem lies not with his ability to reason, but rather with some aspect of his character.

Aristotle’s description of the acratic maintains that he is able to reason correctly about what to do, but that *epithumia* somehow causes him to ignore the results of the reasoning process or not to successfully complete it and thus to perform some different action. Aristotle explains that in most cases, when a person has a universal premise and a particular premise and the two come together, action immediately follows. Ordinarily, once one perceives the particular thing, the reasoning is complete and action follows (NE VII.3 1147a 25-31).

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In cases of acratic action, this pattern of thinking is disrupted. *Epithumia* interferes with the ordinary reasoning process and prevents the agent from acting on the right conclusion. Aristotle explains this case as follows:

When, then, the universal opinion is present in us restraining us from tasting, and there is also the opinion that everything sweet is pleasant, and that this is sweet (now this is the opinion that is active), and when appetite [*epithumia*] happens to be present in us, the one opinion bids us avoid the object, but appetite [*epithumia*] leads us towards it (for it can move each of our bodily parts)... (NE VII.3 1147a 31-35).

What happens in this circumstance is that there are two competing opinions, one which prohibits tasting and one which (apparently) leads to the conclusion that we should taste the sweet thing. The later represents the object of *epithumia* and not of reason, but is what determines the action. Aristotle explains that *epithumia* can move the body and, in this case, it does so. He concludes that the person acts incontinently from reason and opinion in a way, but that the opinion is opposed to itself only accidentally as it is really *epithumia* which is opposed to right reason (NE VII.3 1147b 1-3).33 His perception of a particular pleasure has distracted him from his original conclusion (cf. Protagoras 352d-353e). Were it not for the role of appetite in determining action, the acratic would have acted according to the original opinion ("do not taste"). Nothing prohibits a person from holding different opinions, as long as he does not decide to act on both of them. In this case, however, what right reason prescribes is avoiding tasting and the acratic has decided to do this, yet tastes anyway. Aristotle attributes this to the ability of *epithumia* to latch

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33 Aristotle acknowledges other possible explanations of how a person may act acratically; one is that he does not really know what he should do. He draws an analogy between the acratic and a student who has only begun to learn a subject - although both may say the correct thing, this does not serve as an indication that it is part of them (NE VII.3 1147a 18-23). In this case, then, it is unclear to what extent the acratic has knowledge of the correct action at the time he acts. This case, where a person may say the right thing without its being a part of him, will be important for moral development, as we will see in the next chapter.
on to one opinion and to determine action. Thus, the acratic knows that the action is wrong, but does it anyway.

Aristotle’s defense of the possibility of acrasia supports the initial description of the phenomenon. What appears to cause the acratic to act as he does is conflict in desires. In all types of acrasia, one type of desire has an object which is not that which has been determined by correct reason (or in the case of thumetic acrasia, the object which would be determined by reason). For one reason or another, this deviant object is affirmed by desire and the individual performs an action which is contrary to that called for by his rational deliberation. We see in the case of acrasia that development has proceeded correctly to a point. The person has the right first principle and intellectually identifies with the right end. However, his desires are not unified and he experiences conflicting impulses to action. These conflicts cause the acratic to act contrary to right reason. The existence of acrasia highlights the importance of orienting desires toward their proper objects during development. If the desires do not agree, problems occur with respect to action and the person cannot achieve excellence.

According to Aristotle’s description in Eudemian Ethics Book Two, the encratic person appears to be in largely the same situation as the acratic, but unlike the acratic performs the action called for by correct reason. Encratic action is to be commended - encrateia is referred to as an excellence early in the Eudemian Ethics (EE II.7 1223b 11), although Aristotle later distinguishes it from moral excellence when giving his detailed account of the topic (EE II.11 1227b 16-17). In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle

34 Because of the similarity between acrasia and encrateia, I will not go into as much detail in my treatment of encrateia as I did with acrasia.
attends to the common perception that encrateia and temperance are the same. He claims
that this appears to be the case because encratic action is similar to temperate action. As
he notes, "...both the continent [encratic] man and the temperate man are such as to do
nothing contrary to reason for the sake of the bodily pleasures; but the former has and the
latter has not bad appetites" (NE VII.9 1151b 34-1152a 1) He continues, describing the
difference between the two as follows: "the latter [temperate person] is such as not to feel
pleasure contrary to reason; while the former [encratic] is such as to feel pleasure, but not
to be led by it." (NE VII.9 1152a 2-3). Thus, although there are similarities between
encrateia and excellence and the encratic person performs a good action, the encratic falls
short of excellence.

The encratic acts with reason and against desire (EE II.7 1223b 14-15; cf. NE I.13
1102b 25-28). Thus, the encratic person, like the akratic, acts with impulses contrary to
himself. In this case, the impulse which he acts upon is that according to reason and the
contrary impulse is that of epithumia (EE II.8 1224a 32-37; cf. NE III.2 1111b 14-17).35
He, too, feels both pleasure and pain at his action - pleasure in expectation of the benefit
of the action and pain in going against epithumia (EE II.8 1224b 15-19). In chapter 11 of
Eudemian Ethics Book Two, Aristotle asserts that continence is a sufficient condition for
correct reasoning; thus what distinguishes continent people from those who are morally
excellent must be their characters (EE II.11 1227b 15-16).36 In Book Seven of the

35 Aristotle's comment at EE 1223b 18 about the scope of acrasia applies as well to encrateia. Hence, an
encratic agent may experience an impulse from thumos as well as from epithumia.

36 A good explication of this passage can be found in Woods' commentary, pp. 163-165. He suggests that
Aristotle is arguing here about the nature of excellence and using the distinction with continence to show
that excellence is not the same as knowledge. He claims that Aristotle is not saying that continent people do
not have the right end (Michael Woods, Aristotle's Eudemian Ethics: Books I, II, and VIII (Oxford: Oxford
University Press 1982)).
Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle explains that the enkratic person acts from reason: he recognizes that his *epithumiai* are base (φαύλατ) and because of reason does not satisfy them (NE VII.1 1145b 10-14; cf. VII.8 1151a 27-28). Thus, the enkratic must be able to reason well. According to these accounts, the enkratic agent reasons correctly and performs the correct action, but experiences desires which are contrary to reason.

Aristotle describes the enkratic's response to the urgings of *epithumia* as one of overcoming, rather than resisting, pleasure. He says, "...for endurance consists in resisting, while continence [encrateia] consists in conquering and resisting and conquering are different, as not being beaten is different from winning..." (NE VII.7 1150a 34-36, cf. 1150a 12-13). This comment gives us a clue as to how the enkratic is able to follow reason and not *epithumia*. It looks as though this person does not force himself to follow reason against the urging of *epithumia*, for this would be a case of simply resisting *epithumia*. Rather in the enkratic, reason overcomes, or wins out over, *epithumia*. This implies that when the enkratic person acts, the judgment of reason has been accepted by the whole soul, although the contrary *epithumetic* desire remains. Reason "wins out" over *epithumia* not by force, but by (somehow) persuading it to allow reason to determine the act.\(^37\) Aristotle's explanation in Nicomachean Ethics I.13 that the continent man is persuaded by reason (πειθαρχεῖ γοὺς τῷ λόγῳ τὸ τοῦ ἐγκρατοῦς) (NE I.13 1102b 26-27) supports this interpretation.

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37 This suggests that this kind of persuasion might be a step in the process of moral education, prior to unification of desire.
The encratic person, like the acratic, experiences disunity within the soul: at times, *epithumia* or *thumos* urges him to do things which are incompatible with what correct reason judges. However, the encratic person is not swayed by *thumos* or *epithumia* to act contrary to reason. He is able to make these desires acquiesce to the control of reason and acts as reason dictates. The encratic, therefore, performs the correct action although he experiences contrary desires and possesses base appetites. The problems with the encratic's development are similar to those of the acratic although they do not have the same impact on action. The encratic person is worthy of admiration because he is able to act according to reason despite his conflicting desires. Nevertheless, this person does not have the unity of desire and stability characteristic of the person of moral excellence. The tension encratics experience is indicative of incomplete development and prevents them from achieving excellence.

The examination of the three character types most often opposed to moral excellence, viciousness, acrasia and encrateia, has isolated two primary ways in which poor development of the affective part of the soul may prevent a person from achieving excellence. First, a person may develop in such a way that he is precluded from seeing the first principles of action and hence affirms the wrong ends. Second, even if the person recognizes these first principles correctly and is thus able to determine the correct action to perform, his desires might not have the proper objects. This will cause conflict within the agent and lack of stability and consistency in action. Without successful development of character, an individual will be unable to attain excellence and will be likely to perform wrong acts.
The prevalence of the non-excellent character types attests to the difficulty of attaining moral excellence. If training is not completed successfully, at a certain point the student will fall short of excellence and will be unable to make moral improvement. Given the natural objects of the different desires, it is clear that successfully guiding development will be a challenging task. Although human nature is suited to acquire excellence and is oriented toward it, the natural objects of desire exercise a strong influence on action and orienting desires toward their proper objects is difficult. Even if an agent wants to identify with right reason, he is sometimes unable to do so, as happens with acrasia. Successful development requires a substantial amount of discipline and effort on the student’s part as well as the educator’s.

Since the process of habituation is one of guiding the development of character, there is continuity in habituation. As the student matures and as his character develops, the changes in character will build on previous stages in his development. He will not typically change greatly from moment to moment and he will not experience radical transformations. Rather, the same affective qualities he has always had will shift in orientation toward their best, or (normatively) natural objects. This, in turn, makes Aristotle’s program of moral education developmental as it reflects the natural progression from immaturity to maturity. I agree with Sherman’s characterization of moral education as developmental, but I hold this position for a broader range of reasons than Sherman does. She describes moral education as developmental because of the continuity of progression between stages of moral education.\footnote{Sherman’s reasons come across most clearly in her dissertation, pp. 143-148. She also presents an argument in favor of a developmental interpretation in \textit{Fabric of Character}, pp. 159-162.} While I agree with this
point, I hold that moral education may be characterized as developmental for the additional reason that it is facilitated by the child’s natural development. As we will see in the next two chapters, Aristotle’s program of moral education is one in which prior achievements are built upon as education progresses and relies heavily on the nature of the child and his development.
CHAPTER THREE: INITIAL HABITUATION

I. INTRODUCTION

Natural excellence, along with the student’s teleological orientation to the good, serves as the starting point from which the moral educator begins. His task is primarily one of guiding, refining and informing those dispositions with which a person is born. The moral educator does not have to persuade his students to seek the good life, but must show them what this life is. We have seen, though, that showing students what the good life consists in is not a simple undertaking. Because of the complex nature of the soul, this process involves more than just an intellectual demonstration of the best life. The moral educator must also find some way to orient the non-rational parts of the soul towards the good life and thus to bring thought and desire into harmony. With the natural excellences, he begins from a positive position - his charges are not neutral with respect to excellence, but rather have an inborn inclination toward it.

The theory of moral education we can extract from Aristotle’s writings is one which utilizes naturally occurring aspects of human nature and behavior, as well as a positive social context, to influence the process of moral development and orient the soul toward the proper ends. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he explains that humans are adapted by nature to receive moral excellence, but that it must be perfected by habit (NE II.1 1103a 24-25). Aristotle draws on the inherent rationality of humans and on three

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1 Throughout this chapter and the next, I will adopt Aristotle’s normative view; he assumes that a student will be brought up in a good social context and that the student has the natural endowments which ensure that he starts from a positive position with respect to *areté*. 
behavioral influences (philial relations,\textsuperscript{2} the desire for honor and to avoid shame, and the desire for pleasure) in his theory of moral education. These attributes help the moral educator to influence behavior and thus to guide development. With the exception of rationality, all of these factors occur in and exert direct influence upon the affective part of the soul. As the subsequent discussion will show, character development and cognitive development go hand in hand for Aristotle, a phenomenon which led Sherman to term the process of moral education one of "critical habituation."\textsuperscript{3}

\section*{II. CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN NATURE AND BEHAVIOR USED IN HABITUATION}

There are several aspects of human nature and behavior which are used in moral education: the natural rationality of humans, the desire to achieve honor and to avoid shame, the desire for pleasure, and natural relations with friends and family. In this part of the chapter, I will examine each of these individually, focusing on how it exerts influence on an individual and his actions. Although I will be discussing the way each of these impulses works in isolation from the others, we must remember that they do not affect an individual sequentially and that more than one impulse can be operative at a time. Thus, for example, a single action might reflect the desires to win honor and to please one’s parents. These factors facilitate the changes that take place during the

\textsuperscript{2} I follow Sherman in using this term to refer to the influence of the relationships of reciprocal love with those we care about. This is primarily the family, but will include friends as well. See Sherman, “Aristotle’s Theory,” p. 78 and Fabric of Character, Chapter Four.

\textsuperscript{3} Sherman, Fabric of Character, p.158; cf. Burnyeat, op. cit., pp. 70-71.
process of habituation by giving the moral educator influence over the student. They do not themselves constitute part of habituation. The moral educator can use a person's desire for honor to motivate him to learn more about the requirements of, e.g., temperance. The activities which promote learning and character changes constitute habituation, the desire for honor simply facilitates it. In the second part of the chapter, I will look at how these facts about human nature and behavior work together to effect moral development.

A. NATURAL REASON

The natural rationality of humans serves as an important resource for the moral educator. We saw in the previous chapter that humans naturally possess the ability to reason and to learn about particulars and universals in addition to the natural desire for explanations and to understand how things work. Thus, the student will seek to understand which actions are excellent and why they are so.

This implication of rationality comes across perhaps most clearly in the opening chapter of the *Metaphysics*. Here, Aristotle begins with the assertion that "[a]ll men by nature desire to know" ([π]άντες ἀνθρώποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὁρέγονται φύει) (Meta I.1 980a 22). Aristotle states that there are two kinds of knowledge (knowledge of individuals and knowledge of universals) and that humans tend to move from individual experiences to universal judgments. He also remarks that those who grasp universals and therefore know causes are considered to know in a truer sense and to be wiser than those who know particulars (Meta I.1 980b 27-981b 9). Thus, although experience is more
relevant to action, knowledge of causes and universals is considered superior with respect to knowledge. The desire to know referred to in the opening line of the *Metaphysics* as a desire natural to all people means that the student will naturally attempt to determine the causes for things and that he will generalize from his experience. Students have a natural curiosity about things and why they are the way they are and delight in learning (Rh I.11 1371a 31-b 8, Poet 4 1448b 12-15). Not only do people have a natural drive to understand, it is also something which they find pleasant.

The ability of humans to discover causes and to reason about universals ensures that a student will be able to reason about his experience as his natural rational ability develops. The young person will want to know *why* a certain action is required in a given situation and will be receptive to the educator’s explanations about what actions are required. He will draw together the educator’s explanations and similar experiences of his own to form an inductive base for reasoning about particular actions. He will also learn general lessons from his experiences since he will be able to comprehend general truths about action. This will eventually allow him to form a conception of the best life which will, in turn, influence his reasoning about which actions to perform in a given situation. The educator may thus be assured that his pupil can assimilate the lessons he is receiving and that as moral education proceeds the student will instinctively assume responsibility for his own actions and character. The student’s rational nature ensures

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4 This does not mean that the student will always be moved by the moral educator’s arguments. As Aristotle says in *Nicomachean Ethics* X.9, before an individual is moved by arguments, a certain amount of moral progress must be made (NE X.9 1179b 5-19). Although he will presumably have an intellectual desire to learn about excellent action, this will not always affect the student’s actions because of the influence of non-rational desires.

5 This will not all be accomplished during his formal education.
that he will be attentive to the lessons of his instructor and that he will be able to make sense of them.

B. PLEASURE

In addition to the desire to know which is characteristic of all people, the desires for pleasure and to avoid pain are among the most powerful resources available to the moral educator. As I remarked in the last chapter, this desire initially manifests itself with respect to physical pleasures and pains and is attributed to the epithumetic part of the soul (Rh. I.11 1370a 16-18). However, the desire for pleasure is not necessarily limited to physical pleasures and pains (cf. NE VII.13 1153b 29-36).

There are two ways in which young people's attitudes toward pleasure affect the actions they perform. The first is the things they find pleasant and painful: things which are physically pleasant or painful. The second is the fact that initially, at least, the desire for pleasure outweighs others in determining actions. If not properly directed, both of these influences can exert a negative effect on moral development. Thus, the moral educator must take steps to ensure that youths come to take pleasure from the right sources and that their actions are not too much directed by the desire for physical pleasure. Aristotle's remarks in Nicomachean Ethics X.9 demonstrate that in his view

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6 Aristotle's treatment of pleasure is notoriously difficult: it is unclear how the two treatments found in Nicomachean Ethics Books Seven and Ten relate to each other and both books contain imprecise and seemingly weak arguments. My discussion of Aristotle's views on pleasure will be limited to pleasure's relation to action and moral development. I will thus not treat many of the interesting issues associated with Aristotle's treatments of pleasure (such as whether pleasure is an activity or something added to an activity). For a more comprehensive treatment of the topic, especially the two Nicomachean Ethics accounts and their relation to each other, see Gosling and Taylor (J. C. B. Gosling and C. C. W. Taylor, The Greeks on Pleasure. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982)).
pleasure is not problematic per se, but being guided by feelings rather than arguments is. Most people who pursue pleasure are also guided by feelings and so their seeking pleasure is bad, but only because of its association with feelings (πάθη). For those who know what is fine and truly pleasant, pleasure is not problematic because these people will remain open to argument.

Fortunately, pleasure has certain characteristics which help the moral educator direct his charge’s attitude toward it in the right direction. These characteristics also allow the educator to make use of the intrinsic desire for pleasure as a way of guiding the process of moral development as a whole. In *Nicomachean Ethics* X.4, Aristotle explains that pleasure completes an activity (τελειοὶ δὲ τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἢ ἡδονή) (NE X.4 1174b 23). He adds later that pleasure completes activity by supervening on it as a bloom (NE X.4 1174b 31-33). Although this has often been interpreted as indicating that pleasure is something additional to the activity, it does not have to be interpreted in this way. Aristotle most likely means that pleasure is not identical to the activity, but is some additional feature of it when it is performed well. It is thus conceptually, but not literally, distinct from the activity which it completes. Although it is possible to talk about the pleasure of doing a derivation in logic in isolation from the action, this pleasure does not exist apart from the activity.

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7 This is an issue I cannot resolve here. Gosling attributes the view that pleasure is distinct from the activity to Owen, although Owen never explicitly accepts it see pp. 18-19, 26-29 (J. Gosling, “More Aristotelian Pleasures,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1973-1974, pp. 15-34). Gosling’s own interpretation of this passage which concludes that pleasure is perfect actualization, however, is not entirely satisfying, especially in light of Aristotle’s comments in Chapter Five which refer to pleasures as at least conceptually distinct from the activities with which they are associated (see Gosling, op. cit., p. 28 and Gosling and Taylor, op. cit., p. 209-213). A good overview of these issues may be found in Hardie, *Aristotle’s Ethical Theory*, pp. 312-315 and 409-412.
On either interpretation, Aristotle believes that since pleasure completes activity, the quality of a pleasure is determined by its source, "...[f]or things different in kind are, we think, completed by different things...and, similarly, we think that activities differing in kind are completed by things differing in kind" (NE X.5 1175a 23-27; cf. X.4 1174b 24- 1175a 5). He continues, noting that just as activities differ in respect to goodness and badness (ἐπιεικεία καὶ φαυλότητι) so too do the pleasures corresponding to them. For each thing there is a pleasure proper to it which corresponds to its characteristic activity (NE X.5 1175b 24- 1176a 5). Thus, pleasures are differentiated by the activities they complete. For humans, the standard by which pleasures are judged is the same as that by which actions are judged: the person of excellence (NE X.5 1176a 17-19; cf. Philebus 40 b-c). The pleasures of the good man will differ in kind from those of the bad man and are properly considered pleasures.

The words Aristotle uses to express how pleasures are differentiated (ἐπιεικεία and φαυλότητι) indicate a difference in the objective goodness, not the subjective

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8 I am following the Nicomachean Ethics Book Ten account of pleasure, but my comments do not conflict with the Book Seven account. In both treatments Aristotle argues that pleasure is not necessarily bad and that excellence is concerned with pleasure. His arguments in Book Ten are, however, more perspicuous. Although there has been disagreement about how compatible the two treatments really are, there is sufficient agreement on the major points to allow me to use them both together. Owen, for example, argues that the discussions in Books Seven and Ten address different questions and therefore take very different forms (G. E. L. Owen, “Aristotelian Pleasures,” Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 1971-1972, pp. 136-152; this is reprinted in Articles on Aristotle, Vol. II). Gosling takes up Owen’s arguments and asserts that they do not demonstrate that Aristotle’s aims in the two discussions are radically different. See Gosling, op. cit. and Gosling and Taylor, op. cit., Chapter Eleven.

9 Annas explores the implications of the objective nature of pleasure and Aristotle’s linking pleasure so tightly with the good in “Aristotle on Pleasure,” (Julia Annas, “Aristotle on Pleasure and Goodness,” in Essays on Aristotle’s Ethics, ed. Amelie Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 285-299). Although I do not agree with all of its details, the article provides a good general description of the connection Aristotle makes between pleasure and the good and its implications for his ethical views. In this regard, my analysis is very much in agreement with Annas'.
quality, of pleasures. Although Aristotle is clearly emphasizing the objective differences between different kinds of pleasures in this passage, there are also allusions to the subjective feeling associated with pleasure which some commentators neglect.\(^\text{10}\) Because of the types of activity Aristotle describes as causing pleasure, pleasures are not just bodily sensations; they must also include something like psychic recognition. His references to the agent’s experience of the act as pleasant confirm that this subjective experience must be an element in his view of pleasure, even if it is generally downplayed in Book Ten (cf. NE VII.13 1153b 10-15, 25-32; NE X.5 1175b 2-14, 1176a 9-11).

In fact, remarks in Chapter Five of Book Ten suggest a connection between the desirability of a pleasure (which must be a function of the feeling we get from it, or its quality) and its goodness. Here Aristotle argues that each thing desires most those pleasures that are associated with its characteristic activity, or goodness. Thus, he states that, "...horse, dog and man have different pleasures, as Heraclitus says, 'asses would prefer (e\lq e\s t\o\i) sweepings to gold'; for food is pleasant than gold to asses" (NE X.5 1176a 6-7). These comments suggest that Aristotle held that the objective status of a pleasure, measured by the type of activity with which it is associated, would be reflected in the subjective experience of the agent.\(^\text{11}\) The reference to asses’ preference here indicates that Aristotle believed that the pleasure proper to a species would be the best pleasure not only with respect to goodness, but also with respect to the subjectively felt quality of pleasure derived from it. Aristotle’s use of αιρετικα indicates some kind of

\(^{10}\) Annas, in particular, emphasizes the objective standard of pleasure and generally overlooks its subjective aspect.

\(^{11}\) Cf. Philebus 45 b-e, 53a-c where Plato separates the subjective intensity of pleasure from its perfection.
intentional selection; for an animal this selection must be based on its subjective pleasure and not some conception of its good since asses act on the basis of the feeling of pleasure and not on any conception of what is good for them (cf. EE II.8 1224a 25-27). Aristotle’s use of their choice to illustrate what is pleasant indicates that for humans, the subjective quality of pleasure is also relevant to choice. This fact has clear implications for humans: the best pleasure will be that which results from excellent activity. This means that excellent activity is naturally pleasant, as determined by an objective standard (the good man) and that the feeling of pleasure a student derives from excellent activity will be greater than that which is derived from other sorts of activity. Clearly, this will make the moral educator’s task much easier - he will be working with his student’s desire for pleasure rather than against it because the student will naturally derive the greatest pleasure from excellent actions.

Another characteristic of pleasure enables the moral educator to help his student perform the best actions. According to Aristotle, pleasure increases activity. He means by this that when a person takes pleasure in an activity he is better able to perform it. Something about his pleasure enhances his performance. He states that, “...an activity is

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12 Aristotle vacillates between objective and subjective descriptions of pleasure. He clearly wants pleasure to be something objective, but he retains elements of subjectivity in describing what is pleasant. Urmson argues that Aristotle’s failure to distinguish between the passively experienced feeling of bodily pleasure and enjoying an activity weakens his theory. While the objective framework Aristotle develops seems to fit the enjoyment of an activity well, it does not reflect the nature of bodily pleasures. The tension within Aristotle’s treatment which Urmson identifies appears to be the result of his desire to account for all types of pleasure with one concept. See Urmson, “Aristotle on Pleasure,” (J. O. Urmson, “Aristotle on Pleasure,” in Aristotle: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. J. M. E. Moravcsik (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1967), p.. 323-333). Hardie, Aristotle’s Ethical Theory, p. 297 also remarks on this tension.

13 This assertion of Aristotle’s seems to be overly optimistic; it is difficult to imagine how even an excellent person can realistically be said to enjoy some of the kalon acts he performs, such as sacrificing his life in battle or turning a friend in to the police. Gosling and Taylor, op. cit., pp. 277-278, also question the legitimacy of this claim.
intensified by its proper pleasure, since each class of things is better judged of and brought to precision by those who engage in the activity with pleasure..." (NE X.5 1175a 30-32; cf. NE X.7 1177b 20-21, NE VII.12 1153a 21-23). Unfortunately, Aristotle does not explain exactly how pleasure increases activity. The comments which follow his statement suggest that the heightened attention of which an agent is capable because of his pleasure helps his performance (NE X.5 1175b 9-16). When someone finds e.g., painting enjoyable he is able to bring a certain attentiveness to it which helps him to listen to instruction, to notice details of the painting, and so forth. This will, in turn, help to improve his painting. Thus, as he comes to take pleasure in an activity, he is better able to do it. As the student naturally comes to take pleasure in excellent action, he will be all the more capable of performing excellent actions in the future.

The moral educator will use the desire to attain pleasure and to avoid pain to guide the process of development, as Aristotle indicates in Nicomachean Ethics Book Ten: "...in educating the young we steer them by the rudders of pleasure and pain; it is thought, too, that to enjoy the things we ought and to hate the things we ought has the greatest bearing on excellence of character" (NE X.1 1172a 21-23). Contrary to

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14 However, it is also possible that the pleasure resulting from an activity impedes it; see Urmson, "Aristotle On Pleasure," pp. 327-328 and Gosling and Taylor, op. cit., pp. 273-276 for various counterexamples to Aristotle's claim.

15 This may leave us wondering why everyone is not fully virtuous, as it seems rather natural. This is certainly the feeling one gets upon reading Sherman's treatment of moral education in Fabric of Character (see Chapter Five, "The Habituation of Character"). As I will explain in this chapter and the next, I believe that "coming to take pleasure" in excellent activity is a complex process which involves more than just the feeling of pleasure derived from an individual act. In addition, there are other aims and desires within the individual which may make it difficult to alter behavior despite the fact that excellent activity yields superior pleasure. This is part of the reason why moral education is a developmental (rather than instantaneous) process.
Sherman’s claim, pain is also an element in training children. In *Nicomachean Ethics* II.3 Aristotle also notes that punishment will serve as a kind of cure (NE II.3 1104b 15-17). The moral educator uses the student’s anticipation of pleasure or pain to get him to perform or refrain from an act.17 In the case of young students, pleasure and pain usually take the form of physical consequences and are particularly effective because this type of desire is what primarily guides them. Thus, although this aspect of training is not much discussed by him, Aristotle does acknowledge a role for corporal punishment in training children. This role, however, is apparently a limited one and (along with the use of physical pleasure as an incentive) should fade into the background as the child’s ability to reason develops.

C. HONOR AND SHAME

The second natural desire Aristotle employs in his program of moral education is really two closely related emotions and desires: shame and honor. Each of these is associated with *thumetic* desires of the non-rational part of the soul.18 Certain characteristics are traditionally associated with *thumetic* desires. Plato associates *thumos*

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16 Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, pp. 164-165; interestingly, the passage just cited is not mentioned anywhere in Sherman’s work. Sherman argues, based on *Nicomachean Ethics* X.9, that since children’s reasoning power is undeveloped and not corrupt, punishment will not be part of education. Her interpretation of even this chapter misses Aristotle’s references to the education of children as well as adults. Although Aristotle’s remarks about harsh punishment are reserved for bad men, he does state that punishment will be used in the training of the young (1180a 1-5).

17 Annas ("Aristotle on Pleasure," p. 289), Gosling and Taylor (op. cit., pp. 270-271). Sherman, *Fabric of Character* (pp. 184-190) and Burnyeat (op. cit., pp. 76-79) all note the importance of learning to take pleasure in the right things as part of the process of moral education.

18 I will explain each separately, although in a sense they are different aspects of the same set of desires. Following my descriptions, I will treat their influence on action jointly.
with spiritedness, the desire for honor, competitiveness, and anger (Republic IV 439e, 440c-d; Phaedrus 253d, 254a). In Aristotelian texts, *thumetic* desires share these characteristics (NE VII.6 1149a 24-b4). In addition to these attributes, individuals seem to have an internal drive for self-improvement which is attributable to the *thumos* and which will be relevant to moral education. In Nicomachean Ethics IX.8 Aristotle discusses whether self-love is a good thing and indicates that the good sense of self-love moves one to strive towards the noble and to do noble deeds (NE IX.8 1169a 6-11).

Whiting argues that the morally excellent person exhibits a sort of metaphorical competitiveness in this passage (she argues that it is not true competitiveness because the good person is not competing against others). So, while non-excellent people compete for goods, the excellent person competes with himself. The source of the drive for self-improvement is *thumetic* desires. Thus the moral educator will be working with students who have a natural drive to improve. In addition to their competitive aspect, *thumetic* desires seem to be essentially social and concerned with an individual’s

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19 It is also linked with certain aesthetic sensibilities, but it is not clear that these play a role in Aristotle’s moral theory and program of moral education. In “Reason, Virtue and Value,” Cooper proposes an interpretation of this aspect of *thumetic* desires with interesting implications for moral development and moral education (pp. 105-109), but he is unable to provide substantial support for his interpretation beyond its internal consistency and plausibility. He bases his argument on the idea that the kalon is fitting (πρέπον) and links this with the assertion in Metaphysics XIII.3 that the attributes of the kalon are symmetry, order and determinateness, concluding that these characteristics will also be found in kalon action (p. 106). These comments touch on an interesting facet of kalon activity, but Cooper goes too far in claiming that these aesthetic attributes are what confer moral value. We saw in Chapter One that an action’s value comes from its fulfilling the human ergon; these aesthetic attributes might be bound up with the achievement of function, but they are not the source of value. This is an interesting possibility but there is not enough textual evidence to conclude that the aesthetic aspect of kalon action is relevant to moral education. Cooper also stretches in characterizing the kalon as the object of competitive, *thumetic* desires and in claiming that this desire is wholly responsible for moral education.

perception of himself. Cairns remarks on the connection between honor and shame in Greek society, noting that each is essentially bound up with evaluations by others.

These common threads run through each of the emotions identified in this section - each in its own way is the result of the overarching desire to think well of oneself and to believe that others respect one. There are two features of these desires which are relevant to moral development. The first, the impulse toward self-improvement and competitiveness, describes the desire at a general level. This impulse persists even in the morally excellent person. The second, concern with other people's opinions is one way this desire is manifested. As the student matures, he accepts standards of behavior and becomes motivated by the kalon. As he does so, honor and shame will become less relevant in accounting for his action, but the generic desire for self-improvement persists in the morally excellent person, as does the desire for the pleasant. Of the variety of ways thumetic desires are manifested, shame and the desire for honor are of such a nature as to be employed by the moral educator. Initially, the competitive aspect of thumetic desire is

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21 In "Aristotle's Theory," Sherman explores in detail how these desires relate to philial relations, see pp. 77-98. This is certainly one important aspect of how the desires to be honored and to avoid shame come into play in moral development, but these desires extend beyond philial relations and have their origin not in the special relations with our family and friends, but in a natural competitiveness in the soul. Although affection for family and friends might lead a person to seek honor from and to avoid shaming himself in the presence of his friends and family in particular, this is only one manifestation of a more generic drive to be honored and thought well of.


23 This may seem to be a far cry from the traditional translation of thumos as "anger," but I believe it to be compatible with it. Insofar as a person feels anger when he believes himself to have been slighted by another, it seems to be a manifestation of the desire to be properly valued by others. Thus, I think the translation "anger" selects one of several emotions characteristic of thumos and uses it to stand for the entire set of such emotions.
satisfied by comparison with others. Honor and shame reflect this concern with other people’s perception of oneself and serve as a source of motivation for action.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the thumetic desire for honor initially emerges from the desire for recognition of status within the community. Because their goal in seeking honor is to obtain confirmation of their social status, people tend to seek honor from those they respect or who are prominent in the community. As in other areas where people seek confirmation of their views from those whom they believe to have expertise, so in confirming their judgments about themselves and their moral stature people turn to those individuals who they believe are themselves good. Moreover, individuals want honor from those who are in a position to make an informed evaluation of them: those who know them well (Rh I.11 1371a 10-17, cf. NE I.5 1095b 28). The inclination to admire parents and friends, which will be discussed below, and the closeness people share with them makes philoi important sources for honor. Because parents and friends know them well and they hold these people in esteem, individuals are likely to seek honor from them most of all, particularly in the early stages of moral development. Others from whom people may be inclined to seek honor might be teachers, family friends and respected members of society. Aristotle remarks on the social nature of this desire in the Rhetoric, explaining that “[t]hey [young people] are shy, accepting the rules of society in which they have been trained, and not yet believing in any other standard of honour” (Rh. II.12 1389a 28-30). At the outset, the student will adopt society’s standards and seek honor for the things it values - this is one reason why it is extremely important to be born into a good society.
Of course, those whom a person believes to be good and thus to be good judges of whether he is good may not in fact be good. Especially early on in moral training a student may seek honor from the wrong people. As moral education progresses, his opinion as to who serves as a good judge may change and he may seek honor not from rich and powerful individuals, but from temperate and courageous ones. This shift reflects a change in the student’s assessment of what is valuable. As is suggested in the passage from the Rhetoric cited above, as he learns more about moral excellence, his desire to be honored will be refined - in terms of what he seeks honor for, from whom he seeks it and, ultimately, his attitude toward honor itself. Morally excellent people act with an eye to excellence and expect others to respect them on this basis. They will be little concerned with doing what will win popular honor, but will instead act for the sake of the kalon. Others who are like-minded will respect and admire them for this. As we will see following the initial discussion of shame, the desire to be honored and the choice of those from whom we seek it can play an important part in moral education.

Although Aristotle does not list them as opposites, in many respects the desire to avoid shame serves as the converse of the desire to be honored. Both are driven by an agent’s concern with other people’s conceptions of him. Whereas honor is the desire to

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24 We should note that there are two excellences associated with honor, megalopsuchia, which is a large-scale excellence and an unnamed excellence which operates on a smaller scale. Both are tied to an accurate assessment of one’s worthiness of honor and thus presuppose self-reflection and self-assessment. In neither case, though, does the individual who possesses the excellence seek honor for its own sake. It appears as if those who explicitly seek honor are not yet morally excellent. Morally excellent people accept honor as an appropriate response to their achievements, but do not seek it for its own sake or for the sake of confirming their opinions of themselves. For an extended discussion of the megalopsuchos’s attitude toward honor, see Whiting, "Self-Love," pp. 168-172. The attitude toward honor is similar to the proper attitude toward pleasure which was described above: the excellent person will accept honor for the right reasons. As he matures, his desire for self-improvement, which initially manifests itself as the desire for honor will be turned toward his own evaluation of himself and performing kalon acts.
be thought well of, shame is the desire not to be thought badly of. Aristotle asserts that
shame is not an excellence although it is concerned with feelings and represents a mean
(NE II.7 1108a 31-b 1; EE III.7 1234a 24-25). Nevertheless, he believes it to be a
natural feeling which can help steer moral development and it will thus contribute
significantly to the student’s moral education.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle defines shame as fear of disrepute (NE IV.9
1128b 10-12). The notion contained in this definition is also found in the definitions in
the *Eudemian Ethics* and in the *Rhetoric*, where it is said to be concern with good men’s
opinion and pain or disturbance with regard to bad things respectively (EE III.7 1233b 26-
30 and Rh. II.6 1383b 15). *Aidôs* has both prospective and retrospective aspects: it may
deter an agent from performing a base act and it may also reflect his regret when he acts
wrongly. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle explicitly states that shame is fear of disgrace and
not of the consequences of the act (Rh. II.6 1384a 23-25). In one way shame is an
anticipatory feeling which reflects an individual’s concern with what others think of him
and his desire not to be thought poorly of, in contrast with the operative aspect of the
desire for honor, which is the desire to be thought well of. Like the desire for honor,
shame also results from the genuine desire to do well. However, people are also apt to
feel shame when they have a sense that they have done something wrong; this is its
retrospective sense (NE IV.9 1128b 17-23; cf. Rh. II.6 1383b 18-20).²⁷

²⁵ Cf. EE II.3 where shame is included in the table of excellences.

²⁶ Cairns, op. cit., pp. 415-418.

²⁷ In his treatment of shame in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Four, Aristotle makes an allusion to a connection
between shame and encrataia. These remarks suggest that prospective shame might act as a restraint for
encratic agents and retrospective shame as an indication of an akratic’s regret at his action. In accepting
shame in young people, but not adults, Aristotle is implicitly drawing a distinction between youth’s
In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle indicates that people also feel ashamed when they lack some honor which their peers possess (Rh. II.6 1384a 9-16). This feeling will make individuals strive to attain honor and thereby affect behavior. Although young people live by passion and do not yet possess good characters, they are restrained by shame; this must be the anticipation of shame because the act is in the future (NE IV.9 1128b 17-20).

The occurrent feeling of shame is a sort of second-order assessment of actions: it is an emotion agents feel when they evaluate their own actions as being wrong according to some external standard (either actually or potentially). For this reason, the disposition to feel shame seems to presuppose a fair amount of moral development. First, the agent must have developed the desire to do good acts and to be thought well of, as well as some ability to differentiate good acts from bad. The person must have internalized society’s standards about action that is worthy of praise and blame. Thus, in *Nicomachean Ethics* X.9 Aristotle states that only certain individuals are moved by shame: those who are generous-minded, gently born and true lovers of what is noble (NE X.9 1179b 4-15).\(^{23}\) If those who feel shame can be characterized as “true lovers of what is noble,” they must have already undergone a substantial amount of habituation since being a true lover of the noble implies commitment to performing excellent acts. In addition, in order to feel shame properly, an individual must to some extent be able to discern what is the excellent

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\(^{23}\) I will take up the larger context of this passage - the role of argument in moral education - below, in the discussion of Aristotle’s program of moral education.
response in a given circumstance.\textsuperscript{29} In a sense, shame is an emotion by which the partially developed intellectual ability to judge reprimands or prompts the less fully developed character.\textsuperscript{30} It represents the emergence of self-evaluation within a person, although this occurs primarily after the fact with respect to an external standard and is not the primary way in which shame motivates. That is, it is not primarily because a student anticipates letting \textit{himself} down that shame acts as a deterrent, but because he anticipates how his actions will affect \textit{other people’s} opinion of him that shame can affect his actions. Although the motivation or evaluation is external, the student will have begun to internalize communal standards.\textsuperscript{31}

It is because of the moral and cognitive development displayed in feelings of shame that Aristotle says it is becoming to youth. Young people are not expected to have completely internalized society’s standards; shame can help to reinforce the lessons they have learned and to deter them from acting wrongly. In its retrospective function, the feeling of shame also demonstrates that although they have followed their passions young people know what the best action is and have some desire to perform it. However, this emotion is not to be praised in adults because they should have internalized standards of behavior and should not be led or tempted by passion; in this case, shame serves as an indication of a character flaw (either \textit{en crateia} or \textit{acr asia}) (NE IV.9 1128b 17-23).

\textsuperscript{29} For this reason, young children do not feel shame: they do not yet have a sense of which actions are right or a desire to perform the right one because it is right (they may desire to perform these acts for other reasons though).

\textsuperscript{30} Cf. Sherman, “Aristotle’s Theory,” p. 79.

According to Aristotle, then, the feeling of shame is a semi-virtue\(^\text{32}\) because it is an appropriate response once one has acted wrongly and indicates that the individual can determine the right action. It is not an excellence because one should not be performing the wrong acts in the first place and should not require constraints on future actions. As a student makes moral progress, he will feel shame less and less frequently because he will be tempted to or actually perform the wrong acts less often. Shame therefore becomes less of a constraint on action.\(^\text{31}\)

There is another way in which shame may be regarded as representing moral progress, one which is implicit in Aristotle’s definition of shame. Insofar as shame is a feeling concerned with what others think of one, it is typical of a person who is not yet morally excellent. Yet, as mentioned above, it requires some degree of self-evaluation. Since morally excellent people and those approaching moral excellence act on the basis of excellence and not convention, they will evaluate action on these grounds and will engage in critical self-examination and self-reflection. To the degree that a young person feels or anticipates shame upon performing some bad act, he demonstrates the ability for this kind of critical self-examination, although he is still motivated by external considerations and evaluation (his reputation). As students make moral progress, there

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32 Burnyeat coins this term in “Aristotle on Learning to Be Good,” as a way of indicating the moral progress aidōs implies (Burnyeat, op. cit., pp. 78-79).

33 Cairns argues that contrary to Aristotle’s claims in Nicomachean Ethics Book Four, aidōs must continue to be relevant to morally excellent action, largely because he (Cairns) does not see how it can completely drop out of the morally excellent person’s affective nature. Cairns’ claim is strongly influenced by his view that aidōs must be a hexis (Cairns, op. cit., pp. 426-429). Aristotle may have made a mistake about the nature of aidōs, but even if aidōs remains a part of the affective soul, it becomes irrelevant in excellent people, both as a motivation to action and as a response to action. The excellent person might feel shame at the incorrect actions of those close to him, but it will not be relevant to his own acts.
will be a transition from looking to external evaluation to relying on self-evaluation of their acts to determine their moral standing and progress. In addition to serving as an indication of a person's ability to judge acts and desire to act well, then, shame can be regarded as a semi-virtue because it represents a first step toward self-evaluation.

As in the case of honor, those who are not yet morally excellent are especially concerned with what those closest to them and those they admire think of them. They are therefore particularly reluctant to disgrace themselves in the presence of these people. Aristotle takes up this aspect of shame in his discussion of ἀιδὸς in the Rhetoric. He says there that, "...since shame is the imagination of disgrace, in which we shrink from the disgrace itself and not from its consequences, and we only care what opinion is held of us because of the people who form that opinion, it follows that the people before whom we feel shame are those whose opinion of us matters to us" (Rh. II.6 1384a 23-27). These will be a group similar to that described in the discussion of honor above: those students admire and those whose opinion they respect, but Aristotle adds three other groups here - those who admire them, those by whom they wish to be admired, and those with whom they are in competition (Rh. II.6 1384a 27-29). In concrete terms, this is likely to be students' families, teachers, peers, and those whom students consider to be morally good.34 This gives these different groups a privileged place in assessing their acts and helping them to assess them for themselves. This assessment will, in turn, shape future acts.

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34 Aristotle emphasizes the social nature of the feeling when he states that we feel no shame with those whose opinions we do not respect. Clearly, this feeling depends on who knows of our actions and not solely on self-evaluation (although as discussed above it requires the ability to judge our own actions).
The emotion of shame and the desire to be honored, since they are closely tied together and are both essentially concerned with other people's opinions, influence behavior and judgment in similar ways. Both of these desires emerge from the agent's general desire for self-improvement and are manifested in the desire for other people to have a good opinion of him; he takes this perception as an indication of his moral stature. The desire for respect from peers motivates the agent to act in accordance with expectations of him. The external assessment required by these desires has a direct affect on which acts the agent performs: he is apt to act in ways which he thinks are likely to make others honor him and not to act in ways which will bring him shame. As we will see below, the acts which are motivated in this way constitute part of the habituation of character. Aristotle remarks in the *Rhetoric* that "...there are many things that shame before such people [those we admire, those who admire us, rivals, etc.] makes us do or leave undone" (Rh. II.6 1385a 7-8). In the good social setting which Aristotle assumes, a student will begin to perform increasingly "correct" actions, where these actions are determined by the anticipated reaction of those around him.\(^\text{35}\)

The competitive, *thumetic* desires to obtain honor and avoid disgrace cause people to modify their behavior in light of the reactions of those whom they consider to be good judges of it. These desires will also make agents receptive to guidance from these same sources as they attempt to learn for themselves what constitutes honorable and shameful behavior and to act accordingly. The moral educator can use these desires to influence

\(^{35}\) Cf. Cairns, op. cit., pp. 421-425 on the educational aspect of shame. Cairns goes too far, I think, in saying that it is *aidōs* which makes the student desire to be *kalon*. This will be one, but not the only, factor in his desire to perform *kalon* acts.
behavior and guide moral development via the attribution of praise and blame, as we will see below. Once moral education is complete, the competitive desire remains and manifests itself in the agent’s on-going desire for self-improvement (as with morally excellent friends increasing each other’s excellence in *Nicomachean Ethics X.9*), but his concern with his reputation and the opinion of others becomes less important.36

D. PHILIAL RELATIONS AND IMITATION

Each of the factors previously discussed is a fact about human nature and its desires. The final factor is not a desire, but a group of relationships which naturally affect behavior. In the ethical treatises, Aristotle identifies *philoi* as having particular influence on the behavior and development of individuals. *Philial* relationships initially exist between a child and his family and later include friends as well. Aristotle indicates that family and friends play an important part in the habituation process, but does not elaborate on exactly how they influence habituation. The role of the family is a topic which has received little attention from scholars over the years. Sherman emphasizes the importance of family in moral education both in her dissertation and in *Fabric of Character*, but few others explore its influence on moral education.37 Much of the work

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36 The morally excellent person will have friends and will want them to think well of him, but virtue friendship will be based on mutual recognition of character. There is no indication that the morally excellent person is concerned with his reputation as a means of making and keeping friends.

37 Sherman, *Fabric of Character* pp. 151-156, “Aristotle’s Theory,” Chapter Two. Tress argues that family plays a central role in moral education, but emphasizes its importance to the neglect of other factors (Tress, op. cit., pp. 73-79). Blits argues that the family is important for moral education, but does not explore its influence (Jan Blits, “Privacy and Public Moral Education: Aristotle’s Critique of the Family,” *Educational Theory*, 35 (3) 1985, pp. 225-238.) Verbeke, op. cit., mentions family as playing a role in moral education, but does not discuss the topic in detail, see p. 167. Burnyeat does not mention family.
Sherman does is with respect to elucidating the specific contributions family makes to moral education (which is a topic I will discuss in the following section), but beyond noting the role of love, she does not examine in detail how philoi gain influence, which is my present concern.

Although there are several ways in which relationships with family and friends contribute to habituation, there is one which I think is most characteristic of the philial relationship: because of their affection for friends and family, people are inclined to admire and thus to imitate them. Habituation can thus be guided by the behavior exhibited by family and friends and, later, by the way they articulate reasons for their behavior.

Given Aristotle's claim that imitation is natural to children and is one of the first ways in which they learn (Poetics 1448b6 ff.), the fact that children imitate the members of their families (and later their friends) seems to be in some way coincidental - they would imitate anyone, not just family members. In fact, Aristotle makes this very point in the Politics, when he warns educators about the way children will absorb and imitate all of the things around them - the source does not seem to be significant to the child (Pol VII.17 1336a 24-b 35). However, the degree of imitation is more pronounced in philial relationships because of the nature of the philial relationship. Family members will be

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38 There are other areas where philial relationships exert influence over moral development, but which I do not think are distinctive of it, for example shame, which is the one Sherman focuses on. While family is central to the experience of shame, the way that people are influenced by shame is social and is not specific to philial relations, as I argue above. For this reason, I treat shame separately and characterize affection as the primary way in which philoi gain influence.

39 Cf. Rhetoric I.11 1371b 4-10, where Aristotle remarks that imitation is naturally pleasant because of the inferences it allows us to draw.
doubly influential: they have early, unlimited access to children and they have a relationship with children whereby children trust and admire them, which is not true of the relationship with slaves. Because of these two factors, children will be more likely to follow their behavior than a slave’s.

Aristotle remarks several times that there is a natural affection or bond between parents and children (NE VII.1 1155a 16-18, EE VII.3 1238b 23-26, Pol II.4 1262b 14-24).40 In NE X.9, Aristotle states that, “...as in cities laws and character have force, so in households do the injunctions and habits of the father, and these have even more because of the tie of blood and the benefits he confers; for the children start with a natural affection and disposition to obey” (NE X.9 1180b 4-7).41 The natural affection children feel for their parents has an efficacy independent of the disposition to obey. In this passage, Aristotle indicates that parents’ habits and injunctions both have force in moral education (as do character and laws in a city), and he says that this is so because children have both a natural affection (for their parents) and the disposition to obey. It appears that there are two parallel influences on behavior: laws and injunctions, which work because of the disposition to obey and character and habits, which work because of affection. In Book Eight, Aristotle describes the friendship between parents and children

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40 Aristotle sometimes refers to the bond “parents” feel for their children and sometimes refers to “mothers” and “fathers” separately. When he speaks of education, though, he refers more often to the father’s friendship with his son. I will often apply “parents” to these cases as well, although I acknowledge that Aristotle believed that mothers could not contribute in the same way to the moral education of their male children at least in part because of their inability to attain moral excellence.

41 The reference to the role of law will be taken up in the discussion of the program of moral education in the third part of the chapter.
as being similar to the affection men feel toward gods: it is a relationship to them as good
and superior (NE VIII.12 1162a 4-10).

Since they regard their parents as good and superior, it is quite natural for children
to imitate their behavior, as the passage from Nicomachean Ethics X.9 suggests. In fact,
in the Rhetoric, Aristotle describes an emotion which children feel toward their parents
(and which friends may also feel toward their friends), "ζήλος," which Cooper translates
as "feeling eagerness to match the accomplishments of others."42 Aristotle identifies this
as a good emotion which makes a person take steps to acquire these goods himself. He
explicitly lists excellence as an object which inspires this emotion and those individuals
admire as people toward whom it is felt:

ει δ' ἐστιν ζήλωτα τὰ ἐντιμα ἄγαθα, ἀνάγκη τὰς τε ἀρετὰς εἶναι
touaútac...kai oì̂ς πολλοὶ ὁμοίοι βούλονται εἶναι, ἡ πολλοὶ γνώριμοι, ἡ
φίλοι πολλοί, ἡ ὁδύς πολλοὶ θαυμάζουσιν, ἡ ὁδύς αὐτοὶ θαυμάζουσιν...

Further, since all good things that are highly honoured are objects of emulation,
excellence in its various forms must be such an object....Also [it may be felt
toward] those whom many people wish to be like; those who have many
acquaintances or friends; those whom many admire, or whom we ourselves
admire.... (Rh. II.11 1388b 10-20).

Given that children view their parents as superior to them, it is likely that they also
admire their parents and desire the goods they perceive their parents as possessing.

It does not seem that in all cases children will admire those whom they view as
superior to them. In some cases it strikes me as equally likely that children might resent

In the Revised Oxford Translation, Roberts translates this emotion as "emulation." I find this translation
less satisfactory than Cooper's since in English "emulation" is not an emotion, but a kind of behavior. It is
likely, though, as I will suggest below, that this emotion leads to emulation.
someone who is superior to them as with someone superior in, e.g., power. Their attitude toward those superior to them will be determined largely by how those people act toward them. So if someone superior to a child in power wields her power over him in a capricious manner, he is quite likely to resent rather than admire her. Although it is possible that he will come to regard power as an important possession and may take steps to acquire it, he will not do so out of admiration for the person who is more powerful.

What makes me confident that Aristotle believes that children are likely to admire their parents is the characteristics with respect to which they believe them to be superior (knowledge, excellence, etc.) and the environment of the household: parents felt affection toward their children and were the ones who ensured that their children were cared for. Given that a child recognizes these characteristics as goods and that good parents are not likely to exercise them on the child in a negative way, they are more likely to inspire children to admire than to resent those who exceed them with respect to these attributes (their parents). A similar situation holds with friends. Both parents and friends seem especially likely to cause the emotion Aristotle refers to as "ζηλος" and to make children strive to acquire for themselves the goods their parents and friends possess.

Parents exert influence over children's behavior in another way in addition to the desire to attain the goods their parents possess. This second means of influence is

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43 This seems to be especially true of mothers, but fathers felt affection for their children as well. In addition to the places where Aristotle discusses the feelings of parents toward their children cited above, see Golden, Chapter Four (Mark Golden, Children and Childhood in Classical Athens (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990)).

44 Of course, the attributes children regard as good will not always be good. Children may also admire bad role models since they have not yet developed the ability to discriminate good examples from bad. If a child mistakenly views power or money as a good, he will admire those who are superior to him with respect to these things.
mentioned in the passage from *Nicomachean Ethics X.9* cited above: the power parents have over children and children's obedience to them. Family life in fourth century Athens was one in which children were expected to manifest respect, loyalty and obedience, especially toward their fathers. These expectations were enforced through physical punishment.⁴⁵ Although Aristotle does not emphasize this dynamic, his comments about sons beating their fathers attest to the presence of violence in domestic life (*NE VII.6 1149b 8-13*). We should therefore expect that Aristotle assumed that accepted standards of behavior and the threat of punishment would influence a child's behavior. If the child wished to meet his parents' expectations and to follow their injunctions, he would be obedient and respectful of the power they had over him. Although punishment does not play a major role in Aristotle's account, we should be aware of it insofar as it must be presupposed as part of the context within which development occurs. The positive motivation from affection is more heavily emphasized by Aristotle and more in keeping with his optimistic picture of human nature and *philial* relations, but the motivation arising from the power dynamic will also exert influence on the child's behavior.

Since the standards set by their parents and the qualities children admire in them are both ways of being and not tangible things, the most efficacious way for children to work to obtain them is through modifying their behavior and patterning it on their parents' behavior - in short, children will imitate or emulate the behavior of their parents. This is why in *Nicomachean Ethics X.9* Aristotle says that the habits of parents have

force in the moral education of their children: because children admire their parents, they will emulate their behavior in an attempt to acquire the goods they believe their parents possess. Moreover, in so far as children admire certain characteristics in their friends which they do not possess, they will be inclined to emulate them as well.

Aristotle’s account of the parent-child relationship suggests that as children get older, they will be receptive to their parents’ explanations and instructions concerning moral matters. People are likely to turn to those they believe to be more knowledgeable than themselves for help in understanding the world around them. In the case of children, this means that they are likely to look to their parents for such guidance. As children seek to learn what it is about a situation which makes it right to repay a debt or to come to someone’s aid, parents will enjoy a privileged place in shaping their moral perception and judgment.

III. PROGRAM OF EDUCATION

Aristotle nowhere explicitly sets out a complete explanation of his program of education and how it works. The closest he gets to providing this sort of account is his discussion of education in Politics VII and VIII, but even this account is sketchy, especially regarding the changes that occur in an individual’s character. In this section, I will reconstruct Aristotle’s views on moral education, showing how he uses the natural behaviors and desires discussed in the previous section to guide moral development. I will argue in the following chapter that Aristotle believes that this program needs to be

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46 Golden, citing Gouldner, points out the role of slaves in training children, but notes that their authority and standards are ultimately derived from parents. Ibid., p. 155.
supplemented in order for the student to achieve complete moral excellence. The process Aristotle describes reflects his conception of moral excellence in two ways: the various influences described (music, tragedy, etc.) cause changes in both character and intellect and help to bring the two parts of the soul into agreement. We will thus be able to observe the student’s moral and intellectual progress and to see how reason and desire move closer together as he matures.

In what follows, I will follow Aristotle’s approach in the Politics (and that of Plato before him) and divide the educational program into parts based on the student’s age. According to the Politics, there are two phases of education before a person reaches adulthood; the first extends from the age of seven to fourteen and the second from fourteen to twenty-one (Pol VII.17 1336b 38-40). However, Aristotle also remarks on the influences on development prior to the age of seven. Even though it is not explicitly mentioned as part of the educational program, I will include this period because of its significance to moral development. Aristotle’s references to Directors of Education in this early phase suggest that he thought it was important and that it could be externally influenced (Pol VII.17 1336a 30 - b 38). Although Aristotle breaks this period up into the ages of birth to five years and five to seven years, I will treat it as a unit and refer to it as “pre-education.” I will call the first phase of formal education “early education” and its students children or boys. The second phase of formal education is “late education” and its students are young men or adolescents. Dividing the process of moral education into stages is somewhat artificial, as there may be considerable overlap between different

47 Cf. Republic VII 537a-540c. Aristotle’s formal program of moral education is similar in many respects to that proposed by Plato in the Republic and Laws.
stages in the educational program - similar techniques (like musical training) may be used in more than one stage and the changes that occur in different stages may be characterized similarly. However, this method of division has the advantage of providing two levels of description (the educational program and the changes in the student's hēxis) at once.

A. PRE-EDUCATION

Aristotle states that the early periods in moral education are concerned primarily with training the non-rational part of the soul through proper habituation (Pol VII.15 1334b 20-27). This is particularly true of the period of pre-education, when a child's rationality is least developed. In this phase of education, there will be little or no formal instruction. Rather, the primary role of the moral educator (probably the parents at this point) will be to supervise the child and to regulate those things (music, stories and people) to which he is exposed.48

One of the ends of this phase of education is simply to ensure that growth and development can proceed uninhibited. For this reason, Aristotle says that a child of this age should not be forced to study or to perform any kind of labor. Rather he should be kept active through amusement (παιδεία).49 This play though should be neither vulgar, tiring nor effeminate (Pol VII.17 1336a 23-30). The child should be physically active,

48 Golden explains that children were primarily in the care of their mothers when they were young. Boys did not spend time with their fathers until they were older and had been introduced to society. See Golden, op. cit., pp. 37-40, 123.

49 Cf. Republic VII 536e, Laws VII 793e.
with few demands made on him. During this period, the moral educator should not attempt to instruct the child.

This does not mean that the educator (or parent) will be inactive in this phase of development. There are a number of ways in which a child’s development may be influenced and the educator should ensure that the child is influenced in a positive rather than a negative way. Because of their natural tendency to imitate and their inability to discriminate good from bad, children will be particularly susceptible to forming bad habits at this age. Educators therefore need to be vigilant in keeping them away from bad examples, particularly those of slaves (Pol VII.17 1336a 40-b 3). Exposure to these examples can lead to acquiring the traits they possess: Aristotle explicitly warns that children can acquire meanness (ἄνελευθερία) from slaves. It is the educator’s task to prevent the child from forming the wrong habits and attachments during this period by overseeing examples he is exposed to.

One force by which the moral educator can influence a child’s development at this age is the natural desire to attain pleasure and to avoid pain. Although a child’s earliest inclination is toward physical pleasure and the moral educator’s task will be in large part one of bringing the child to take pleasure from the proper sources, he may also capitalize on the child’s enjoyment of certain activities to impart ethical lessons. As we remarked

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50 Sherman argues that family plays a central role in early education (see Fabric of Character, pp. 151-155, “Aristotle’s Theory,” Chapter Two). Although I agree with her main point about the importance of the family, I do not share her difficulty in accepting the prominent role assigned to women or her claim that guidance is conveyed entirely through example and not through explanation.

51 Since Aristotle identifies slaves’ moral shortcoming as lacking a ruling principle, he may also feel that it is detrimental for children to be exposed to those who are not fully responsible for their actions because they do not act from choice.
before, a child will be occupied by various amusements at this age, including things like stories as well as games. We know from Aristotle’s treatment of pleasure that pleasure increases activity. For this reason, Aristotle warns educators to be careful about the kinds of speech and stories their charges may hear (Pol VII.17 1336a 30-34). He suggests that they should hear about those things which they will later pursue in earnest since the pleasure they take in them will begin to accustom them to these activities. The prospect of pain might be used to get the child to participate in activities deemed good for him or to abstain from bad activities, but Aristotle’s primary focus is on the role of pleasure and enjoyment in training the child.

The same inclinations which require such vigilance from parents may also be used as a positive force in a child’s pre-education. Because children naturally imitate those around them, particularly their parents, they will naturally begin to attempt to perform the same kinds of acts those around them do. Their tendency to obey the instructions of their parents also gives parents control over their children’s actions. By providing good examples, parents may encourage good activity in their children. In any society laws will act as a constraint on an adult’s behavior; therefore a certain minimum standard of behavior and examples will be achieved (at least among those who abide by the laws). The child’s repeated activities, which mimic those of his parents, will be the seeds of habits. Parents should thus think about what kinds of activities and influences the child is exposed to. Cf. Republic II 376-379, III 390-391, Laws II 664b-c. Plato also remarks on the need to censor music in Laws VII, but his comments here are directed more to older students.

52 This warning echoes Plato’s comment about the need to censor the stories and music children are exposed to. Cf. Republic II 376-379, III 390-391, Laws II 664b-c. Plato also remarks on the need to censor music in Laws VII, but his comments here are directed more to older students.

53 Cf. Republic II 378 b-c.
exposed to and attempt to ensure that he is exposed to various examples of good behavior.

In addition to the explicit behavioral example the parent sets for the child, he or she also implicitly promotes certain values and types of judgments. These may come across as different ways of responding to various situations (thus a request for money will be met differently when it comes from an attacker than from someone in need), not just in the action itself. They may also be conveyed in response to questions from the child. A child’s effort to emulate his parent’s actions more perfectly will likely lead him to seek explanations and justifications for why a given act is performed in a certain set of circumstances. This desire, combined with a child’s natural desire to understand makes him particularly receptive to explanations. Thus, a parent is able to begin to teach a child about what is relevant in determining actions, what kinds of exceptions there are, what emotions it is appropriate to feel and so forth. As Sherman puts it, “the parent helps the child compose the scene in the right way.” The parent can help to shape the cognitive basis for emotions by way of the explanations he or she offers. If a parent explains that it is not right to be angry when another child has a turn playing a game, his or her child will begin to learn that anger is appropriate only when one has been intentionally slighted and that giving another a turn is not such an occasion. Although the child will understand these lessons at a very rudimentary level, he will absorb the important fact that emotions are not always right and that their correctness depends on circumstances.

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54 Sherman, Fabric of Character, p. 171; see also pp. 171-174.
The informal education of early childhood begins to orient the child in such a way that he will be receptive to more formal education later. The child begins to form attachments to good action because of the influence of pleasure in his play and because of his imitation of the good acts of the adults around him. The repetition of these acts helps him become accustomed to acting well and the pleasure associated with them (both from amusement and consequent on the act) helps him begin to take pleasure from the proper sources. The parent or educator concentrates on making sure the child does not develop bad habits and building the foundation for good ones. Even at this early stage, the child’s affective response is being oriented toward the standard set by reason.

B. EARLY EDUCATION

The examination of excellence in Chapter One showed that there are two things which an individual has to get correct in order to act virtuously: actions and emotions (cf. NE II.6 1106b 16-17). This requires excellence in both character and reasoning. Therefore, the moral educator is concerned with ensuring that his student is habituated so as to perform correct actions and to feel proper emotions. Since Aristotle views education as a developmental process, the changes in the first stage of formal education (early education) will build upon those achieved in the period of pre-education. Thus, if the child has begun to be habituated to feel the right emotions and to perform the right actions in the pre-education phase, this process continues in early education. The influences enumerated in that earlier period will continue to have impact during this one and others will be added. During this period, the habituation of the non-rational part of
the soul is the educator's primary goal, although intellectual development takes place as well (Pol VII.15 1334b 25-27; cf. Laws II 653b). During early education, the instructor influences the child's actions and emotions by explicitly guiding his actions and through gymnastics and music. As we will see, these influences play two important roles in moral education: they help to properly habituate the non-rational part of the child and they help the child to learn about what kalon activity consists in.

In addition to habituation of the non-rational part of the soul, which will be discussed below, the body is also trained during this phase of moral education. In Politics VIII.3 Aristotle asserts that the body must be trained before the mind and that children should begin physical training at this age. According to the list of subject areas in Politics VIII.3, this physical training falls under the auspices of gymnastics, which is said to promote courage. Aristotle warns, however, that physical training should not be excessive as it might impair the growth of the body. This type of training should be for the sake of the noble and not for its own sake: physical training is of instrumental value (Pol VIII.4 1338b 29-34). Gymnastic training is intended to give individuals the strength and confidence to exhibit bravery when necessary. However, focusing exclusively on

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55 Aristotle lists five branches of education: reading, writing, gymnastics, drawing and music. Of these, he characterizes reading, writing and drawing as "useful" (χρήσιμονς). These three components of education do not appear to have direct bearing on a child's moral development (Pol VIII.3 1337b 23-26).

56 Aristotle is not explicit about the exact ordering of the elements of education here and whether this training in gymnastics will be simultaneous with other parts of education. His distinction between training of the body and mind is correlated to the difference between physical and intellectual training and does not incorporate training of the non-rational part of the soul. It is not clear where habituation of the non-rational part of the soul fits into this picture since it is not part of training the body or the intellect. I think it must be concurrent with preliminary physical training because Aristotle says at VIII.4 1339a 33 ff. that parents who focus only on physical training and neglect other areas do their children no good. But cf. 1339a 7-11, where Aristotle says that labor of body and mind ought not be undertaken at the same time. In this case, he must be referring to a later period in education, where the training (physical or intellectual) is more intense.
physical training, as the Spartans do, leaves students ill-equipped for developing excellence because there is more to even bravery than just physical strength and courage. It requires certain discriminatory powers which are not attained through physical training. Without these abilities, Aristotle warns that a child will become a craftsman or technician (βάρυνανασος) who is useful to the art of statesmanship in one quality only (Pol VIII.4 1338b 34-36). Aristotle has a fairly negative view of the importance placed on physical training by other societies and maintains that it should be limited and not excessive (Pol VII.16 1335b 2-12). It is an important part of a child’s education - it helps him to develop the fortitude required by bravery - but much more is required in order for the child to become habituated to acting bravely (or according to any other excellence).

One important element in this phase of education is not mentioned by Aristotle in the Politics. This is explicit guidance of the student by the teacher. We know from the comments he makes in the ethical treatises that Aristotle believed that the habituation process was externally guided. In Eudeman Ethics II.2, Aristotle makes this most explicit where he says, “...character, being as its name indicates something that grows by habit - and that which is under guidance other than innate (ἀγωγής μή ἐμφύτου) is trained to a habit by frequent movement of a particular kind...” (EE II.2 1220a 38-b 2; cf. Pol I.13 1260a 31-33). This guidance will be provided by the moral educator.

One of the ways the instructor’s guidance teaches the child is through the actions it makes him perform. This influence takes the form of a frequently discussed feature of Aristotle’s theory of moral education: the claim that habituation is accomplished through repetition of acts, on the analogy of learning a craft. The Socratic craft analogy likens the
exercise of excellence to a craft. Aristotle extends this analogy to cover training as well.

He says in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1 that:

...excellences we get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do, we learn by doing, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts (NE II.1 1103a 31-b 2; cf. II.4 1105a 18-19).

Aristotle claims here that people acquire the excellences in a similar way to that in which they acquire various skills (*technai*) - by doing them over and over again. There is a clear sense in which individuals do not perform excellent actions over and over again since initially their acts do not meet the requirements of excellence listed in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.4 (that they choose them for their own sakes, that they have a stable *hexis*, etc.). Therefore Aristotle must be referring in this passage to something more like action types. This would be a set of actions similar to those the morally excellent person would perform, like exercising moderation in eating. These fit the general description of the morally excellent act, but not the specific requirements listed in Book Two of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. This provides a degree of latitude in directing habituation - there may be many things beyond mechanical repetition included in it. Repetition of actions of the same type is supposed to lead to excellence in performing them. The praise and blame offered by the educator will exert direct influence on those actions the student

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57 Interestingly, Burnyeat does not include this key passage or the idea of learning by doing in his account of moral education.

58 This process may start in a child's imitation in the pre-education period, but it is more explicit here because of the increased possibility of the child's comprehending explicit instruction from the educator and of his generalizing from experience.
performs. As the instructor praises a student, he will be more likely to perform actions of a similar type. From this repetition the child will learn how to perform excellent action.

On the face of it, this is a rather odd assertion, even in the case of skills. Anyone who has tried to learn to hit a golf ball or to throw a piece of pottery knows that things do not get any better by simply repeating the *same* action or action type (and making the same mistakes). Certain things must be implicit in Aristotle’s notion of becoming excellent by performing excellent activities: some kind of guidance, an increasing level of competence, commitment to improvement, critical evaluation and so forth. Only when these features of the idea of becoming excellent through excellent activity are made explicit does the idea gain plausibility as an instrument of moral education.

As the passage cited from the *Eudemian Ethics* suggests, individuals are not habituated in isolation from other people. Students rely on the guidance of their instructors, who not only guide their actions, but also help them to analyze and evaluate them. The educator does not (in the case of excellence he cannot) provide the student with a set of rules or a detailed description of what excellent action consists in which the student then practices. In the case of both excellence and other skills, the process is not one which is readily codifiable. What the educator does, particularly in this early stage of moral education, is point the child toward particular actions as being correct, provide

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59 These requirements support Sherman’s contention that excellence is acquired through critical practice. See Sherman *Fabric of Character* (pp. 176-181) for her discussion of the craft analogy and becoming just by performing just actions. I consider my views to be largely in agreement with hers, although I do not share her views about the limitations of the analogy. In the second chapter of her dissertation, she argues that there are important disanalogies between learning a skill and becoming excellent, especially with respect to the role of instruction and rules. I think the use of explanation would be similar in both - rules work no better in teaching a skill than in moral education. In both areas, however, explanation and analogies are helpful.
general explanations of why they are correct and offer advice about how to perform them. These explanations will frequently be difficult to verbalize - they may pick out features of the situation or of the participants or they may describe the action in a new light. Quite often (since we rarely encounter the same situation twice) they will take the form of analogies, highlighting some facet of an action as being the decisive factor in determining what to do. So, the moral educator might remind the child of a previously encountered situation and show him how the present situation is similar to it in such a way that the same type of action must again be performed, e.g. "Remember last week, when you helped the old man cross the street? Well, this lady isn't old, but she can't see and is therefore in danger, just as the old man was. So, you should also help this woman cross the street." By providing this kind of instruction, the moral educator is able to help the child to learn by doing.

Thus, one way in which agents become excellent by doing excellent acts is by acquiring a certain amount of experience and know-how. As they perform the same type of action repeatedly, students become more adept at it, providing they have some guidance and put some effort into it. Once I enroll in a ceramics class, where the instructor tells me how to move my hands slowly down the lump of clay to center it and not to use too much water when pulling up the sides and I practice doing these things, I should have more success in making pots. Similarly, what Sherman calls "critical practice"\(^{60}\) will increase the expertise of the student of ethics in determining what actions to perform. There is a way in which this process requires, and causes, cognitive

\(^{60}\) Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, p. 176.
development, which furthers the child’s moral development by enabling him to determine more accurately which actions to perform. The student’s natural inclination to generalize from experience will ensure that as he repeats similar actions, he will learn from his experience and become more capable of judging which action to perform in similar circumstances. He will begin to recognize for himself the relevant features of a situation.

Since Aristotle says that excellence comes about through habit, which is formed by repetition of actions, this repetition must not only enable a person to judge correctly which acts are required, it must also account for how he comes to perform them reliably. That is, it must account for the development and refinement of the affective part of the soul (a person’s emotions and desires). This is accomplished in a variety of ways throughout the entire educational process. One way in which habituation affects a person’s desires has already been mentioned: as actions, like helping those in need cross the street, become habitual, they yield a certain amount of pleasure (Rh I.11 1370a 5-8). Since humans naturally seek pleasure, this serves as a prima facie reason to continue to perform those actions. The response of the educator also helps to shape the affections. Insofar as the student abstracts generalizations from the moral educator’s responses, these generalizations influence the cognitive component of emotions. The circumstances which are considered to be the proper basis of various emotions are shaped by generalizations founded on the moral educator’s response. As the student learns more

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about the proper emotional response, his emotions are refined and become more appropriate to the situation.

Another part of the educational program that shapes the affective part of the soul is education in *mousikê*, which commences during this first phase of formal education. Aristotle’s discussion of *mousikê* in this phase of education focuses on music and does not mention the poetic stories which play a prominent role in Plato’s account (*Republic* II 376e - 382e). This could be explained by the incompleteness of the *Politics*, which ends with the treatment of music - Aristotle might have continued with the discussion of other forms of *mousikê* in the remainder of the treatise. Like example and explicit instruction, musical training will continue in later phases of education.

There are numerous clues in the text of *Politics* VIII which indicate that Aristotle believed musical education to begin in this, the first phase of formal education. The most telling is a comment he makes in VIII.6, where he says,

> Besides, children should have something to do, and the rattle of Archytas, which people give to their children in order to amuse them and prevent them from breaking anything in the house, was a capital invention, for a young thing cannot be quiet. The rattle is a toy suited to the infant mind, and education is a rattle or toy for children of a larger growth. We conclude then that they should be taught music... (*Pol* VIII.6 1340b 25-31; cf. 1339a 26 ff.; 1340b11-19; and 1340b 35).

The reference to children in this passage, as well as the reference to education as a rattle or toy suggest that Aristotle thought musical education would begin when rattles and toys

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62 The Greek term, *μουσική*, is a broader term than our “music” and includes poetry and dance as well as song. Tragedy is also part of *μουσική*, broadly construed, but I will put off discussion of tragedy until the next section, where it is introduced into the educational program. For a more detailed discussion of *μουσική* in ancient Greece and in Aristotle’s theory, see Sherman, “Aristotle’s Theory,” Chapter Four, pp. 152-162 and the references cited there. Anderson discusses *Politics* VIII in detail (Warren D. Anderson, *Ethos and Education in Greek Music* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1966)). Although I do not agree with his views on tragedy, his discussion is generally quite informative.
were no longer appropriate, probably at some point in the first phase of education. At this time, the student is still young enough (between seven and fourteen) to be accurately referred to as a child, but seems to be ready for musical education. Thus, Lord seems to be incorrect in placing musical training in the second phase of the educational program.63

Musical training has a notable effect on the development of character (cf. *Republic* III 398c- 403c). Aristotle says repeatedly that it has a strong influence on character and that the practice of music can promote the development of the affective part of the soul. At this age, in particular, music influences a person. Because children are still motivated primarily by pleasure, music is an especially effective tool at this point in the educational program: "[t]he study is suited to the stage of youth, for young persons will not, if they can help, endure anything which is not sweetened by pleasure, and music has a natural sweetness" (Pol VIII.5 1340b 14-16). According to this passage, music is particularly effective because it is pleasant. It thus has the characteristics of pleasant activity discussed in the first part of this chapter: children naturally want to do it more and to become better at it. Pleasure makes them attentive to musical training and the lessons thereof.

In the *Politics*, Aristotle enumerates a number of ways in which music may affect character through its imitation of emotions and character:

And that they are so affected is proved in many ways, and not least by the power which the songs of Olympus exercise; for beyond question they inspire

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63 Lord, pp. 65-66 (Carnes Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982)). Cf. pp. 100-101, where Lord must stretch for an interpretation of 1340b 40-41a 9 which will accommodate his claims about the commencement of musical training. He seems to be pushed to this view about when education in music starts by his belief that Aristotle separated the educational program into three distinct phases - bodily training, training of the non-rational part and training of the rational part of the soul (see pp. 46, 62, but cf. p. 156 where he seems to soften his position, at least with respect to the training of the rational and non-rational parts of the soul).
enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is an emotion of the character of the soul. Besides, when men hear imitations, even apart from the rhythms and tunes themselves, their feelings move in sympathy. Rhythm and melody supply imitations of anger and gentleness, and also of courage and temperance, and of all the qualities contrary to these, and of the other qualities of character, which hardly fall short of the actual affections, as we know from our own experience, for in listening to such strains our souls undergo a change. (Pol VIII.5 1340a 7-23)

Through music children experience various emotions and these emotions are developed by exposure to the imitations of music. Because of the effect music has on the soul, Aristotle says that only certain modes of music have a beneficial effect in the education of children. He identifies the Dorian mode as expressive of character, where this must mean good character (Pol VIII.7 1342a 27-30). The Dorian mode is a mean between others and produces a moderate and settled temper (Pol VIII.5 1340b 45); Aristotle says that it is not as emotional and exciting as the Phrygian mode is, but does not name the other extreme in Chapter Seven - it is probably Mixolydian, which makes us sad and grave (Pol VIII.5 1340b 1).

It is difficult to articulate the exact mechanism by which music changes character, but it must be somewhat as follows. Aristotle follows Plato in assuming that the student will become like what he enjoys (Laws II 656b). He clearly thinks that the ethical quality of music will bring a student to experience the emotions for himself and that the pleasure derived from the music will both reinforce these lessons and make him receptive to future lessons, thus allowing habituation to occur through repetition of similar kinds (modes) of

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64 In a way, this will be another case of learning by doing or, in this case, experiencing.

65 Cf. Republic III 399a, where Plato also advocates the Dorian mode of music (although he accepts the Phrygian as well).
music. In bringing the student to experience emotion, good music brings him to feel certain emotions in response to the correct triggers.

In addition to making students delight in the right things, Aristotle holds that musical training aids in the development of good judgment, which also affects their behavior (Pol VIII.5 1340a 17). From the context of this comment, it appears as if what Aristotle is referring to here is the ability to judge correctly which things are truly pleasant and painful (or loving and hating correctly).66 This, then, is another way in which music affects the development of the affective part of the soul: it facilitates the student in forming attachments to the proper objects. A child's enjoyment of music influences his assessment of its subject matter (cf. Republic III 401d-402d). Thus, by portraying noble subjects music may help to cultivate an attachment to them which is expressed in correct judgments about their value.

Aristotle insists that the child should learn not only to listen to music, but also to perform (although not at a professional level). He states that children must learn to perform because in this way they will be better able to judge the work of others (Pol VIII.6 1340b 24-25; 35-40).67 The ability to perform and the work that goes into developing that ability teach students to appreciate and delight in what is fine. As with any skill, those who actually exercise it are able to appreciate the performance of others in a way that the untrained cannot, no matter how educated they are in the area. Performers

66 This does not appear to be a purely intellectual judgment or simply the judgment of actions, but rather one of values and ends. Plato also indicates that this will be one of the effects of musical training (Laws II 659 d-e).

67 Thus the earlier suggestion that children would be more able to enjoy music if they knew how to play seems to have been modified. See VIII.5 1339a 33, 41 and 1341a 13-15. For Aristotle, there is more benefit from playing music than just taking pleasure in it.
know what really is difficult and what only seems difficult to observers. They can thus judge more accurately than others what is of merit in a performance. Aristotle is making the claim here that actually doing a thing teaches a student about it in a way that observation, however keen, cannot. This parallels his views on becoming excellent by doing excellent acts. In both cases, the student's development is promoted by activity. With musical training the pupil develops the ability to judge as well as his affective responses.

In addition to enhancing the ability to judge the performance of others, Aristotle says that actual practice of the art makes a considerable difference in the character of the performer (Pol VIII.6 1340b 23-24). Performing makes an individual feel the music in a deeper way than the audience does because he is actually producing the imitation of character or emotion. As a child learns, he performs the same pieces repeatedly, thus experiencing the same feelings numerous times. This repetition assists in the cultivation of the sentiments and in associating them with their proper objects and thus brings the child to delight in noble things. Sherman describes the effect of musical training in the following way:

...the learner’s mimetic enactment of them [the modes] (through performance) is a way of coming to feel from the inside the relevant qualities of character and emotion. It is an emulative and empathetic kind of identification. Together with the positive reinforcement that comes from pleasure music naturally gives, the mimetic enactment will constitute an habituation, an ethos

\[68\] Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, p. 182.
Music, then, is a valuable tool for the moral educator because of its ethical character and the pleasure associated with it. The effort and practice required to learn to perform music impart important lessons applicable to many areas of life. The child learns to refine his actions with practice and that practice does, indeed, pay off. These lessons will be important later in the child’s moral training, as he begins to reflect on his own actions and tries to act excellently. By training his pupil in music, the educator is able to refine his judgments about action, to shape the affective part of the soul and to help the student to experience the proper sentiments.

In this first stage of formal moral education we see both cognitive and affective development, as we should expect given Aristotle’s conceptions of moral excellence and development. The student begins to be habituated to performing correct actions and feeling correct emotions through gymnastics, directed activity and musical training. As he becomes habituated in a certain way, it becomes natural insofar as it happens with regularity and begins to yield its own pleasure (Rh I.11 1370a 3-8; cf. I.10 1369b 6-7). The pleasure he takes in noble activity, in turn, strengthens his attachment to it. At this point, the child has begun to acquire the proper ends and affections through habituation, but the habituation process is by no means complete. Although the child has some attachment to fine action and experiences pleasure upon performing it, he still has strong competing desires which often control his actions: his habits are not yet well entrenched and his desires are not unified. He has not yet made the transition to self-directed action -

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69 Aristotle’s optimism about human nature again shows through in his assumption that music and learning will bring pleasure to the student. He does not consider the possibility that a student will feel displeasure in his studies.
his actions still will be externally guided. Although he may be able to identify excellent actions and what makes them excellent in some cases, he has not yet become capable of adult moral reasoning which yields *prohaireses*. 

C. LATE EDUCATION

The next stage in formal education, which lasts from fourteen to twenty-one, will build on the achievements of the previous ones.\(^{70}\) The habituation process begun in pre- and early education will continue in late education and several new instruments of education will be introduced in addition. The primary difference between adolescence and the earlier stages in the educational program is the increasing emergence of reason, self-determined action and self-assessment. In this stage of education, the educator is still primarily concerned with habituation of the non-rational part of the soul, but he is working with a more complicated, sophisticated student and therefore has more resources at his disposal. 

Aristotle remarks on the nature of youth in several places. In the *Rhetoric*, he devotes a chapter (II.12) to describing the youthful type of character.\(^{71}\) He characterizes

\(^{70}\) Aristotle sub-divides this period into times of hard physical and non-physical training. Thus the account I will give (which does not include this division) is strictly speaking incomplete. The aspects of education which I describe would all be part of the non-physical training. However, I believe my account conveys the substance of Aristotle’s views on moral education. Aristotle’s comments about physical training and its limits in *Politics* VIII.4 show that he saw physical training as of limited value with respect to the development of excellence. As I argued above (pp. 155-156), physical training is primarily of instrumental value and is not itself intrinsically valuable. Although it is necessary for the specific excellence of courage, I am mainly interested in the general account of training of character and mind, so I will focus on this aspect of Aristotle’s account and not address the account of physical training. 

\(^{71}\) Aristotle is describing a “typical” youth here; a student who benefited from the early stages of education might be better off than the one described here. However, it is unlikely that early education would completely transform a child’s character and thus I think this account serves as an adequate general description of the student in the second phase of education.
youth as a time when an individual experiences strong desires (epithumiai) and is often led by them (Rh II.12 1389a 3-4; cf. NE I.3 1095a 4-9). These desires tend to be variable though - they arise quickly and strongly, but subside just as quickly (Rh II.12 1389a 6-10). Aristotle notes that youths are particularly prone to acting not only on strong desires, but also from anger (thumos). This is because of their desire for honor (Rh II.12 1389a 10-13). Youths at this age have become committed to society in a way that they were not when they were younger (cf. Rh II.12 1389a 27-30); this suggests that social norms and expectations will have a greater influence on their actions during this period of their education than previously. Because they lack experience in life, youths are optimistic and confident and therefore tend toward excess. At this age, young men tend to live according to their characters rather than according to reason. Aristotle explains that character and excellence lead a person to choose noble actions, as opposed to reasoning, which selects what is useful. Since youths live and act according to their characters, they will tend to select those actions they believe to be noble (Rh II.12 1389a 32-35).

The youth Aristotle describes and with whom the moral educator will be working sounds like a typical modern day teenager. He experiences emotions deeply, cares what others think of him and acts from his feelings rather than from deliberation. Because he lacks experience, particularly of negative things, the student will be overly trusting and over-confident of his own abilities. He will not know what is realistic in a situation. Aristotle also notes that young people are particularly attached to, and influenced by, their friends (Rh II.12 1389a 37-b 2). All of these characteristics must be taken into
consideration by the moral educator, who should tailor this stage of the education program to accommodate the characteristics of youth.

As mentioned above, many of the methods of instruction used in earlier periods continue to be used in late education. Presumably, the instructor will continue to offer explicit guidance to the youth with respect to the activities he performs, although this will take a broader range of forms than during the first phase of education. Remarks Aristotle makes in his discussion of musical training suggest that this kind of training will continue beyond early education into late education - to come to delight in music properly will require study beyond middle childhood (Pol VIII.6 1340b 37-40; 1341a 13-15). So we can expect musical training to have the same kinds of effects during this period as were recounted in the previous section.

Similarly, the tendency toward imitation will continue during this period of development. However, the object of imitation is likely to be different. Rather than his parents, a young man of this age will be inclined to imitate his friends. At this point in his development, Aristotle explains, a young person is particularly fond of his friends and they will likely have a big influence on his behavior.\(^\text{72}\) At *Nicomachean Ethics* VIII.1 1155a 11-12, Aristotle says that young friends keep each other from error. The student’s friends, then, play an important role in his continuing development. Depending on their character, they can either reinforce earlier lessons about what is fine or get the student off track. The moral educator needs to oversee the young man’s friends as much as possible.

\(^{72}\) Aristotle says that the friendship of youth is primarily one of pleasure (NE VIII.3 1156a 32-b 4). Adolescents will therefore not derive the benefits associated with complete friendship (see NE IX.9, 12 and EE VII.12). Nevertheless, from the arguments about *philial* relations in the first part of this chapter we may conclude that a young person’s friendships will exert a significant influence on his development.
It is unlikely that the educator will be able to shape the interactions that constitute a friendship; he therefore needs to attempt to ensure that his charge’s friends are also moving toward proper habituation. If he is able to do this, then the student’s friendships have a positive effect on his development. Friends will reinforce each other’s good behavior and criticize each other when they act badly.

Another area where external influences can shape a young man’s development is his pursuit of honor and his effort to avoid shame. In his effort to obtain honor or to avoid shame, a young person will try to conform to social expectations. A shift in priorities has occurred as social convention becomes more influential than parental expectation in determining the young man’s actions.

The desires for honor and to avoid shame serve as a strong sources of motivation in the young student; the moral educator should take advantage of this by orienting him toward what is truly honorable and away from what is shameful. He may do this with the application of praise and blame, as well as with explanations. This in turn brings the student to perform the best acts, which we have seen has a positive effect on his development. As he repeats these actions, he becomes habituated to them and is able to draw on them in his moral reasoning. Being oriented toward what is truly honorable (and away from what is shameful) leads the young man to properly assess actions and people. If he incorrectly thinks wealth, rather than generosity, is to be honored, he will consider wealthy people to be more honorable and better than generous ones. However, if he correctly assesses the relative value of these two things, he will correctly judge the people who possess them. Since those he honors have influence on his actions, getting the
student to honor the right people will contribute to his development. Thus, it is important for the educator to bring his student to seek honor from the right people (those who know what is truly valuable). In this way, he will be able to inspire his pupil to perform good acts (which will habituate him to good action), to become attached to the right things and to accurately assess what they are.

A young man's awareness of social norms and conventions also indicates that he will probably be aware of and influenced by the laws of his society. This awareness likely has an influence on his actions which is caused by the desire for honor. Since according to Aristotle a young person wants to be regarded as a good member of society (insofar as he wishes to be honored), he will do his best to live by its standards, as reflected in its nomoi. Laws will be a more direct constraint on adults who lack proper habituation, as Aristotle indicates at Nicomachean Ethics X.9 1180a 1-5, but they also direct the behavior of someone who strives to be a good member of his community, as the young person does. For this reason, Aristotle urges the community to use legislation in

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73 The Greek term νόμος is broader than the English "law." It includes customs and norms as well as laws. Aristotle seems to use νόμος in both the broad sense and in the narrower, legal sense in the ethical works and Politics. I am referring specifically to the legal sense here, e.g. that mentioned in Nicomachean Ethics X.9.

74 According to Dover a young man was made part of his father's deme at the age of eighteen and was then considered to know right from wrong (pp. 102-103) (K. J. Dover, Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974)). This would be right in the middle of this second period of education.

75 Homiak suggests another way in which participation in political and legislative activity might promote moral development. Using Marx's writing as an inspiration, she claims that political activity might help to bring the non-rational and rational parts of the soul into harmony and uses this possibility to support the claim that humans are by nature political. Although the evidence that this was Aristotle's intent is tenuous, Homiak's ideas are interesting. The dynamic she describes appears to be a special case of a more general process of acting on the basis of a general view of the best life which I will describe in the next chapter. See Marcia L. Homiak, "Ethics As Soul-Making: Aristotle On Becoming Good," Philosophia 20 (1990), pp. 167-193.
moral education. Laws should be used not only because they reflect an accurate assessment of situations and people and thereby reduce the chances of bad examples for young people, but also because they provide a minimum standard for a person’s actions. By guiding his actions, laws can exert a positive influence on a young person’s development and help him to act according to reason rather than passion when these conflict.\textsuperscript{76}

There is another component in the educational program which Aristotle does not explicitly say contributes to moral education, but which has effects on character and therefore seems to contribute to moral education: tragedy. He mentions in Poetics Four that men learn through the imitation of poetry (which includes tragedy), but nowhere develops this point in any detail.\textsuperscript{77} Since Aristotle does not discuss tragedy in the context of education, as he does music, we are left to extrapolate his views from his discussion of the topic in the Poetics and from what we have learned thus far about his views on education. I include the discussion of tragedy here, in late education, because it would be particularly effective at this time (and I believe Aristotle would have recognized this). As I will discuss below, tragedy is said to affect a person largely through the emotions, especially pity and fear. Since Aristotle believes youths feel emotion strongly and are

\textsuperscript{76} Of course, once moral education is completed successfully, reason and passion will cease to conflict. The agent will be able to act according to both at the same time. In the meantime, however, it is important for the student to follow reason since it is more likely to fix on the best action.

\textsuperscript{77} Given the incompleteness of the Politics and the Poetics, we cannot know for sure that tragedy was not treated more extensively in these works.
heavily influenced by it, it seems reasonable to conjecture that he would have recognized
the effectiveness of tragedy as a means for affecting young students.\footnote{It is not clear who Aristotle believed to be present at the performance of tragedies. According to Golden, children attended dramatic festivals at which tragedies were performed, so it seems reasonable to assume that Aristotle would have expected young men to be present at tragedies (Golden, op. cit., pp. 44-45).}

However, appreciation of tragedy (as well as the emotions of pity and fear) also
requires experience. Identification with the characters and their fate, which is how
tragedy works, requires a certain amount of empathy, which in turn requires accepting
that bad things can happen to one.\footnote{Nussbaum explores the importance of the recognition of the vulnerability of the human condition in Greek morality. See Fragility, esp. Interlude Two.} As I mentioned in my treatment of Rhetoric II.12 above, young people have not yet had enough experience in the world to realize how
fragile happiness is and how quickly bad things can befall them. Because tragedy
requires both passion and a certain degree of experience, it would seem to be effective
only toward the end of this second phase of education. We may anticipate that Aristotle
thought it might play a role in a young person’s moral development only once he had
gained a fair amount of experience and had become able to feel empathetic emotions -
probably in the latter half of late childhood and into adulthood.\footnote{Pace Belfiore, who takes it for granted that children would be affected by tragic emotion; see esp. p. 357 (Elizabeth Belfiore, Tragic Pleasure: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)).}

In the Poetics, Aristotle describes tragedy in very specific terms.\footnote{A complete analysis of Poetics and tragedy is well beyond the scope of my project. I will not attempt to present a detailed analysis of the text and will limit my comments and use of secondary material to those aspects of the Poetics which are pertinent to moral education.} In chapter six
of the Poetics, he offers the following definition of tragedy:

A tragedy, then, is the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having
magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind
brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its *katharsis* of such emotions.\(^2\) (Poet 6 1449b 24-28)

As he continues his treatment of tragedy, Aristotle adds detail to this definition. He notes that the plot should be of such a length that it is possible for the audience to keep the whole thing in their memories (Poet 7 1451a 5-6). In chapter nine, he discusses plot and says that whatever the plot is about, it must be believable and must be about incidents which arouse pity and fear. The plot should contain three parts: reversal of fortune (*περιπέτεια*), discovery (*ἀναγκάρσις*) and suffering (*πάθος*) (Poet 11 1452b 10-13). Its central character must be neither too good nor too bad: he must be one of "...the intermediate kind of personage, a man not preeminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some fault..." (Poet 13 1453a 6-10). In order to generate tragic pleasure, Aristotle says, the poet must produce pity and fear by a work of imitation; therefore, the causes of events which arouse pity and fear should be included in the story (Poet 14 1453b 12-14).

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle explains that pity and fear are caused by certain things: "...pity is occasioned by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves..." (Poet 13 1453a 4-5). Although he does not provide much detail about these emotions in the *Poetics*, Aristotle discusses both of them in greater depth in the *Rhetoric* and we may learn about these emotions from the discussion there. Fear is portrayed as an emotion which is felt in anticipation of events which a person feels have the power to destroy him (Rh II.5 1382a 21-27). A person comes to fear things that he believes may legitimately

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\(^2\) I am focusing on the structure of tragedy now and so will put off discussion of the *katharsis* clause, which is one of the most widely discussed points in the definition.
happen to him which are not in the distant future. One way to incite fear in an audience, Aristotle informs the orator, is to make them believe that some danger befell people like themselves (Rh II.5 1383a 7-12). Although this advice is intended for an orator, it seems just as applicable to a tragic poet because presumably both are dealing with audiences with similar emotional responses. We see in Aristotle’s description of the tragic hero and plot an effort to make sure that the events are believable and to ensure that the audience will identify with the situation (see. e.g., Poet 9 1451b 15-19, 13 1453a 6-12).

Pity is defined in the *Rhetoric* as "...a feeling of pain at an apparent evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours, and moreover to befall us soon" (Rh II.8 1385b 13-16). Thus, pity is partly anticipatory and partly reactive. Like fear, it requires that an agent identify with the person who suffers. However, the requirement of identification seems to be less stringent in the case of pity. Aristotle notes that a person feels pity not only when he feels a similar thing may happen to him, but also when he feels that it might happen to someone he cares about. Thus, a young man might feel pity in reaction to a situation he imagines might happen to his father. The experience of these emotions may also lead to a feeling of vulnerability with respect to the events of

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83 Aristotle remarks that those who believe themselves immune from bad fortune will not feel pity (Rh II.8 1385b 20-25). Given a youth’s confidence and optimism, it thus seems that he will not experience pity and thereby be affected by tragedy. However, it is reasonable to expect that a young man would have encountered bad fortune and would have had sufficient experience to realize bad things could happen to him in the latter part of this stage of the educational program. One of the effects of tragedy is to reinforce this insight.

84 For Aristotle feeling pity requires intellectual recognition that the fate is undeserved. Genuine pity, therefore, requires a degree of intellectual development that young children lack. For this reason, young children cannot be said to feel pity, although they might respond to their parents’ bad fortune with sadness.
life. In these respects, in particular, the occurrent emotion of pity serves to remind an individual of the importance of his philial relations - imagining or recognizing the evils that might befall those he cares about reinforces the young man’s sense of connection to them and empathy for them.

The aspects of the structure of the tragedy described above are particularly suited for evoking pity and fear: a tragedy will concern characters the student can identify with and plots which strike him as both undeserved and awful. This is why the actions in the plot must be possible - so that the audience will believe the events can happen to them. The reversal and discovery also combine to make the audience feel pity and fear by helping people see that the fate that befalls the hero is undeserved. The mere fact of the play, with its actors and acting will serve to enhance whatever pity the audience is apt to feel: in his treatment of pity in the Rhetoric, Aristotle observes that whoever heightens their words with dramatic elements (gestures, tones, appearances and so forth) is especially successful in exciting pity (Rh II.8 1386a 31-b 1). Although in the Poetics he expresses a preference for those tragedies which arouse emotion by their structure rather than by a spectacle (Poet 14 1453b 1-8), the dramatic elements will nonetheless contribute to the impact of the tragedy, as long as they are not excessive.

Tragedy contributes to moral education in two ways: as a way of learning about human action (intellectually) and as a way of developing and refining the experience of emotions (emotionally). The first is rather straightforward. Aristotle says in Chapter Four of the Poetics that humans learn first through imitation and naturally enjoy imitation
The events in the play promote the development of his practical reasoning. As he views these events he will gain knowledge about what constitutes a proper response to such situations.

Aristotle states that imitation causes people to learn and that it thereby causes delight. Pleasure is associated with imitation as a result of its role in promoting learning and understanding: ⁸⁶

And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation. The truth of the second point is shown by experience: though the objects themselves may be painful to see, we delight to view the most realistic representations of them in art, the forms for example of the lowest animals and of dead bodies. The explanation is to be found in a further fact: to be learning something is the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher but also to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it; the reason of the delight in seeing the picture is that one is at the same time learning—inferring the meaning of things, e.g. that the man there is so-and-so... (Poet 4 1448b 8-17; I have replaced Bywater's translation of συλλογίζεσθαι as "gathering" with Else's "inferring"). ⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Although it is rather old, Else's discussion of this passage and the two causes of poetry identified in it remains authoritative (Gerald Else, Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957)). As Else notes, there is agreement on the first cause: that imitation is natural to us, but deep disagreement as to the second. The two possibilities are 1) the pleasure we derive from poetry (1448b 8-9) and 2) our natural sense of harmony and rhythm (1448b 20-21). Each possibility finds some degree of support in the text, but neither is definitively supported. Although the textual support for it seems somewhat weaker, I am inclined to agree with Else that the second possibility is, in fact, the second cause of poetry. It simply makes more sense given Aristotle's arguments in the passage. See Else, pp. 124-135 for a detailed treatment of these issues.

⁸⁶ There is another way in which tragedy and tragic emotion may bring the audience pleasure. As Sherman notes, the tragic emotions (pity and fear) bring viewers to identify with others and this will serve to bring the audience pleasure (Sherman, "Aristotle's Theory," p. 186). As a spectator experiences pity and fear in response to the events portrayed in the tragedy he comes to identify with those around him and the resulting sense of community and shared experience brings him pleasure. It seems likely that this rather than the pleasure associated with learning is the type of pleasure referred to by "tragic pleasure." The pleasure generated by the experience of pity and fear is more distinctive of tragedy than is that associated with learning from experience. This interpretation of tragic pleasure also explains how all people will experience pleasure upon viewing a tragedy. If the pleasure comes from learning it is not evident that the excellent person, who already knows the lessons embodied in it, will experience pleasure.

⁸⁷ Cf. Metaphysics I.1 and my discussion in the first part of the chapter about people's natural delight in learning.
As we saw above, an individual’s enjoyment of an activity makes him more attentive to it and enhances the learning process. In the present case this occurs via poetry. This aspect of poetry is again touched on in chapter nine. Aristotle says there that “...its [poetry’s] statements are of the nature...of universals....By a universal statement I mean one as to what such or such kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do...” (Poet 9 1451b 6-9). In this context, Aristotle uses “universal” in a non-technical way to refer to general truths and characterizations as opposed to particular individuals and events. By showing the audience these general truths, tragedy helps those who view it to learn about human nature and action. They will have a better understanding of how to respond to events which will in turn inform their reasoning about action.

Tragedy (as a kind of poetry) provides examples from which the student can learn. He will encounter different types of individuals and have an opportunity to observe what they say and do. From these specific examples of universals (the characters would not be considered particulars because even though they may be fashioned after historical figures, they do not represent actual individuals), the student may learn by inference from a given character’s reaction to a situation that that sort of character (or action) is good or bad. By providing a variety of examples via the characters in a tragedy and by exposing the audience to their motivations and the consequences of their actions, tragedy serves as a

\[88\] Aristotle’s view here seems to be in stark contrast with Plato’s. In Republic X (595b-608b), Plato accuses poetry of turning people away from the truth because it is a form of imitation. He states that it corrupts the mind and weakens the soul. Elsewhere, he seems to be more willing to consider the benefits of tragedy (and imitation). See, for example, Republic III 394c-396e and Laws VII 817a-c.

powerful educative tool. It promotes the cognitive development of the student by giving a wide range of detailed examples, essentially enriching the student's breadth of experience. These new "experiences" give the student a broader base of knowledge to draw upon in determining what actions and reactions are proper in a given situation.

Belfiore asserts that the viewer's intellectual recognition will go beyond the kind of specific lessons I have described. She states that part of the learning process associated with tragedy is the intellectual realization of the human condition and human suffering. Belfiore is lead to this view by her interpretation of θεωροῦντες and θεωροῦντας (at Poet 4 1448b 11 and 16 respectively) as contemplation rather than as seeing or viewing. This gives an intellectual, theoretical tone to the passage which it lacks if the more common translations are used. There is no reason to opt for contemplation as a translation here. Although learning is mentioned in the passage, a fact which Belfiore uses to support her views, the kind of learning referred to is the earliest form of learning and we know that Aristotle did not think early learners to be capable of contemplation. Moreover, sight is also mentioned in the passage. Since imitation works by representing objects to the senses, it will affect an individual as particulars do, through aisthēsis. The lessons of tragedy will be learned not through contemplation, but by a process of generalization. Thus the intellectual lessons of tragedy will not take the form of all things considered.

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90 This may reveal the significance of needing to be able to keep the whole story in memory (Poet 7 1451a 4-6). To draw the right inferences and learn the right lessons from a tragedy, a person must have the whole story in front of him.

91 Belfiore, op. cit., pp. 346-350. She also claims that this intellectual process is part of tragic katharsis, a claim I will address below.
judgments about the human condition as Belfiore suggests, but rather will be insights about types of people and actions.  

By causing the student to experience pity and fear, tragedy and tragic *katharsis* will help the student to refine pity, fear and similar emotions. We have already seen that the student will learn about human action from the imitation of actions. He will learn something about which experiences do not merit fear and pity: those for which an individual is culpable and those which seem remote or unlikely. His comprehension of the plot and structure of the tragedy help to shape the cognitive part of the student’s feelings of pity and fear: he comes to have different beliefs about which situations call for which emotional responses.

Tragedy appears to have effects on the emotions in addition to the refinement of the cognitive basis of the student’s feelings of pity and fear. These effects are those attributed to *katharsis* and depend on the experience of pity and fear prompted by the events and structure of the tragedy: “...incidents arousing pity and fear wherewith to accomplish its *katharsis* of such emotions” (*δι' ἐλέου καὶ φόβου περαινοῦσα τὴν τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων κάθαρσιν*) (Poet 6 1449b 27-28). Unfortunately, the meaning of this phrase is far from evident from the text and there is widespread disagreement over what Aristotle means by the term *katharsis*.  

I will not attempt to present a definitive

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92 My denial of Belfiore’s interpretation does not amount to the claim that the audience will not experience the kind of epiphany she describes. The individual lessons of tragedy might inspire these kinds of realizations but the primary lessons of tragedy are not assimilated through contemplation.

93 Else questions the conventional translation of *τῶν τοιούτων παθημάτων* as “such emotions” and suggests instead translating it as “acts which have that quality [i.e. of arousing pity and fear]” (Else, op. cit., pp. 228-229). Sherman follows him in this and uses the new translation in her interpretation of *katharsis* (see Sherman, “Aristotle’s Theory,” p. 182). However, Else’s arguments are not convincing and it is preferable to retain the conventional translation which reads “such feelings.” Belfiore criticizes Else’s argument and reviews the difficulties in interpreting this phrase. See Belfiore, op. cit., pp. 257-272. See
interpretation of _katharsis_ here; rather I will focus on this notion insofar as it has implications for the moral educator. My comments here are necessarily speculative because of the lack of information about _katharsis_ contained in the text, but they are supported by my analysis of pity and fear above and by Aristotle’s few comments about the type of effect _katharsis_ might have.

_Katharsis_ affects the non-rational part of the soul. As was mentioned above, feelings of pity and fear have an impact on the student beyond the experience of the occurrent emotion. The experience of these emotions in response to the events portrayed in a tragedy leads to the emotional recognition of human vulnerability. The student comes to realize that terrible things may indeed happen to him or to those he cares about. He may see, for example, that some of his own fears are exaggerated or that his belief in his own invulnerability is not well founded. He comes to appreciate that his well-being is connected to that of those around him (his _philoi_). These deep emotional responses will help the student to develop proper empathetic emotions - those of pity, anger, kindness, friendship and the like - not only for _philoi_, but whenever appropriate. These

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94 Also Halliwell, pp. 355-356 (Stephen Halliwell, _Aristotle's Poetics_ (London: Duckworth, 1986)). A related issue is whether tragic _katharsis_ is homeopathic or allopathic. Belfiore challenges the traditional position that tragic _katharsis_ is homeopathic; see Belfiore, op. cit., Chapters Eight and Nine.


96 Belfiore claims that the effect of _katharsis_ will be to bring the individual to the mean with respect to _aidōs_. This suggestion is clearly wrong - although _aidōs_ is a crucial element of moral education, it is not the result of tragic pity and fear. Belfiore’s analysis does not show how _aidōs_, an emotion essentially concerned with reputation, is brought about by these tragic emotions, which are concerned with well-being. See Belfiore, op. cit., Chapters Six and Ten.
emotions are a necessary part of the best life as they are essential for maintaining philial relations.

Tragic *katharsis* may be characterized as part of the habituation of the affective part of the student’s soul.⁹⁷ Contrary to Belfiore’s argument, which describes it as a primarily intellectual process which depends on contemplation of the lessons of tragedy, *katharsis* is essentially an emotional process. Through his experience of the occurrent emotions of pity and fear, the student will come to appreciate the vulnerability inherent in being human. His awareness of this helps him to identify with those around him and to refine and expand other-regarding emotions (“such emotions” in the definition of tragedy in *Poetics* Six). *Katharsis*, then, is a three step process: the student experiences pity or fear for his *philoi* (which requires empathy). This leads to recognition of the vulnerability of the human condition, which then expands his range of other-regarding emotions. Tragic *katharsis* is properly considered part of habituation insofar as it contributes to the student’s coming to feel a set of emotions properly. This process, which also relies on the intellectual lessons of tragedy to shape the cognitive basis for emotion, helps to expand

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⁹⁷ Throughout the corpus Aristotle nowhere suggests that pity and fear are improper emotions *per se* and that they should therefore be expunged (see, for example, NE II.7 1107a 33-b 4, where Aristotle describes courage as a mean with respect to fear). From Aristotle’s general attitude toward these emotions, we may conclude that in the *Poetics* he does not intend *katharsis* to eliminate the emotions, as is suggested by medical analogies (this line of interpretation does, however, seem fitting for Aristotle’s use of *katharsis* to treat an excess of emotion in the *Politics* (Pol VIII.7 1342a 5-11)). If *katharsis* does not expunge the emotions, it must either alter the student’s experience of the emotions in some educative way or serve some purpose of enjoyment. Given Aristotle’s attitude toward *mimesis* and music in the *Politics* and his rejection there of the suggestion that they exist only for the audience’s enjoyment (Pol VIII.6 1341a 14-16, 1341b 9-13), it seems unlikely that Aristotle believed *katharsis* in tragedy to consist simply in a sort of pleasant emotional release.
the student's sphere of concern and to cause him to identify with the fate of those around him. He will thus come to feel other-regarding emotions properly.98

Aristotle's association of *katharsis* with education at *Politics* VIII.7 1341b 35-39 strongly suggests that some forms of *katharsis* could have an educative effect. *Katharsis* is grouped here with education and *diagôge* as possible benefits from music. Although *katharsis* is not identified with education, we may infer that it has some kind of educative effect because both of the other elements do.99 We know from Aristotle's treatment of musical education that experiencing emotions through musical performance helps people to feel these emotions properly. Tragic *katharsis* has the same effect: by causing a student to experience genuine pity and fear it helps him to refine these and similar emotions.100 By exposing his charge to good tragedies (that is, those which satisfy the requirements Aristotle sets out), the moral educator is able to further his student's cognitive and affective development. The student will absorb numerous lessons about character and action and will develop empathetic emotions.

In addition to his responsiveness to the emotional lessons of tragedy, the student also responds to argument during this stage of education. As I explained in the first part of this chapter, a sense of shame indicates that a student has the desire to perform *katon*

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98 This characterization is similar to Halliwell's, which claims that *katharsis* helps to harmonize emotions with reason. See Halliwell, op. cit., pp. 195-201. Lear's objections to the interpretation of *katharsis* as an educative process are not persuasive and his alternative reading fails to account for the importance Aristotle attributes to tragic *katharsis*. See Lear, op. cit., pp. 318-335.

99 For a defense of the claim that *diagôge* has educative effects, see Lord, op. cit., pp. 75-85; 102-104.

100 This account focuses on effects on young members of audience, but tragedy should have a similar affect on more mature audience members as well. Those who fall short with respect to empathetic emotions will be touched by tragic events and prompted to empathetic responses (which, of course, may be short-lived depending on the individual's character type). Those who already experience these emotions properly will respond to tragedy insofar as the actions portrayed in it are genuinely worthy of emotions.
acts and, to some degree, the cognitive ability to determine what they are. Moreover, it indicates that the student is motivated by something other than pleasure - at a minimum, this will be the desire to perform kalon acts so that he will be thought well of.\textsuperscript{101} This alternative source of motivation appears to be precisely how the student moved by shame differs from others not so moved: they are described as living by passion and pursuing pleasure. The student’s sense of shame and desire to act well make him receptive to the arguments of the moral educator. The instructor can guide the young man’s actions by argument, persuading him that a given action is required in a certain circumstance. The educator’s use of argument and rational persuasion also demonstrates to his pupil the place of rationality in action.

In “Self-Love and Authoritative Virtue,” Whiting makes a persuasive case for the claim that according to Aristotle a certain amount of self-determination and self-reflection are necessary for the acquisition of full moral excellence (kalokagathia).\textsuperscript{102} In order to become self-determined and achieve excellence, an agent must single out reason as the highest standard for evaluating actions and seek to act according to it. This process requires the acquisition of nous (understanding) which is what helps to guide the soul in determining which actions to perform (NE VI.13 1144b 10-14). An agent’s identification

\textsuperscript{101} Thus, although I think that feeling shame represents a good amount of moral progress, I do not think the student has made as much progress as Burnyeat ascribes to him. Burnyeat’s claim is that the young man who obeys a sense of shame has “the that” (op. cit., p. 78). On Burnyeat’s interpretation, this entails that the young person knows which specific actions are noble or just (p. 72) and that this knowledge is second nature to him (p. 74). This description is more applicable to one whose habituation is complete than to a student still undergoing habituation. Given Burnyeat’s later association of the students of ethics with akratic individuals (p. 83-86), it seems unlikely that the student will have made the moral progress Burnyeat earlier attributes to him. This inconsistency is one of the few weakness in Burnyeat’s insightful treatment of moral education.

\textsuperscript{102} Whiting, “Self-Love,” esp. sections VI, VII, VIII and X. She calls the result of this process “authoritative virtue.”
with *nous* as the standard for action is thus a crucial step in coming to act according to reason and in achieving excellence (cf. the discussion of self-love where Aristotle emphasizes the need to identify with reason, NE IX.8 1168b 29-1169a 3; cf. EE VIII.3 1249b 5-10). Identification of *nous* as a standard is also associated with self-determination insofar as it reflects an agent’s active decision about what kinds of actions he wants to perform and what kind of character he wants to develop. During this second phase of his education the student’s intellectual abilities should be adequately developed for him to reason abstractly and to begin to identify with his reason. He will also have had enough experience from which to generalize and to begin to form a view of the best life. In the discussion of shame above (pp. 136-140), we observed that young men naturally begin to evaluate themselves and their actions during this stage of education. Thus, they have begun to engage in the kind of self-reflection which will be necessary if they are to achieve full moral excellence. They have begun to assess their moral status and to appreciate the influence of action on their characters.

If the student has been well habituated and recognizes the importance of reason in determining actions (this recognition comes from the educator’s use of reason in the examples he sets and the arguments he offers, as well as from the student’s appreciation of the reason embodied in laws, etc.), he will himself begin to identify with *nous* as a standard for action and to appreciate the place of reason in action. Not only is he

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103 As Whiting notes, how one comes to identify with *nous* is not obvious from the text (see ibid., n. 40). It is not clear what she understands “identification with *nous*” to be. It is likely that she uses this term to reflect a sort of self-definition (e.g., “I am my *nous*”) which I do not think occurs. There is no evidence that anything beyond identifying *nous* as a standard to live by is required for moral excellence. I will argue in the following chapter that full identification of the sort necessary for the achievement of excellence will require some kind of theoretical understanding of the end and of the place of reason in it.
responsive to the arguments of others, as we saw above, but he also uses reason to
determine his own actions and sees it as a way of justifying his actions. More
importantly, as he adopts a rational perspective on action he may begin to take a more
general view of his actions where this is the result of reflection on the particular lessons
he has learned. Adopting this perspective may help the student to avoid distraction by
particular pleasures, which lose their strong appeal when considered from a broader
perspective. This will allow him to become more consistent in his actions and may help
him to begin to integrate his desires. As we will see in the next chapter, what is
significant about identifying with *nous* as a standard for action is not that this makes a
student follow reason in the way Plato describes the ideal state of the soul, where *thumos*
and *epithumia* submit to the rule of reason (*Republic* IV 441e-4441; IX 586d-587a; cf.
*Phaedrus* 256a-b and my discussion in Chapter One, p. 63). This sounds more like
Aristotle’s description of encrateia than that of excellence (*NE* I.13 1102b 25-28).
Rather, the student’s identification with *nous* as the standard for action helps him to
perform actions which will ultimately bring his desires into harmony with each other and
with *nous*. He will then be able to perform excellent actions wholeheartedly and

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104 This serves as a point of contrast with acratic people. As the student develops a firmer general plan he
will be less distracted by particulars. An acratic will not make this kind of progress because his character
has already been established. He might formulate a general plan for his life, but he will not be able to
consistently carry it out.

105 In order to be influential with respect to the acquisition of excellence, identification with *nous* must
have impact on more than just the intellect. It must also affect the non-rational part of the soul. The act of
intellectually identifying with *nous* seems to be similar to an encratic person’s selection of reason as
authoritative. Whiting, in stressing the need for self-determination, overemphasizes the intellectual
implications of this process. Without the affective changes it causes, the act of identifying with *nous* does
not distinguish the morally excellent person from the encratic. I will explain how selecting *nous* as the
standard for action causes changes in the affective part of the soul in the following chapter.
achieve excellence (this will occur at some point after the completion of formal
education).

The student's reflection on the lessons he has learned serves as a sign that he has
begun to make these lessons part of him.\textsuperscript{106} Whereas previously he has been able to state
what he should do and to perform the correct action, it is not until he reflects on what he
has learned that he begins to understand why these actions are correct in any meaningful
sense. Once he has done this, the student will see the rationale behind the actions he
performs; this will allow him to form a more general view of the best life and to act from
it. He will thus be in a position to assess his own moral status and to recognize the
influence of action on character. He will no longer be entirely reliant on external sources
to determine and justify his actions.

It is probable that the student will require additional knowledge to form a coherent
general plan for his life (this will be taken up in the following chapter). He will also
probably not fully identify with \textit{nous} as the best standard for action for a long time and
may often be led astray by particulars. At this point, he might be incorrect in his
assessment of the relative value of things. Like the Spartans, he might value excellence
for the sake of external goods such as wealth or honor (cf. EE VIII.3 1248a 37-1249a 10).
However, the student's ability to reflect and his emerging identification with \textit{nous}, along
with his desire to become excellent (even if for the wrong reasons) indicate the potential
for him to progress beyond this state of incomplete excellence. With encouragement and

\textsuperscript{106} Cf. NE VII.3 1147a 18-23 where acratics are assimilated to students who have not made knowledge part
of them. At this point, the student will be progressing beyond the acratic's level of development.
guidance, the student may come to value things correctly.\textsuperscript{107} The student's assumption of responsibility for determining his actions and his concern with his character, signal an important transition in moral development.\textsuperscript{108} The student will have begun to assume responsibility for his own character.

This second period in formal education is a busy one, with moral education taking place through a number of avenues simultaneously.\textsuperscript{109} The combination of ongoing habituation and the young man's own natural development ensures that if all goes well in late education, the pupil who emerges from it will have made significant moral progress. He is not yet fully virtuous, but has a strong foundation on which to build.

One of the most important achievements of this period of education is the young man's motivation by a source other than pleasure. As we saw above, the student desires to perform \textit{kalon} acts and thereby to attain honor in his society. The desire for honor implies a corresponding decrease in the desire for pleasure. In a healthy society, a young person cannot both pursue physical pleasure wholeheartedly and at the same time seek to act in such a way as to merit the honor of those around him. Both sources of desire remain strong at this age (cf. Rh II.12), but the young man must be coming to realize that pleasure is not the ultimate source of value if he is willing to pursue honor over pleasure

\textsuperscript{107} See Whiting, "Self-Love," pp. 190-193 on the way application of praise and blame is appropriate to the merely \textit{agathos} person but not to the \textit{kalos} \textit{kagathos}.

\textsuperscript{108} Cf. ibid., p. 184. Whiting's interpretation presupposes more development than I think has occurred at this point in the student's education. Her characterization, although it focuses on the same type of transition, is more applicable to the final stages of moral education, which will be described in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{109} Aristotle does not include \textit{παραδείγματις}, guidance from relationships with adult males, among the elements in the process of moral education (cf. Nussbaum, \textit{Fragility}, pp. 369-371). This is an especially interesting omission given the role of \textit{παραδείγματις} in Platonic and Stoic theory.
in some cases. This bodes well for the moral educator, who will eventually want the child to discover that neither honor nor pleasure is ultimately valuable. With reflection, the child may accept that there are other sources of value which outweigh pleasure and honor.

During this phase of education the student begins to accept responsibility for his own actions. He begins to exhibit self-reflection and self-determination and selects his actions by reason. Insofar as the young man begins to decide for himself which actions to perform on which occasions and this decision is based on deliberation, he will be using reason to determine his actions. His decision will not be a prohairesis at this point because he probably lacks a settled view of the end (cf. NE VI.2 1139a 32-35). However, insofar as he attempts to determine for himself what action to perform, he will be exercising his rationality and acting from it. Although he may not yet be fully responsible because he does not act from a settled hexis, he begins to take on responsibility for his actions by determining them for himself and making the lessons he has learned his own. As the student moves from being guided by external reason to his own, he will begin the transition to full moral agency. His developing rationality and self-assessment thus increase his moral autonomy.

It is in undergoing this transformation that young free men differ from women and slaves. As he matures, a young man naturally begins to exercise his deliberative faculty and to act from deliberation. In the Politics, Aristotle states that women and slaves will not reach this point in development since they do not act from deliberation: “...the slave

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110 He is becoming a moral agent, who may be praised or blamed for his actions.
has no deliberative faculty at all; the woman has, but it is without authority..."(...ó μὲν γὰρ δοῦλος ὀλως οὐκ ἔχει τὸ βουλευτικόν, τὸ δὲ θῆλυ ἔχει μὲν, ἀλλ' ἀκυρον...) (Pol I.13 1260a 12-13)."111 Young men (who as children were also without the deliberative faculty) develop the ability to deliberate as a result of their nature. It emerges as a result of the development of rationality and the increasing exercise of autonomy typical of young men. They will develop naturally (with the help of good education) the requisite faculty of deliberation and thereby become capable of complete excellence, which women and slaves - because of their natures - cannot attain.

A young person undergoes significant emotional development during this stage of education. Tragic *katharsis* and continued musical training help the adolescent to expand his range of emotion and to refine his existing emotions. He begins to feel emotions correctly - in response to the right situations and with the right intensity. Since emotions are intentional and cognitive, the student’s increasing understanding of what excellent action consists in will have an influence on his emotional response to situations. He will be better able to determine which situations call for which emotions and to evaluate the appropriateness of different responses.

In addition to the development of the affective part of the soul, a certain amount of cognitive development is achieved in this phase of education. The student’s increased

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111 It is not clear whether slaves lack the deliberative faculty because of some defect in their intellect or because of a problem with their *thumos*. For the former view, see Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle on Slaves" (W. W. Fortenbaugh, "Aristotle on Slaves and Women" in *Articles on Aristotle, Volume Two: Ethics and Politics*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, Malcolm Schofield and Richard Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1977), pp. 135-139). For the latter, see Garver (Eugene Garver, "Aristotle's Natural Slaves: Incomplete *Praxeis* and Incomplete Human Beings," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 32:2 (1994), pp. 173-195). Since both of these causes are the result of some aspect of the slave’s nature, I will not take the issue up here. The cause of slaves and women’s defect is natural, not developmental. Therefore, it will not be of direct concern to the moral educator, whose charge does not share the same nature.
experience, as well as the wealth of examples he encounters (in the form of persons, characters in tragedy, and in music) together give him a broad base of information from which to make inferences about action and character, good and bad. The student learns more about what excellence consists in, draws on this knowledge in judging actions and characters (both his own and those of others) and uses it to begin to formulate a general view of the best life.
CHAPTER FOUR: COMPLETION OF EDUCATION

I. INTRODUCTION

As we saw in the previous chapter, the formal program of education promotes a child's moral development in a variety of ways. At the conclusion of the formal program of moral education, the student has learned to feel emotion in more or less the right way; his emotions may be regarded as being in conformity with reason. The student has developed a rich and discerning set of emotions which helps him to respond appropriately to different situations. He has also begun to form an inductive base from which to reason for himself about what action to perform in a given situation. Finally, he has begun to engage in self-reflection about his acts and to identify with nous as a standard for action. This transition toward self-assessment reflects his own emerging commitment to excellence.

Nevertheless, the student who completes formal training has not attained full moral excellence.¹ The student needs exposure to additional situations to perfect his moral reasoning. Acquisition of phronesis and harmonization of the rational and non-rational parts of the soul also require development of a view of the end which underlies his choices.² Once his ability to reason is perfected and he has a settled view of the end,

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¹ At a minimum, he will require some time to develop moral excellence. If the process of habituation is sufficient to complete moral education (a possibility which will be examined below), the student will need a period of time in which to practice. In addition, we saw in the previous chapter that some of the lessons of initial habituation (i.e., those of tragedy) would not be effective until the late teen years. These changes would probably require time to be absorbed and for this reason the process of habituation must continue into the adult years.

² This is a view McDowell argues against in "Deliberation and Moral Development" (John McDowell, "Deliberation and Moral Development in Aristotle's Ethics," in Aristotle, Kant and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Duty, ed. Stephen Engstrom and Jennifer Whiting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
the student will achieve *phronesis*. He will still need to attain unity of desire in order to act consistently for the sake of the *kalon* and to achieve full moral excellence.

In this chapter, I will describe how Aristotle might have intended to supplement the initial, formal phase of moral education. Although Aristotle says nothing explicit about a second phase of education, there are sufficient clues to allow us to be fairly confident that he intended education to proceed roughly along the lines that will be developed. We will see that Aristotle does, indeed, satisfy the need for supplementary education. Given the complex nature of moral excellence, we should not be surprised to discover that the mechanism at work in this later phase in education is a complicated one which fosters development of both intellect and character.

Lord and Sherman suggest that moral education is completed through the continuation of habituation begun in the first phase of education. Although this might yield progress and practical success in some areas, it will not bring about all of the changes required for the attainment of full moral excellence. The acquisition of *phronesis* requires intellectual training and some view about the good life which is not provided by habituation and continued training. Moreover, continued habituation does

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1996), pp. 19-35). Cf. Vasiliou (Iakovos Vasiliou, "The Role of Good Upbringing in Aristotle's Ethics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 56* (1996), pp. 771-79). Although McDowell acknowledges that a picture of the end is presented in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he claims that practical wisdom and the concept of doing well are just the ability to read situations well and that this ability does not require an objective foundation or justification (p. 30). I agree with his dismissal of the "blueprint" or "Grand End" view of reasoning, but I do not think this means there is no role for an independently justified view of the end (cf. Sorabji, op. cit., pp. 205-208). I will argue below that it is required for the acquisition of *phronesis* and excellent character. McDowell may be right to assert that the person who has achieved moral excellence has no need of a blueprint, but this does not mean that an independently justified view of the view of doing well is not part of the education process. Cf. my discussion of the distinction between the role of reason in determining particular choices and its role in development in Chapter One, p. 85.
not account for the unification of thought and desire and the stability of character required for full moral excellence.

I will argue in the final section of the chapter that the intellectual growth prompted by the lessons contained in the ethical works, which helps to develop *phronesis*, also completes the habituation of the non-rational part of the soul and brings the soul into proper condition for full moral excellence. Other scholars remark on the place of ethical teaching in moral education; they fall roughly into two groups. Some, like Vasiliou and McDowell, see the teachings in the ethical works as adding detail to the student’s conception of excellent action and as helping him to determine what actions to perform.³ Others, like Burnyeat and Sorabji, view the ethical treatises as providing abstract lessons which help the student to generate and understand a conception of the end. According to them, this will promote practical reasoning in particular, but will have an impact on character as well.⁴ My interpretation is similar in many respects to Sorabji’s and Burnyeat’s, although I place greater emphasis than they do on the impact of these lessons on character.

The student’s training involves theoretical instruction about the nature of excellence which causes effects different from those of initial habituation and which are crucial to the attainment of full moral excellence. As a person undergoes cognitive training through the study of ethics, both his character and his intellect will change.⁵ As

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⁵ Burnyeat and Sorabji both assert that the study of ethics, particularly the lessons contained in the ethical works, is an integral part of moral education (see Burnyeat, op. cit., pp. 81, 88; Sorabji, op. cit., pp. 217-218). I am largely in agreement with their views; my interpretation of the nature of the ethical lessons and their role in moral education is set out in the final section of this chapter.
Aristotle’s views about *phronesis* and moral excellence suggest, there will be considerable mutual influence between the training of character and intellect.

II. COMPLETION OF EDUCATION

The education which occurs following the period of formal education must accomplish two primary tasks. First, it must complete the intellectual development required for the student to acquire *phronesis*. Secondly, it must bring the student’s *hexis* to a point of stability whereby he consistently chooses and performs *kalon* acts for their own sakes. There are a number of ways of describing the changes involved in this second process: one could say that the desires of the soul must be brought into harmony, that the parts of the soul must all acquire the same end, that the student must acquire a unified source of motivation or that the student must make a commitment to living an excellent life. Ultimately, these changes seem to be largely interchangeable - accomplishing one will imply the others as well since all of these changes seem to be either aspects or manifestations of the same phenomenon: the harmonization of thought and desire.

However it is to be completed, one thing is clear: the student’s moral education will not move forward automatically; it requires effort on the student’s part. Aristotle says that achieving the end requires a certain kind of study and care (διὰ τινος μαθήσεως καὶ ἐπιμελείας) (NE I.9 1099b 18-20). Although the implication of this passage is that it will be possible for anyone who is not incapacitated for reaching excellence (*πεπρωμένοις πρὸς ὁρετὴν*) to become *eudaimon*, Aristotle states that study

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6 I will argue below that the comments in this passage apply to the student of ethics.
and attention are required to do so. Thus, *eudaimonia* and presumably excellence (since this is the primary component of *eudaimonia*) do not come automatically but require effort on the part of the student. In order to attain excellence the student must be active and attentive.

This requirement is reflected later in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle talks about individual responsibility for character. In his discussion of voluntary action in *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three, Aristotle states that individuals are responsible for their vicious characters, "...they [men who do not take care] are themselves by their slack lives responsible for becoming men of that kind, and men are themselves responsible for being unjust or self-indulgent..." (ἀλλὰ τοῦ τοιούτους γενέσθαι αὐτοὶ αὐτοὶ ζῶντες ἀνεμένως, καὶ τοῦ ἀδίκους ἡ ἀκολουθοῦσα εἶναι...) (NE III.5 1114a 4-6; cf. 1114b 1-3). According to these statements, individuals are responsible for their *hexeis*; thus they must also be responsible for their ends, which are determined by their *hexeis*.

As the student completes his moral education and begins to select actions for himself, he also becomes responsible for the shape his character ultimately takes; this transition is initiated but not completed during formal education. The focus in *Nicomachean Ethics* III.5 is on the influence the student’s actions have on his continued development, but the reference to the end at 1114b 1 suggests that part of this self-directed stage of education might include critical assessment of, or reflection on, his ends. Clearly ends will be dependent to a certain extent on initial habituation, which instills a

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7 As Meyer argues, these comments are made primarily for the purpose of refuting the Socratic asymmetry thesis and not for the purpose of demonstrating responsibility for character (see Meyer, op. cit., Chapter 5 *passim*). Therefore, although we may be assured that these comments do indeed express Aristotle’s views, we should not expect a complete treatment of responsibility for character here.
set of ends in the young man. His ends will also be influenced by the actions he performs since these influence his *hexeis*, which in turn determine his perception of the end or good life. However, since there is a good chance that the student’s specific ends will come into conflict, we may presume that he will be forced to reflect on these ends and on their place in his ultimate end, the good life. This reflection will result in refinement of his conception of the end. Ideally, his conception will evolve into one which values *kalon* activity for itself. According to Aristotle the student will be the one who is ultimately responsible for his moral state. As he matures and becomes more capable of reasoning, he will deliberate for himself about which actions to perform and reflect on their place in the best life. This assumption of responsibility will enable him to achieve full, or authoritative, excellence.

**A. CONTINUATION OF INITIAL HABITUATION**

One way in which Aristotle may have believed moral education could be completed is through the continuation of initial habituation into adulthood. According to this model, which is advocated by Lord and Sherman, the factors which are influential in the formal education process will continue to be influential in adulthood and will cause the changes necessary to complete moral education. Thus, elements like music, tragedy, the response of others and knowledge gained through experience continue to shape the development of character and intellect, with the eventual result that the student achieves full moral excellence. This account presupposes that there is a certain continuity and

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8 See Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, pp. 86-94 for a description of this process. See also McDowell, "Deliberation and Moral Development," p. 31-32.
naturalness to the process of moral education: on this model, the acquisition of full moral excellence is primarily a matter of accepting standards of action through critical attention and refining one’s understanding of them. As these standards are internalized, they will shape the student’s emotional and intellectual responses to situations. That is, this model presents the process of moral education as essentially iterative: students attain moral excellence by refining their responses (both emotional and intellectual) through various experiences of good and bad behavior. However, we will see that although the influences from initial habituation might continue to have a positive effect on moral development, they will not be sufficient to bring the student to full moral excellence.

In *Nicomachean Ethics* X.9 Aristotle makes a comment about the influence of laws on adults which suggests that he did, indeed, believe that the elements of initial habituation would continue to be influential into the adult years. He says the following: “[b]ut it is surely not enough that when they are young they should get the right nurture and attention; since they must, even when they are grown up, practice and be habituated to them, we shall need laws for this as well, and generally speaking to cover the whole of life...” (NE X.9 1180a 1-4). In subsequent lines, he remarks on the common view that legislators move those who are well habituated toward excellence:

διόπερ οὖνται τίνες τοις νομοθετοῦνταις δεῖν μὲν παρακαλεῖν ἐπὶ τήν ἁρετήν καὶ προτρέπεσθαι τοῦ καλοῦ χάριν, ὡς ἐπακουσόμενων τῶν ἐπιεικῶς τοῖς ἔθεσι προηγμένων...

This is why some think that legislators ought to stimulate men to excellence and urge them forward by the motive of the noble, on the assumption that those who have been well advanced by the formation of habits will attend to such influences... (NE X.9 1180a 6-9)

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9 This way of describing the final stages of moral education makes the acquisition of moral excellence appear to be a rather straightforward proposition, although not necessarily an easy one.
This assertion indicates that Aristotle believed that the laws which shaped the action of youths continued to do so once they were grown up, suggesting that he thought elements in initial habituation continued in adulthood. The polis takes a primary role in the continuing development of its members and actively fosters moral development.

Lord uses this passage from Nicomachean Ethics Ten and the lines following it to ground his claims that early education is not sufficient to bring a student to excellence. He claims that this passage indicates that the student needs to be educated in reason as well as habit. It is important to note that Lord believes the training of the non-rational part to be complete by age twenty-one. Continued training must, then, affect the rational part of the soul. Although he distinguishes character and intellectual training, he notes that there is a certain sense in which education of reason and habit cannot be separated and ultimately concludes that “it is the task of the education of prudence to translate a settled disposition to virtue into principled and intelligent moral action.” Lord’s reference to “translation” here suggests that prudence takes an already formed hexis and guides it to excellent action.

Although he acknowledges that law will play a role in education in virtue, Lord asserts that it will not be sufficient for the acquisition of moral excellence because it is not persuasive enough and not sufficiently detailed to cause prudence. He suggests that

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10 He proceeds to indicate the remedial, punitive aspect of law, but this would not apply to those who have been brought up correctly.


12 Ibid., pp. 46-47.

13 Ibid., p. 156.
law will be effective only on men who are not well habituated, contrary to Aristotle’s explicit statement that laws are used in habituation.\textsuperscript{14} Lord believes that the acquisition of prudence through the training of reason, along with the correct pre-existing disposition, will be sufficient to bring the student to full moral excellence. On his view, this training occurs primarily through similar vehicles as the training of character: he indicates that the musical training described in the \textit{Politics} continues into adulthood as part of the education of the mind. He suggests that poetry in particular helps individuals to develop the judgment characteristic of prudence.\textsuperscript{15}

Lord later points to tragic poetry as Aristotle’s proposed “cure” for acrasia, one of the flaws that must be resolved in order to achieve excellence.\textsuperscript{16} Lord argues that tragic \textit{katharsis} affects not only pity and fear, but also the \textit{thumetic} emotions associated with them. The \textit{katharsis} of these emotions through tragedy reigns them in from excess and thus “cures” the \textit{thumetic} type of acrasia.\textsuperscript{17} Lord states that according to Aristotle individuals learn through tragedy and tragic error that the \textit{thumetic} emotions can be dangerous when excessive. According to Lord, this knowledge will have the effect of curing acrasia.\textsuperscript{18} Since tragedy conveys knowledge of universals and affects the audience by portraying universals in action, Lord counts this as part of the education in reason,

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 154-155.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., pp. 102-104.

\textsuperscript{16} I will assess the merit of Lord’s argument below.

\textsuperscript{17} Lord’s interpretation of \textit{katharsis} as partial purgation or purification (ibid., p. 159) differs from mine, but this difference is not significant in the present context.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., pp. 156-164. Education through tragedy, however, will cure at most one kind of acrasia.
which draws on both universals and particulars. ¹⁹ According to Lord, the extension of the application of the instruments of formal education has its primary effect on the development of reason, which then translates an existing disposition into action.

Sherman describes an alternative way in which continued habituation may bring a student to full moral excellence. She does not explicitly mention the possibility of continuing the training of formal education into the adult years. However, Sherman clearly thinks that "critical practice" will be sufficient to bring a student to full moral excellence and that this is an on-going process. ²⁰ This suggests that she considers the elements in initial habituation sufficient to complete education.

Like Lord, Sherman indicates that continuing the process of initial habituation can aid in the development of the practical intellect, although she does not mention the *Nicomachean Ethics* Ten passage and its reference to adult education. ²¹ She focuses not on the explicit teachings of tragedy, but rather on experience as the central element in the student’s acquisition of practical knowledge. This is the same kind of learning process the student has used since his youth. According to Sherman, "...while such experience will be acquired piecemeal, it must eventually be integrated to form larger, more interlocking patterns. This will comprise the practical knowledge essential to the possession of the unified virtues." ²² As he matures, the student continues to reflect on his

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 177-179.

²⁰ Sherman, *Fabric of Character*, p. 176, 184. Note that Sherman’s "critical practice" shapes both non-rational and rational parts of the soul.

²¹ Unlike Lord, who perceives a separation between the education of the non-rational and rational parts, Sherman believes practical reason develops concurrently with character.

ends and to refine them in light of other ends when conflicts arise between them.\textsuperscript{23} The process takes place through the same sorts of explanations and inferential reasoning from particulars that has occurred throughout the student's initial habituation. Since Sherman believes the practical knowledge acquired in this way promotes the possession of unified virtue, she must also believe that it is sufficient for the development of \textit{phronesis} (cf. NE VI.13 1144b 33-1145a 2). Ultimately, Sherman believes the process of reasoning about particular ends and actions issues in a conception of the good life, which is associated with practical wisdom since it accounts for unified virtue.\textsuperscript{24} This conception is acquired through experience and explanations of it, rather than through instruction on abstract points and theoretical truths.\textsuperscript{25}

There is a second way in which continued habituation aids the student in achieving full moral excellence on Sherman's reading, one which affects the student's character. According to Sherman, Aristotle's views on pleasure ensure that the student will come to value excellent activity for its own sake: pleasure helps to bring about the final changes needed to obtain full moral excellence.\textsuperscript{26} Sherman acknowledges that "true" pleasure accompanies only fully actualized states (i.e. moral excellence), but claims that nevertheless pleasure is able to play a decisive role in learning virtue.\textsuperscript{27} She argues that

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., pp. 8-12, 193.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., p. 194.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., pp. 194-197.

\textsuperscript{26} Although Sherman does not word her view this way, her emphasis on the effects of pleasure justifies attributing this view to her.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., pp. 184-185.
imperfect actualizations, such as the actions of the student, yield real pleasure, though not to the same degree that complete actualizations do. These imperfect actions and the knowledge and responses they represent are themselves part of having virtue. Sherman then makes the following suggestion: "[i]t might be in this way that we can make sense of the idea of pleasure which comes with learning virtue: though the habituating action is not itself an exercise of a perfected state, it is none the less an exercise of a part of virtue, and yields pleasure to the extent to which it develops that part." Her suggestion is that the pleasure which results from developing virtue motivates the student to continued development. Presumably, the student eventually comes to value excellent action for its own sake and thus chooses kalon acts for their own sakes and achieves excellence. For Sherman, then, pleasure plays a central role in ensuring the acquisition of full moral excellence and the proper motivation which this presupposes.

While there is certainly a place for the continuation of the process of habituation initiated during formal education in the completion of the education process, on its own continued habituation is not sufficient to bring the student to full moral excellence. As the student acquires an increasingly broad range of experience to draw upon, his natural ability to generalize from experience aids him in coming to a better understanding of what excellent action consists in. Thus, Lord and Sherman seem correct in their assertions that the process of habituation can help the student to reason well about action: the ability to learn from experience described in Metaphysics I.1 enables the student to draw on his experiences (whether lived or observed through tragedy and music) and learn.

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28 Ibid., p. 189. See also pp. 186-190 passim.
from them. Since continued habituation provides this kind of experience and aids in the
analysis of it (with the help of educators, friends, parents, etc.), it fosters the student's
ability to determine actions for himself, which is one of the areas which the student needs
to develop when his formal education comes to an end.

This range of experience also helps the student to begin to develop a general
conception of what excellence consists in, as was noted in the last chapter and as
Sherman suggests. As the student acquires knowledge about what is an excellent
response to a given situation, this knowledge is combined with knowledge previously
acquired to form an increasingly complete view of the end, the best life. If necessary, the
student may then deliberate about what action to perform based on this emerging
conception of the end. The student thus develops a notion of the end which grounds his
practical deliberations. This view does not, however, include an abstract understanding
of why the end is as it is or any attempt to justify it since this would require more than just
empirical knowledge of the end. The student has the “that” without the “because”: he
knows what actions to perform and has a conception of the end, but he does not know
why the acts are excellent or why a certain kind of life is the best kind.

Continued habituation is not sufficient to generate “the because” and is therefore
not sufficient for the development of phronesis. In order to attain phronesis, an
individual must have a theoretical understanding of what is best for humans. In order to
acquire phronesis, the student’s preliminary conception of the end has to be ordered by
universal concepts and truths, which serve to unify his views. This will be achieved by

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29 It is not clear that such deliberation will always be necessary though - in many cases what he should do
may be obvious to the student.
learning the "because," which explains the "that." Continued habituation does not generate a view of the end which is sufficiently well grounded to satisfy the requirements of *phronesis* outlined in Chapter One (pp. 51-54), although it is adequate for reasoning about particular situations.

In addition to his intellectual deficiencies, the student also has deficiencies in his character when the formal education process ends. Continuation of the process of habituation brings about some improvement in these areas as well. Additional experience in life and continued exposure to the moral lessons of tragedy and music undoubtedly help to further refine the student's emotions, as Lord suggests. Lord appears to be overly optimistic, however, about the extent to which this training promotes excellence. The lessons of tragedy will help to educate the *thumetic* emotions to the extent described above, in Chapter Three: they will change the cognitive structure of the emotion and provide the student with some experience with them, but curing even *thumetic* acrasia requires the active participation of the agent. Before he is cured, an individual must first acknowledge that his emotions are excessive; tragedy will not cause this kind of recognition. Once an agent knows that he needs to reign in his emotions, changing the cognitive component is only part of the solution - the agent will still need to make his behavior conform to his new beliefs. This requires an extended period of time and attention. At best, then, tragedy serves as only part of the cure for *thumetic* acrasia. Moreover, Lord ignores altogether the more problematic kind of acrasia, that which

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results from *epithumia*. Overcoming both types of acrasia requires attaining a degree of unity of motivation that the lessons of tragedy do not instill.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the student's primary weakness of character is not failure to feel emotion when he should. By the end of formal education he appears to have the proper range of emotions and to feel them largely as he should, although he is still prone to excess. His major shortcoming is one of motivation: he does not consistently act for the sake of the *kalon*, or according to reason. Sometimes he does not choose the *kalon* act, other times he does choose it but fails to act on his choice and other times he acts correctly, but for the wrong reason. In order to overcome this shortcoming the student must wholeheartedly accept and desire to achieve the best life as represented in his general view of the end.

Aristotle's views on the desires for pleasure and honor suggest that continued habituation helps the student to take pleasure in the right things and to seek honor appropriately. Aristotle's teleological conception of pleasure as being greater the better its source ensures that students will derive the greatest pleasure from excellent activity, activity according to reason. At this level, Sherman's description of the working of pleasure seems to be correct. Students likewise come to realize that excellent activity is what is most honorable. Thus, they learn from their own experience that their desires for pleasure and honor are best fulfilled by performing excellent actions. This realization provides a *prima facie* motivation for the student to act according to reason since acting in this way also satisfies the desires for pleasure and honor. We see that as the student

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matures we can expect him to perform the *kalon* act more frequently and to be led astray by the desires for honor and pleasure less often.

Unfortunately, the changes to character and the intellectual recognition that excellent action will satisfy each of the various types of desire are not sufficient for the achievement of full moral excellence. Although the student may manifest less inconsistency in his actions once he learns that all of his ends will be satisfied through excellent activity, he still does not have the stability required for excellence nor have his desires been unified. He must learn that not all pleasures and honors are good without qualification and that they do not serve as ends independently of their place in the best life. Until he learns this, he will continue to have a motivation to act so as to achieve all pleasures, even those from lowly sources. This may cause him to forgo some more distant *kalon* act in order to achieve immediate pleasure (or honor). This appears to be what happens in some cases of acrasia: the agent loses sight of the *kalon* because of the appearance of some particular pleasure. Until the student is able to unify his desires and to act for the sake of his more general conception of the best life, he will not necessarily choose for the right reasons and will be subject to distraction by particular desires.

The realization that pleasures from excellent activity are best and the consistent selection of these pleasures are not produced simply by continued habituation, as Sherman suggests. In order to automatically choose the pleasures associated with excellent activity in every case, the student must come to accept his conception of the best life and to choose on the basis of it. This commitment to his more general view of the

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32 Pleasure and honor will not cease being ends for the excellent person, rather they become integrated into, or informed by, his conception of the best life.
best life is not one of selecting one end and disregarding others, but takes the form of unifying and bringing into agreement all of his ends. His commitment to the end ensures that the student selects for the sake of his overall end and that he is not distracted by more immediate physical pleasures. Without identifying with his view of the end there is no guarantee that the student will choose for the sake of the kalon. Sherman's account does not guarantee that this identification will occur.

This conclusion is supported by Aristotle's own statements about development. Since initial habituation uses natural desires and abilities to shape development via widespread social practices (musical education, tragedy, law, the attribution of praise and blame, etc.), it is reasonable to expect that habituation would continue to have effects into the adult years. If Aristotle believed it to be sufficient to account for the acquisition of full moral excellence, we would expect him to be optimistic about the possibility of achieving excellence: on this account humans are naturally suited to acquiring moral excellence and the means by which development is guided are readily accessed. However, we know that Aristotle is fundamentally pessimistic about the moral status of the average person. Far from possessing full moral excellence, the average individual is characterized as being acratic and inconsistent, often changing his ends, "...often even the same man identifies it [happiness] with different things, with health when he is ill, with wealth when he is poor..." (NE I.4 1095a 23-25). Aristotle comments that most people are somewhere between acrasia and encrateia:

...it is possible to be in such a state as to be defeated even by those of them [pleasures] which most people master, or to master even those by which most

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33 This sounds more like the motivational state of an encrateic individual who attempts to identify with rational motivations and to suppress those of pleasure and honor.
people are defeated; among these possibilities, those relating to pleasures are incontinence [acrasia] and continence [encrateia], those relating to pains softness and endurance. The state of most people in intermediate, even if they lean more towards the worse states. (NE VII.7 1150a 11-16).

The pervasiveness of acrasia and encrateia is an indication that moral excellence is not easily achieved and, hence, that Aristotle must have believed that more than initial habituation was necessary to attain it. This inductive evidence of Aristotle’s own thinking reinforces the arguments presented above that initial habituation cannot bring about all of the changes necessary to achieve full moral excellence, even if it is continued into the adult years.

B. INTELLECTUAL TRAINING

There is a second way in which Aristotle might have intended that moral education be completed: through the lessons and instruction contained in ethical training, such as his teachings on ethics. This instruction would be primarily intellectual; the ethical treatises contain lessons about the nature of the good life, excellence, friendship and so forth. We have seen that initial habituation, when continued in the adult years, suffices for the development of the ability to determine what action to perform in a given situation.\(^{34}\) It is therefore unlikely that these intellectual lessons are intended solely to assist the student in reasoning well about particular actions since this would make them of limited value to students.

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\(^{34}\) Initial habituation might not provide the student with a complete picture of the end, but this kind of detail is not usually necessary for reasoning about action although it might be helpful in reasoning about difficult cases.
It is my contention that Aristotle believed that in addition to their contribution to moral reasoning, the lessons found in the ethical works would help the student achieve *phronesis* and the *hexit* of moral excellence. They have a positive effect on the affective part of the soul: they help to bring about the changes in character required for achievement of full moral excellence. By learning more about *eudaimonia* and moral excellence, the student arrives at a deeper comprehension of the role of excellent activity in his life and of the nature of the individual excellences. This understanding helps him to identify with his abstract view of the best life and to adopt it as the end of action. His commitment to living the best life solidifies his motivation and ensures that he will act according to reason in the face of temptation by immediate pleasures. As he continues to act according to reason, the mechanisms of pleasure and honor, discussed in Chapter Three (see pp. 125-129, 135) ensure that the student's *epithumetic* and *thumetic* desires will be satisfied by action according to reason. This, in turn, will help to bring his desires into harmony. The resulting unity of desire manifests itself in a stable *hexit* which chooses actions well; it enables the young man to select the *kalon* for its own sake consistently and thus to achieve full moral excellence.

Aristotle makes several remarks in the ethical works which reveal that he considered his treatment of ethics to be part of moral education. He states in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Eudemian Ethics* that ethical inquiry is practical in nature and undertaken with an eye to the acquisition of moral excellence. This sentiment is most explicit in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.2, but it is present elsewhere as well (NE II.2 1103b 27-29; cf. X.9 1179b 3-5 and EE I.1 1214a 13-21). In the *Nicomachean Ethics* he says that
ethical knowledge gives us a mark to aim at in life (NE I.2 1094a 23-25). Aristotle’s reasoning is perhaps more explicit in the *Eudemian Ethics*. In the opening chapters of the first book, he explains that each person must determine for himself what *eudaimonia* consists in and what is necessary for it so as to have a mark to aim at in his actions (EE I.2 1214b 6-13). He states in *Eudemian Ethics* I.3 that the inquiry into the best life will be directed at the causes which enable people to share in it (EE I.3 1215a 7-10). Defining happiness will help to resolve questions about how to live and how happiness is acquired (EE II.4 1215a 20-25; “τὰ πλείστα τῶν ἀμφισβητουμένων καὶ διαποροομένων” in 1215a 20 refers back to questions about the nature of the good life and its acquisition which were raised in previous chapters). Both works, then, take on the project of explaining what *eudaimonia* consists in so as to aid people in attaining it.

Aristotle explains that the arguments contained in the ethical treatises are of a certain type and structure. First, they hold usually and for the most part and lack exactness (NE I.3 1094b 19-27, II.2 1104a 1-11). The arguments move from those things which are familiar to men to things that are familiar in themselves, or ethical first principles (NE I.4 1095a 31-1095b 3; cf. EE I.7 1217a 18-20). We should thus expect Aristotle’s ethical inquiry to yield some kind of understanding of the nature of *eudaimonia*. In *Eudemian Ethics* I.6, he notes that there is a role for philosophy in ethics:

...in every inquiry there is a difference between philosophic and unphilosophic argument; therefore we should not think even in political philosophy that the sort of consideration which not only makes the nature of the thing evident but also its cause is superfluous; for such consideration is in every inquiry the truly philosophic method. (EE I.6 1216b 35-39)
In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle does not mention the role of philosophy in the inquiry, in fact he warns against thinking one can become good simply through a theoretical understanding of the good life. (NE II.4 1105b 12-17). Nevertheless, he does provide philosophical arguments about, e.g., why *eudaimonia* is found in a certain kind of life. Thus, given the role of philosophy in ethics, we should expect Aristotle’s course on ethics to teach not only specifics about what kind of life is most *eudaimon*, but also why it is so. This knowledge, in turn, should have some practical effect on the lives of students since ethical inquiry is supposed to help students become excellent.

Aristotle’s comments about the practical purpose of ethics suggest that the lessons in the works must not be intended for those who have already attained moral excellence since they will be of no practical value to these people, who are already capable of selecting and performing excellent acts. Aristotle indicates that the lessons will be appropriate to students of politics, which is the discipline which subsumes all of the sciences concerned with the good of states (πόλεις) and individuals. It is not clear from this remark whether the student of politics is a student who is learning how to run a state or a student studying within the discipline of politics, as a student of ethics would be. In the *Eudemian Ethics*, however, Aristotle describes a true “political” man as one who selects noble acts for their own sakes, a description which suggests that he must be a person of moral excellence (EE I.5 1216a 20-27). Given this statement, the practical purpose of the study of ethics, and Aristotle’s remarks about the best students of ethics (these will be discussed below), it is reasonable to conclude that the lessons in the ethical treatises were not intended only for future lawmakers.
Aristotle’s statements about the appropriate students for ethics indicate that the students I have been describing, who have completed their formal moral education but have not yet attained moral excellence, would be prime candidates for his teaching on ethics. In *Nicomachean Ethics* I.3, Aristotle states that in order to benefit from the study of ethics, a student must have had some experience in life and must not be swayed excessively by his passions. The study of ethics will bring profit to those students “who desire and act in accordance with rational principle” (τοῖς δὲ κατὰ λόγον τὰς ὀρέξεις ποιομένοις καὶ πράττονσι) (NE I.3 1095a10). The students whose formal education is complete will have had sufficient experience in life to begin to reason for themselves about which actions to perform. Moreover, their musical training and exposure to tragedy would have had the effect of subduing their passions. Although these students continue to feel emotion and to be led astray by errant motivation on occasion, they no longer follow their emotions blindly. As we have seen, these students are beginning to act according to reason and to desire to do so, especially after a period of continued habituation. The students whose formal moral education is complete are motivated by reason; their shortcoming is simply that they continue to have other sources of motivation, derived from other ends, which turn them away from reason at times.35

Aristotle provides another description of the best students of ethics in the following chapter. He says there that:

...any one who is to listen intelligently to lectures about what is noble and just and, generally, about the subjects of political science must have been brought up in good habits. For the facts (τὸ ὅτι) are the starting-point, and if they are

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35 It is unlikely that Aristotle intended the condition of being motivated by reason to apply only to those who acted according to reason without exception since these people would have already attained moral excellence, and it is difficult to see how the study of ethics would be of benefit to them.
sufficiently plain to him, he will not need the reason (διότι) as well; and the [one] who has been well brought up has or can easily get the starting points. (NE I.4 1095b 4-8; I have changed “man” at line 7 in Urmson’s translation to “one.” There is only a definite article and no noun to which it refers, so this passage is ambiguous as to age.)

This description also fits the student whose formal education has been completed. We saw in the previous chapter that although the young man does not act with perfect consistency, he does have good habits and these habits make him susceptible to argument (NE X.9 1179b 4-10). We should expect, then, that students whose formal education is complete would be moved by lectures on ethics in a way that those lacking good habits would not. In fact, Aristotle states that argument and teaching will be effective only on those who have habits of noble joy and hatred, suggesting that teaching may play a role in moral education (NE X.9 1179b 23-26). We have seen, both in the previous chapter and in the discussion of continued habituation in the first part of this chapter, that these students will have the proper starting points for lectures (the facts) and that they will be able to reason fairly reliably about what action should be performed in a given situation. Thus, they appear to have the proper temperament for a course on ethics, as well as the requisite reasoning skills, or starting points. These two descriptions of the proper student of ethics fit students whose formal moral training has come to an end particularly well: they have the required personalities to appreciate the lessons and are young enough that such teaching will still be of benefit to them.

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36 The *Eudemian Ethics* does not contain a description of the ideal student although there is a discussion about the purpose of ethics in Book One.

37 It is unlikely that this kind of training would benefit an older, non-excellent person because his defects would be deeply entrenched. This person responds to force rather than reason.
This conclusion is shared by Burnyeat; however he seems to hold that the student has made more moral progress than I do. He asserts that the student has made the knowledge that certain acts are noble and enjoyable second nature.\(^{38}\) Burnyeat’s student has learned that higher pleasures are better (although he still might fail to act on his knowledge) in a stronger sense than mine has. Having made this knowledge second nature suggests that it has been integrated into the student’s value system in a way in which I think is unlikely before he achieves full moral excellence.

The proposal that the course in ethics was intended to help complete moral education has a certain initial plausibility: the descriptions of the best student of ethics match the young man who emerges from formal moral education and Aristotle states that the lessons are intended to help the student attain *eudaimonia*. We must consider next what kinds of lessons the ethical treatises contain and whether (and how) these lessons will help the student to achieve full moral excellence by resolving his remaining weaknesses in character and bringing him to *phronesis*. At this point, I will provide a general summary of these lessons, showing that the ethical works contain both practical information about the individual excellences and living the best life and theoretical instruction about moral excellence and *eudaimonia*.\(^{39}\) The specific information might aid in practical reasoning, although it will not be necessary for good reasoning. The theoretical points contained in the ethical treatises will bring the student to an abstract

\(^{38}\) Burnyeat, op. cit., pp. 71-78.

\(^{39}\) I use “theoretical” here in a modern sense and do not follow Aristotle’s division of practical and theoretical topics (according to which these lessons are practical in nature). My use roughly follows the contemporary notion of moral theory (vs. “applied ethics”).
understanding of the best life sufficient for the acquisition of *phronesis* and help him to identify with his abstract view of the end, thereby helping to bring his desires into harmony with reason. This summary will of necessity be sketchy: to provide a complete analysis of all of the lessons would be tantamount to writing a commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

In the first book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says several important things about the nature of *eudaimonia*. He argues that all humans seek *eudaimonia* and that this is, in fact, the best life (NE I.4 1095a 16-20, I.7 1097a 15-b 22; cf. EE I.1 1214a 7-9, I.7 1217a 30-40). In addition to claiming that all men seek *eudaimonia*, Aristotle sets out to explain what *eudaimonia* consists in and confirms his initial definition (the good is activity of the soul in conformity with excellence) in light of common views about the human good (NE I.4 1095a 21-30, I.5, I.7 1097b 23-1098a 19, I.8; cf. EE I.1-5, II.1 1218b 32-1219b 7). Following several more technical points, Aristotle identifies the primary component of *eudaimonia*, excellence, as requiring further study and offers a brief analysis of the types of excellence (NE I.13; cf. EE II.1 1219b 26-1220a 12).

Book Two contains an exploration of moral excellence. Aristotle starts with the question of how moral excellence is acquired (NE II.1-2, 4; cf. NE II.9 1109a 30-b 13, EE II.1 1220a 22-32). Once he has explained how people become morally excellent, he steps back and considers exactly what sort of thing it is and why it is important (NE II.5-6; cf.

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40 I will use the *Nicomachean Ethics* as my primary source here, but most of the points I discuss arise, in roughly the same order, in the *Eudemian Ethics*. I will provide cross-references where applicable.

41 Since this is an overview, I am drawing points together from different sources and the references I give are not necessarily consecutive. Where the entire chapter is relevant, I will provide only book and chapter numbers; where only part of it is relevant I will include line numbers as well.
EE II.2, II.3 1220b 21-36, II.5). This is followed by a review of the individual excellences and the vices associated with them (NE II.7-8; cf. EE II.3 1220b 36-1221b 26).

The third book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* commences with a discussion of voluntary action and the conditions of moral responsibility. Aristotle begins by defining voluntary action (NE III.1; cf. EE II.6-9). He then takes up choice (προαίρεσις), which is said to be closely bound up with excellence (NE III.2-3; cf. EE II.10). From these notions, Aristotle develops an account of responsibility (NE III.5; cf. EE II.11).

The later part of *Nicomachean Ethics* Book Three and the whole of Books Four and Five are devoted to describing the individual moral excellences (cf. EE III). He lists the individual excellences and explains how each is a mean between extremes. These lessons are primarily descriptive in nature: they provide a sense of what morally excellent people are like and what is relevant to reasoning about the individual excellences. The level of description is rather general, but would be adequate to help the student develop a fairly complete picture of the excellences.42

The theoretical lessons continue in *Nicomachean Ethics* Six. This book investigates the various intellectual excellences. Aristotle begins by specifying the intellectual excellence which is required for choosing intermediate actions and then distinguishes this excellence, *phronesis*, from the other intellectual excellence, which is of non-changing things (NE VI.1-2). Following this rough description of the intellectual

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42 More detail is provided in the *Rhetoric*, where a student can get an idea not only of the vices opposed to each excellence, but also of what constitutes the mean. The correspondence between Aristotle's remarks in the *Rhetoric* and those in the *Nicomachean Ethics* was noted in Chapter One (p. 44).
excellences, Aristotle provides a much more detailed one which treats all of the ways the soul possesses truth and the relations between them (NE VI.3-11). Finally, Aristotle addresses several *aporiai* which arise as to the usefulness of *phronesis*, its relation to moral excellence and its relation to wisdom (NE VI.12-13).

In the first part of Book Seven, Aristotle discusses the various possible character types and where they go right and wrong (NE VII.1,5,8-10). He pays particular attention to the acratic state, exploring its causes, the different types of acrasia and how akratics differ from both vicious and encratic men (NE VII.2-4, 6-7). With respect to all of the character types, Aristotle specifies what their ends are, what kinds of actions they perform and their attitudes toward themselves and their actions.

Pleasure is one topic in the *Nicomachean Ethics* which is treated in multiple locations. It is initially mentioned in connection with the description of moral excellence in Book Two when Aristotle says that moral excellence is concerned with pleasure and pain and their influence on action (NE II.3; cf. EE II.4). The first extended discussion of pleasure occurs in the second part of Book Seven. Here Aristotle investigates whether pleasure is a good and its place in the *eudaimôn* life (NE VII.11-14). Aristotle discusses pleasure again in Book Ten (NE X.1-5). Although his treatment in Book Ten differs in several important respects from the Book Seven treatment, particularly regarding the ontological status of pleasure, the two accounts are largely in agreement and treat many of the same issues, especially those relating to types of pleasure and whether it is necessarily bad.

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43 Book Seven says that pleasure is an activity, Book Ten that it completes activity. Cf. the discussion of the accounts of pleasure in Chapter Three (pp. 125-131).
Books Eight and Nine cover the topic of friendship. As with the treatment of the individual excellences, the lessons contained here are largely descriptive, although they are more specific than the teachings on the individual excellences. Various particular aspects of friendship and all types of relations with others are covered in these books (NE VIII 6-14, IX 1-8, 10-11; cf. EE VII.3-4, 6-11). Other, more theoretical points are also made however. Aristotle describes the different types of friendship and declares virtue friendship to be the best (NE VIII.2-5; cf. EE VII.2,5). He reviews the role of friendship in life and argues that even morally excellent people need friends (NE VIII.1, IX.9,12; cf. EE VII.12).

The final lessons in the Nicomachean Ethics focus on the nature of eudaimonia (NE X.6-8). Here, Aristotle again describes the end of man. He explains what the most eudaimôn life will be like, man’s limitations with respect to this and other lives which may also be considered eudaimôn. He also indicates what is required for the attainment of these kinds of lives.

The lessons contained in the ethical works are quite varied. They cover such general topics as what is the best life to lead as well as more specific issues, like what is the role of friendship in such a life. On the whole, Aristotle offers a fairly comprehensive account of the best life and its components. He describes the relevant excellences and explains how they are related to eudaimonia. In addition to the theoretical explanations of what eudaimonia and the excellences consist in, he also takes up a number of related topics which add detail to the description of the end. The treatment of acrasia helps students to understand in more detail what is required for moral excellence and how
people go wrong in their actions. The discussions of pleasure and friendship show the student how these commonly valued things are part of the best life, although not in their most common forms. The student’s understanding of a variety of topics relating to eudaimonia and the best life is refined and expanded by the lessons in the ethics.

Aristotle’s comments about the practical purpose of the ethical treatises have often been interpreted as an indication that the works on ethics are intended to provide specific counsel about action. Thus, Vasiliou and McDowell, who believe that there is no place for a general conception of the end (which they refer to as a "blueprint") in moral reasoning, regard the ethical treatises as providing specific information about the excellences and the excellent person. According to them, the instruction provided by the ethics occurs primarily in the middle books of the Nicomachean Ethics. This information assists the student in deciding what actions to perform.\(^{44}\) McDowell emphasizes that this knowledge will be intimately associated with habituation and not abstract truths; in fact, he claims that practical wisdom emerges from habituation.\(^{45}\) According to both Vasiliou and McDowell, the lessons in the ethical works have force primarily in helping the student to refine his understanding of the best life and excellent action.

Indeed, the ethical treatises do contain specific information about the excellences and how to act well which might be helpful to a student of ethics: the details found in the descriptions of the excellences in Nicomachean Ethics III-V (cf. EE III) and the books on friendship are of immediate practical value to someone who is trying to determine how to

\[^{44}\text{See Vasiliou, op. cit., pp. 787-791; McDowell, "Deliberation and Moral Development," pp. 24-29.}\]

\[^{45}\text{McDowell, "Deliberation and Moral Development," pp. 31-32.}\]
conduct his life. These lessons provide general guidelines to follow and might help the student make decisions about action or help him to understand situations better. Although I have argued above that this sort of information is not necessary for the student to reason well about action, these sorts of lessons might help the student learn more easily and quickly those things he would naturally learn for himself.

However, insofar as they assist in reasoning and determining what action to perform, the specific lessons in the ethical works (for example, Aristotle’s advice about the best number of friends in NE IX.10 or his description of the person who goes to excess with respect to humor in NE IV.8) do not have a perceptible effect on character, which is one area which needs to develop in order for the student to acquire full moral excellence.46 For this reason, McDowell’s and Vasiliou’s accounts do not provide a complete account of moral education. As we saw above, understanding what moral excellence consists in and determining which action to perform in a given situation are only part of living excellently. There is no more reason to believe that the specific teachings of ethics, insofar as they improve the student’s ability to reason about action, help the student to be properly motivated than there is to believe that the knowledge he already possesses about what acts are best does so. While knowledge about specifics might help him reach conclusions about particular situations, we have seen that when it comes to particular acts, the young man’s other ends (pleasure and honor) might easily distract him from acting for the sake of the kalon. Thus, if he has reached the conclusion that here and now he must make a gift to a family in need, he might nevertheless be

46 This distinction suggests a false dichotomy between the development of reason and character - as we have seen these two processes are tightly intertwined.
distracted by his desire for pleasure and use his money to pay for a lavish party for himself and his friends. Vasiliou and McDowell do not explain how unity of desire and proper motivation will be secured.

In order to avoid distraction by the desires for pleasure and honor, the student needs to adopt a perspective on action which enables him to withstand the attraction of ends which compete with the kalon (eventually, these ends will be oriented toward the kalon and so will cease to be distractions). He begins to do this during the period of initial habituation, but in order for the process to be completed the student must come to identify fully with nous as the standard for action and to wholeheartedly adopt a general perspective from which to determine his actions. The lessons which aid in reasoning about specifics are not able to complete this shift in perspective since they do not give the student reason to identify with his general view of the best life. For this reason, these lessons are not able to complete the young man's moral education.

There is another way in which the works can serve their practical purpose, however. The lessons may be intended not to assist in reasoning about specific actions, but rather to help the student achieve phronesis and to shape his desires. In addition to the specific teaching about excellent action discussed above, the works on ethics contain general information about the good life and what is required for it. This kind of information helps the student to reach the intellectual state of phronesis. The general points about eudaimonia and the conception of the end generated from them will also have an indirect effect on the student's character and motivation. This is a result with practical implications: if the lessons in the ethical treatises - even if they are primarily
abstract - affect the student’s desires and motivation and thereby his ability to perform excellent acts consistently and for the right reasons, they are certainly practical in nature. On this account, the teachings of the ethics have their practical effect indirectly, by helping the student to acquire *phronesis* and thereby shaping his *hesis*, as I will show below.

The information in the ethical works helps the student to gain the intellectual insight necessary for *phronesis*. This is the aspect of the ethical teachings on which Sorabji focuses, although he also makes a passing remark about the student’s affective response to his general view of the end ("...habituation makes him like that general ideal."). Sorabji clearly considers ethical instruction useful primarily to assist in reasoning about action; he concludes that these lessons and the student’s general conception of the good result in practical wisdom.

The general teachings enable the student to discover what the best life is and why it is what it is, as Sorabji claims. This knowledge ensures that the student’s grasp of practical truths has the necessary epistemic status, one which cannot be obtained from mere experience. *Phronesis* is caused in part by induction from experience, but the ethical concepts presented in the lessons on ethics are also required in order for the student to assimilate properly this body of experience and to generate an abstract conception of the best life. He thereby attains *orthos logos*, the standard by which to evaluate action.

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The lessons help the student to develop and confirm an abstract view of the end as required for *phronesis*. As discussed in Chapter One, the ethical works include information about what is the best life for a human. The student learns about the importance of acting according to reason and that the best life is one which contains both contemplation and morally excellent activity. He also discovers that in order to live the best life, there must be harmony between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul, each of which must be in excellent condition. All of these lessons combine to form an image of the best life and to help the student to understand his experience and why some actions are good and others bad. When this abstract picture is combined with the detailed teaching in the ethical works, the student understands the constituent parts of the best life, as well as the source of its value. This comprehension, which takes the form of abstract generalizations, serves as the standard for reasoning, *orthos logos*. Once he has achieved this level of understanding, the student will possess *phronesis*.48

His understanding of the best life will show the student that the best life contains moral excellence. Aristotle takes it as given that all people seek *eudaimonia* and that they therefore have a commitment to reaching this goal.49 In his treatment of moral excellence, Aristotle includes arguments which demonstrate the importance of moral excellence for *eudaimonia*. These points help the student to understand why excellent action is important: they identify its place with respect to a goal that the student holds.

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48 This description is a bit over-simplified. Strictly speaking, the student will not possess *phronesis* until the *hexis* of moral excellence is also acquired.

49 Aristotle presents this as an empirical claim, but it has normative force as well. Thus, if it is not true in an individual case, Aristotle may conclude that the person is mistakenly pursuing the wrong end. Cf. the discussion about Aristotle's two uses of "natural" in Chapter Two (pp. 87-89).
In *Nicomachean Ethics* II.6, Aristotle uses the idea that moral excellence is a mean to show how moral excellence and the individual excellences are required for *eudaimonia*. The way the doctrine of the mean is introduced shows that Aristotle intends to connect moral excellence to *eudaimonia*. Aristotle begins the chapter with the assertion that each excellence makes the thing of which it is the excellence good and enables it to perform its function well: this is the kind of thing excellence is (NE II.6 1106a 15-16). Aristotle then reasons that the excellence of man is the *hexis* from which man will become good and will perform his function well: "...ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀρετή εἶναι ἢ ἔξις ὁφ' ἢ ἀγαθός γίνεται καὶ ὁφ' ἢ τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἐργον ἀποδώσει" (NE II.6 1106a 22-24). This appears to be an explicit reference to *Nicomachean Ethics* I.7 and the function argument, where *eudaimonia* is identified with one’s fulfilling one’s function.50 This comment thus links moral excellence and *eudaimonia* and gives the student a way to understand how excellence fits into the best life.

Aristotle then goes on to explain that excellence is a mean; this will be what enables excellence to ensure that man achieves his function.51 Excellence, qua mean, makes an agent select intermediate actions, which have been demonstrated to be those which enable humans to achieve their functions (NE II.6 1106a 25-b 28). Aristotle adds an additional argument (1106b 28-35) which shows that excellences are mean states

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50 Few commentators recognize this link between the function argument and the definition of excellence or give it serious consideration. Korsgaard is a notable exception (Christine Korsgaard, "Aristotle on Function and Virtue," *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 3 (1986) pp. 259-279). In addition to comments about the function argument, this article also contains insightful exploration of the nature of moral excellence and of the relations of the parts of the soul. Achtenberg, op. cit., also remarks on the connection between ergon and excellence, although she analyzes the two ideas differently than I do.

51 A full explication of the arguments about the mean is beyond the scope of this project; I will therefore just provide a summary of their content.
between vices. This enables him to demonstrate in subsequent chapters (NE II.7 and 8) that the individual excellences are, in fact, *hexeis* which are excellent and beneficial to their possessors. The doctrine of the mean as presented in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.6 allows Aristotle to justify the importance of moral excellence for the achievement of *eudaimonia.* He explains what it is about excellence which ensures that those who possess it will attain *eudaimonia.* He is also able to show how each of the individual excellences contributes to *eudaimonia.*

In order for their full educational effects to be achieved, however, the student must grasp these abstract lessons at more than an intellectual level. They must have influence on the non-rational part of the soul and be assimilated emotionally. We know that it is possible to know something intellectually but to have it fail to properly motivate us to act, as happens in the case of acrasia (cf. NE VII.3). The student must be able not only to repeat his lessons (which is one sense in which he may be said to know), but also to act on them. Once he has internalized these lessons both intellectually and emotionally, the knowledge becomes his own. Making the knowledge his own in this way is one way of ensuring that he will exercise it since the process of making it his own colors his emotional response, which in turn influences his desire to perform the requisite action. As the ethical lessons are learned in this strong sense, the student’s desires will be

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52 Contra McDowell, "Deliberation and Moral Development," who does not see any of this kind of justification in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (p. 30). Vasiliou, op. cit., also argues against reading the ethics as providing theoretical arguments (pp. 772-773, 781-783). While I agree with Vasiliou that they are not intended to persuade a skeptic, this is not the only possible reason for presenting theoretical arguments. They might be intended to help the student get a firmer grasp on moral truths and to help his development, as I will argue below.
unified and he will begin to act more consistently according to reason and to be less
cratic.

How do the ethical lessons become one’s own? This must occur through
repetition in a process similar to the one which occurs in initial habituation. As the
student repeats the actions called for by his ethical training, in addition to becoming
accustomed to doing them he also becomes increasingly persuaded of their validity. As
his actions proceed to have good results, he becomes convinced that the principles he has
learned and the views he has developed from them are correct. This, in turn, leads to his
affirmation of the lessons and his wholehearted acceptance of them. Once he affirms the
lessons and acts on them, his non-rational desires will be shaped accordingly.

This account of the acceptance of the ethical lessons is somewhat simplistic
however; it leaves unexplained how the student is able to repeat these actions consistently
in the first place. Won’t he again be subject to diversion from his goals by particular
pleasures? Unlike other lessons, the abstract lessons of the ethics provide reasons which
bring the student to act on the basis of the lessons of ethics even before they have
exercised their influence on his emotions. By helping the student to understand more
about excellence and attain a view of the end, the general lessons of the ethics give the
student reason to want to become morally excellent over and above the desire to do so
derived from initial habituation. Once the student understands the nature of excellence
and its place in the eudaimôn life, he is motivated to act excellently because of the
importance of excellence for eudaimonia, as well as because it is the right way to act,

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which is what he learned in initial habituation. This understanding of the importance of moral excellence, in turn, bolsters the student’s resolve to act well and helps him to perform the right actions before they become habitual. The knowledge gained from the teachings on ethics helps the student to strongly identify with reason as the standard for action because it generates an overarching, second-order reason to strive to achieve excellence and makes this desire decisive in determining the student’s actions. The student’s second-order desire to achieve excellence helps to order his various first order desires. Eventually, as he repeats the action enough, his first order desires come into harmony with each other and with his second order desire.

This is similar to Burnyeat’s interpretation except that, as I mentioned above, he presupposes a stronger existing attachment to the kalon and therefore fewer problems with motivation than I do. He explains Aristotle’s purpose as follows:

...he is setting out ‘the because’ of virtuous actions, he is explaining what makes them noble, just, courageous, and so on, and how they fit into a scheme of the good life, not why they should be pursued at all. He is addressing someone who already wants and enjoys virtuous action and needs to see this aspect of his life in a deeper perspective.

According to Burnyeat, the lessons will have already been internalized; the student simply needs “the because” to attain deeper understanding of excellent action. He remarks that this understanding will also provide additional motivation for virtuous conduct, but this result does not seem to be as essential on Burnyeat’s account as it is on mine. In fact, it is not clear why the student needs “the because” on Burnyeat’s account. Whereas the

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55 Burnyeat, op. cit., p. 81.
motivational effects are a positive side-effect for Burnyeat, on my account they are a necessary part of the student’s moral development.

When properly assimilated, the general lessons contained in the ethical treatises fit together to form a complete, coherent picture of the good life. Although it is not terribly detailed, the general picture does provide the student with an image, or mark, to aim at. From the ethical works, he learns why moral excellence is important for the good life as well as various specific lessons about the excellences. The student’s understanding of the “big picture” and how moral excellence contributes to the good life increases his desire to perform excellent acts, even when doing so is difficult - e.g., in the early stages of final habituation when his desires are not yet in harmony. Once he has learned that pursuing the kalon, or excellent action, contributes directly to eudaimonia in a way that pursuing pleasure and honor does not, he has an additional reason to pursue excellence. These lessons thus cement his commitment to living the best life and help him to act for the sake of the end, even when he is faced with distractions.

This dynamic, where theoretical knowledge influences choice and motivation, is frequently observed in areas which require practice for the attainment of a goal. A runner, for example, may have a hard time making herself do speed workouts. On the days when she knows there will be interval training she has a difficult time making herself go to practice and work hard. Sometimes she even skips practice altogether. Although she knows that doing this kind of training is what she is supposed to do and that

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56 Horniak’s example of factory workers coming to unite manifests a similar dynamic; see Horniak, op. cit., pp. 172-176. She links this Marxian example with Aristotle’s views on the acquisition of excellence in the following section, pp. 176-185.
it is good for her, she seems not to have accepted this knowledge wholeheartedly and has little motivation when it comes to speedwork. At this stage, she seems like the student whose formal education is complete: intellectually she knows what she should be doing and she accepts that it is a valuable part of her training, but she is unable to bring herself to act consistently on the basis of this knowledge.

If her coach were to take her aside, though, and explain to her why speedwork is important and how it helps her to become a better runner and to achieve her goals, her motivation to do the difficult workouts would likely increase. Once she understands how interval training makes her a stronger runner from a physiological perspective and how these workouts will help her achieve her goal of becoming state champion, she will have more compelling reasons for doing speed workouts. By offering this kind of explanation, the coach has taken the individual workouts and put them into a broader context. This gives the runner increased motivation when the time comes for a tough workout: she can put the individual training session, which she may have little desire to do, into a broader picture which she does have a strong desire to achieve. She is thus able to do the individual workout because of her desire to achieve her broader goals. Her commitment to the broader goal enables her to withstand the temptation to skip practice. Eventually, the runner may even begin to enjoy the workouts for themselves and

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57 If this explanation has no effect on her, one is led to question whether in fact she really has the goal of becoming state champion. It would be irrational for her to affirm her commitment to becoming champion, but to be unwilling to do those things which are necessary to achieve the goal (this is similar to the dilemma Aristotle faces in explaining akratic action).

58 In this example, speed training is instrumentally valuable for the runner's achieving her goals. In the case of *eudaimonia*, however, moral excellence is more than instrumentally valuable - it is itself part of *eudaimonia*. Nevertheless, the dynamic appears to be the same since in both cases there is a strong identification with the goal, which is what makes the student receptive to the theoretical lesson.
experience the desire to do them for their own sake. Her success in these workouts serves as a sign of her achievement and progress, giving her added incentive to do them.

The theoretical lessons contained in the ethical works are, in essence, like the explanation offered by the runner's coach. The effect of these lessons, which link moral excellence to *eudaimonia*, is also similar to that experienced by the runner. The student has additional motivation to act excellently when he understands how each excellence contributes to *eudaimonia*. He also has added desire to achieve the *hexis* of moral excellence since he knows that this is essential to his living the best life. The lessons contained in the ethical works supplement the student's motivation to act according to excellence and help him to do so in the face of competing motivations. They help him to identify with his abstract picture of the best life and to act based on it.

Performing these acts then helps to stabilize his character, as Aristotle explains in *Nicomachean Ethics* II.1 and 2. We have seen how repeating the same kinds of actions helps the student to become accustomed to them and to start to choose them for themselves. As he begins to act on the basis of the lessons of ethics, he becomes habituated to doing them and begins to internalize the lessons and to act consistently for the sake of the *kalon*. He will also derive pleasure from these acts, which increases his ability to do them. The mechanisms of pleasure and honor ensure that as the student repeats good actions, his desires will shift accordingly - they will also begin to fix on excellent activity as their ends. This process will then guarantee the unity of desire necessary for moral excellence.
The connection between theoretical knowledge and choice and motivation seems to be reflected in the distinction between the kaloskagathos and the Spartan in *Eudemian Ethics* VIII.3. We saw in the previous chapter that the student is similar to the Spartan—he might value the right things (excellence), but (so far) for the wrong reasons. Although Aristotle’s concern in this discussion is to distinguish the kaloskagathos from the merely agathos and not to explain how they become different, the chapter provides some evidence which supports my claims about the importance of theoretical lessons for the acquisition of phronesis and the proper hexis. In *Eudemian Ethics* VIII, the kaloskagathos is distinguished from the Spartan by his correct selection of natural goods. The kaloskagathos values these goods properly and selects them when appropriate; the merely good man does not (EE VIII.3 1248b 38-1249a 16). This distinction reveals two things: the kaloskagathos both judges correctly and values the right things. Clearly, his judgment will be correlated to an intellectual ability. His correct assessment of value, if it is to be manifested in action, must be more than just intellectual—it suggests that his desires are in harmony with reason. We see, then, that the kaloskagathos has the attributes which the student of ethics requires.

Aristotle is not specific about how a person becomes kaloskagathos, especially with respect to his character, but there does seem to be some need of a kind of knowledge which requires theoretical training. A spoudaios, Aristotle explains judges his actions and chooses natural goods in light of some limit: “...so in regard to actions and choice of what is naturally good but not praiseworthy, the good man should have a standard both of disposition and of choice and avoidance with regard to excess or deficiency of wealth and
good fortune, the standard being - as above said - as reason directs...” (EE VIII.3 1249a 24-b 2). This line and those following it bear a striking resemblance to *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.1 where Aristotle also makes an analogy to health and refers to a limit for decision (NE VI.1 1138b 20-34). We saw that the limit there was *orthos logos* and that this requires theoretical knowledge of the best life and its constituent parts, as I argued in Chapter One (pp. 51-55). The *kaloskagathos*’ ability to judge correctly with respect to natural goods thus depends on his training in theoretical lessons in ethics.

Aristotle has less to say about the character of the *kaloskagathos* - his comments focus primarily on the rational qualities the *kaloskagathos* possesses. However, Aristotle does seem to associate the *kaloskagathos*’ proper valuing of natural goods and recognition of what is fine with a proper understanding of why they are valuable (cf. EE VIII.3 1248b 39-1249a 1; 1249a 14-16). Presumably, this understanding causes the *kaloskagathos* to value things correctly and to select them accordingly. There is no clear indication of the source of this understanding, but it seems likely that it comes from the same thing which enables the *kaloskagathos* to judge well: theoretical lessons about the best life. Aristotle’s contrast of the Spartan with the *kaloskagathos* appears to reflect the importance of theoretical understanding obtained from the study of ethics for both intellectual and character development.

The lessons in the ethical treatises and the student’s resulting understanding of the end have a second effect on the development of character. The intentional, cognitive nature of emotion allows the student’s newly acquired knowledge about excellence to

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59 Although Aristotle uses “*spoudaios*” here, the reference to *kaloskagathos* at 1249b 24 indicates that the whole chapter is describing the *kaloskagathos*. 
help with the development of his affective responses. The specific knowledge he gains about moral excellence and the individual excellences affects the cognitive part of the emotions. Once the student learns about the nature of, e.g., anger in more detail, his feelings of anger will be shaped by this knowledge. He learns the proper circumstances for feeling anger and this knowledge begins to affect when and how he feels the emotion. As he learns, for example, that anger is not the appropriate response when someone harms him unintentionally, he ceases being angry at the person who unwittingly insults him. His new knowledge then affects the way he interprets situations and his response to them; he begins to exhibit anger properly. This, in turn, helps the student to respond excellently to situations (since his emotions are felt properly) and to perform the best acts.

Judgment and thus emotion are affected by more general ethical lessons as well as those which explicate specific excellences. The lessons about pleasure, for example, teach the student that pleasure is not wrong per se, but that having one’s actions determined solely by epithumia, the desire for pleasure, is. Pleasure is a natural good which can be either good or bad for a given individual and is not always worth seeking. The teachings on pleasure explain why being guided by feeling, in this case the desire for pleasure, is detrimental to a person’s well-being. Understanding this point and the reasons offered in support of it causes the student to respond to his epithumetic desire more critically. Once he has learned that pleasure is not an unconditional good, rather than automatically assenting to the desire for pleasure he may pause to reflect on the

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60 The ethical works are not this specific with respect to anger, but the proper causes of anger are spelled out at Rhetoric II.2 1378a 31-b 1.
desire first and on whether satisfying it is good in this context. After a period of time, his
desire for pleasure and response to it change accordingly.

The student also learns how pleasure is connected to activity and determined by
the quality of the activity. He learns that pleasures derived from activities that are more
complete are themselves more complete, or subjectively more satisfying. These lessons
explain to the student the reasons for his own subjective experience: we have already
commented on how the hierarchy among pleasures (that better activities yield better
pleasures) is one mechanism which moves the student to perform better actions. Now,
however, the student understands the basis for his experience and learns that it is better
for him - both objectively with respect to his well-being and subjectively with respect to
his experience of pleasure - to pursue higher pleasures. This knowledge enables him to
put his desires into perspective and makes him more receptive to the appeal of higher
pleasures because it alters the cognitive element in the emotions dealing with pleasure.
He is able to identify with more distant, higher pleasures over immediate, low ones. This
is an achievement which continued habituation cannot attain. As the student learns about
the importance of acting according to reason and that emotions are supposed to be
responsive to reason, this makes him more likely to feel emotion which is according to
reason; i.e., which meets the requirements listed in Nicomachean Ethics II.6. Learning
more about excellent action, insofar as it shapes the student’s judgments, also affects his
emotions and thereby his actions. The mechanisms of pleasure and honor help to unify
desire once the student begins to identify with his abstract view of the end and to perform
kalon acts.
Although Sherman and Nussbaum are correct in asserting that the lessons contained in the ethical treatises do not cause radical changes in the student’s emotional responses, they seem to overlook the place for philosophical argument in perfecting the student’s emotions. Both focus on Aristotle’s requirement that the student must have the proper upbringing and good habits prior to commencing his study of ethics and conclude that the student’s character is established by the time philosophical study begins. Interestingly, both remark on the theoretical possibility of changing the cognitive component of emotion through argument and on Aristotle’s failure to take advantage of this possibility. They seem to be led to their conclusions by two assumptions, both of which are incorrect: 1) that philosophy would have to cause significant changes in character if it is to be considered an important factor in moral education and 2) that early habituation determines an individual’s character.

We have seen that although early habituation is a necessary condition for excellent character, it is not sufficient to guarantee it. Early habituation helps to develop and refine a student’s emotions, but it does not bring the requisite stability or guarantee right emotion. We have also seen that the lessons of ethics address the cognitive aspect of emotion. Despite Sherman’s explicit claims to the contrary, Aristotle appears to try to change emotion directly. She states, “...but interestingly, we don’t see strong indications in Aristotle’s ethical writings of this more direct approach of trying to change emotions through revision of belief or thought or through argument.” Although Aristotle does not

present his views as being intended to change emotion, he does present summaries of when various emotions are appropriate as well as arguments about the place of pleasure and emotion in the best life. These should have a direct impact on the student and, as I argued above, we should expect that this was Aristotle's intention, given the practical purpose of the ethics. The lessons do not cause radical shifts in character (they do not have to), but they do provide a student who wants to become excellent and who possesses the necessary prerequisites with standards by which to judge his responses, a new way of understanding emotions, and guidelines by which to shape future responses. These are significant parts of the student’s emotional development which philosophical examination of ethics is uniquely poised to provide. Their failure to recognize philosophy’s contribution to moral education causes Nussbaum and Sherman to overlook an important part of the student’s emotional development.

The lessons of ethics go beyond those the moral educator provides and thereby cause changes the latter’s lessons cannot. While the educator can advise the student about what to do and what not to do, without philosophical argument his explanations are of limited use. The lessons of the educator are those which are relevant at a conventional level\textsuperscript{64} - he is able to offer reasons for acting which are grounded in social norms, but not to aid the student in reflecting critically about them. He may be able to explain, for example, that a person should be brave in battle because it is noble and what a good citizen does. This may help guide the student’s response to fear, but it might not be

\textsuperscript{64} Even though Aristotle presupposes a well set up society where lawmakers establish a good \textit{polis}, full moral excellence requires independence from external authority.
sufficient to guarantee that he will be courageous. In order to develop true courage the student might require an explanation which goes beyond the one offered by the moral educator and deals with questions like why he should be courageous even if it means death. Although the lessons of the educator teach the student to reason fairly reliably about what he should and should not do and help him develop the right ends, they do not offer a sound explanation as to why the acts should be done or how the ends should be ordered and integrated. They do not include an account of why the student should be good or why, ultimately, he should perform an excellent act rather than an amusing one.

This level of explanation relies on philosophical explanations like those found in the ethical works. The philosophical lessons of ethics (which may well be taught by the same instructor as the initial ones were) provide substantial reasons for acting well and a way of ordering ends which will enable the student to respond well to situations. As we saw with respect to the kaloskagathos in Eudemian Ethics VIII.3, the person of complete excellence values and judges correctly as a result of abstract ethical lessons. The rational and non-rational parts of the soul are fused together and oriented toward the kalon.

The effect of the knowledge obtained from studying ethics is to help the student develop and identify with an abstract view of the end. At this point, the student assumes responsibility for his actions and character. In the end, his character depends on him. Whereas before hearing the ethical lessons he lacked a consistent rationale by which to decide how to act, his practical wisdom now provides him with one. This is not only

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65 This account leaves out the need for certain external conditions, like exposure to the right situations, as part of learning to be brave.
manifested in his judgments, but also and more importantly, it affects his character as well as his motivation to act according to these judgments.

We have seen how the student's individual emotions are refined by his increased knowledge of ethics. Having the proper emotional response to a given situation will enable the student to judge accurately what should be done and to do it. Learning about eudaimonia and the nature of pleasure and honor enables the student to affirm intellectually that the kalon is the best end to pursue in action because it contributes directly to eudaimonia. Moreover, he knows that pleasure and honor are not in themselves proper ends of action and that they also result from kalon activity. Thus, his desires for pleasure and honor are met by excellent activity. Knowing all of this helps solidify the student's motivation to act for the sake of the kalon and also begins to shape his affective response to situations. It enables him to identify with his general understanding of the best life and what promotes it, even in the face of competing immediate pleasures. With repeated action, his desires will become unified. The repetition of excellent acts confirms the validity of his lessons and increases his ability to perform them. His emotions begin to conform to his judgments about excellent activity and he develops the ability to act consistently for the sake of the kalon. As he continues to act in this way with increasing consistency, he gradually acquires the stable hexis required of the morally excellent person. His emotions are properly directed, he begins to act from prohairesis, and his actions manifest a consistency previously unattained.
CONCLUSION

The person of moral excellence possesses excellence of the non-rational part of the soul which enables him to act according to reason and fulfill his function. This is a lasting disposition of pathê which has broad implications for action. The excellent person’s non-rational desires are unified and aim for the same objects his rational desire seeks, those which are kalon. These pathê are shaped by the excellent person’s conception of the good life: his knowledge of moral truths influences the pathê he feels. Thus, they may be caused by reasoning in a way, since they may be the result of the excellent person’s reasoning about the good life. We may say that the pathê of the excellent person are led by nous because of the influence his rational comprehension of the end has on his emotions and desires, as long as we understand that we do not mean by this that nous causes each occurrent desire and emotion.

In the presence of phronesis, the excellent person’s unified desire will be oriented toward the best action. The excellent person’s understanding of the best life enables him to determine the best action in a given situation and, in virtue of his tendency to feel correct pathê, he is properly motivated to perform this action. Therefore, we may expect the morally excellent person to consistently perform excellent acts and thereby fulfill his function. The act which phronesis determines satisfies all of the ends sought in action: because the excellent person experiences pathê correctly, an act which he judges to be kalon is also pleasant to him. Since he understands the end and what is truly kalon, this is the act which promotes his good as well. Because the excellent person has the right
desires and takes pleasure in the right things, his action manifests stability and coherence: there is unity within his desires and choices.

The primary task of moral education will be to generate this *hexitis*, or psychological condition, in young people. The moral educator must also help with the acquisition of an understanding of the end and *phronesis*. Achieving the unity of desire characteristic of moral excellence requires refining the student's *pathê* and shaping them in light of his emerging understanding of the best life. As his *pathê* come to agree with reason, the desire and thought of the student will gradually come together so that when he reaches excellence, he will desire just what he judges best, the *kalon*. Achieving this end, however, is not an easy process; it requires certain preconditions and external guidance.

Aristotle's statement that habituation is the means to achieve excellence of character is primarily one of emphasis. Habituation is the mode of training distinctive of character formation, but the student cannot achieve excellence if he does not also possess the right nature. Since it is rare for a person not to possess proper human nature, this requirement is satisfied in most cases. The student also requires intellectual training to learn what the good is. This knowledge promotes not only his moral reasoning and knowledge of the end, but also his ability to perform the correct act in a given situation. So, although habituation is the primary element in character formation, nature and intellectual training are needed as well.

Aristotle's theory of moral education has adequate resources to account for how a child develops good habits and the cognitive ability to determine which acts to perform. The student's early studies in music and tragedy promote his ability to experience the
broad range of emotions required by the person of moral excellence. These lessons, along with practice and explicit teaching, help him to refine these emotions and to reason well about action. The lessons of formal education shape both intellectual and affective responses, bringing them into rough agreement.

In order to achieve full moral excellence, teaching is required in addition to the lessons of formal education. The effects the philosophical study of ethics have on moral development are not surprising given the understanding of moral excellence developed in Chapter One. It is a condition of the soul which presupposes a strong intellectual ability to reason about action which is grounded in an insight into the best life. In order for a person to act according to excellence he must have not only the ability to determine the best action, but also the ability to act on his determination, which requires stability of character and motivation to act well. The theoretical lessons of the ethics help the student to attain *phronesis* and are also of such a nature as to have a strong impact on the young man’s affective responses and on his desire to achieve excellence. Once he learns about the importance of excellent action and the source of the value of pleasure and honor, the student has a strong reason to identify his understanding of the end as the best standard for action and to act according to the *kalon*. As he does so, his affective character is shaped and he acquires moral excellence.

Aristotle’s views about human nature and development exert a strong influence on his program of moral education which has not previously been recognized. For Aristotle, moral education must ensure that character development is completed successfully, as well as that intellectual excellence is achieved. We have seen that, according to Aristotle,
humans are by nature suited for excellence and have certain natural desires which may either promote or hinder the acquisition of excellence. The moral educator's task is to take advantage of these resources and to use them to help guide the child's development.

The task of training the non-rational part of the soul is made easier by the close relationship between the non-rational and rational parts of the soul which allows each part of the soul to influence the other (cf. NE VI.13 1144b 30-1145a 6). Because of this mutual influence, moral education proceeds through both character and intellectual training.¹ In order to be effective, the moral educator must rely on the child's natural behaviors and desires. The efficacy of each of the components described in the account of the formal education program (music, tragedy, explanation, etc.) is dependent on Aristotle's presuppositions about human nature and behavior.²

Aristotle's program of education also relies on the teleological nature of certain desires to achieve its effects. Aristotle's theory of pleasure and the claim that pleasure from better sources is subjectively more pleasant is necessary to explain the transition that the student of ethics makes from seeking physical pleasure to seeking honor and noble action. Because those activities which are best for the student are most pleasant and this makes him enjoy doing them, he is inclined to perform them more often and with a certain attentiveness which enhances his ability to do them. Without this conception of pleasure, Aristotle would somehow have to explain how the desire to perform good

¹ This approach differs from simple cognitive or behavior theories, which guide changes in only one way. Kohlberg's theory, for example, holds that moral education proceeds through stages of cognitive development, where as a student's intellectual development progresses so will his moral development.

² This will be an important point for anyone considering the feasibility of Aristotle's theory for contemporary use.
actions overcomes the desire for pleasure. As it stands, no such explanation is required since the desire for pleasure is most fully satisfied through the performance of excellent actions. Physical pleasure becomes less of a motivator once an individual has been exposed to higher sources of pleasure. This dynamic accounts for how the student comes to perform acts reliably: once his abstract view of the best life motivates him to perform these acts despite distraction by particular physical pleasures, the pleasure he derives from them increases his motivation to perform them and his hexis is stabilized.

The second desire which plays an important part in habituation is the competitive desire for improvement, which is initially manifested as the desire for honor. This desire emerges (or at least becomes forceful) in adolescence. It naturally competes with pleasure to determine action and thus helps to expand the young man’s set of motivations. It also makes the student conscious of social norms and of the opinions of those around him. This helps the moral educator direct the young man’s actions. As with pleasure, the desire for honor can be misplaced and lead to bad action and thereby have a negative influence on habituation, as well as a positive one. As the student’s moral development progresses, he learns that there is a higher standard for honor than that set by social convention and thus looks beyond conventional measures of his status. At this point, the student values what is truly honorable. The desire for improvement leads the student to engage in self-assessment and self-reflection, which are important activities during the final stages of moral education.

Finally, the student’s inherent rationality facilitates moral education. His tendency to reason about things influences his actions both directly and indirectly. It
exerts direct influence over action insofar as the student engages in moral reasoning about which action to perform in a given situation and then acts on the basis of that reasoning. It also leads him to reason abstractly about the best life and to develop a view of the end. A child's rational nature ensures that he desires to know and understand things, excellence in this case. This desire and ability allow him to come to an increasingly nuanced understanding of what excellence consists in, which he can then bring to bear on future actions. His natural inclination to use reason helps him to attain moral autonomy and to act from deliberation, thereby becoming responsible for his own actions.

Each of these behaviors and desires, as well as his presuppositions about human nature and the social context within which education occurs, are essential for Aristotle's theory of moral education. Without them, the components of the educational program would not be able to bring about the changes required for proper habituation and cognitive development.

In the final stages of moral education, we see clearly what has been true throughout the process: that intellect and character are both necessary for moral excellence and that they work together to promote it. The nature of moral excellence and the interweaving of character and intellect dictate that moral education must focus on both and that it will be a complex process. In the final stage, we see that development on both fronts is completed by a single thing, training in ethics. The examination of how the lessons in ethics bring the young man's ethical education to completion sheds light on what is often regarded as a puzzling claim: the claim Aristotle makes in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI that moral excellence and *phronesis* do not exist without one another (NE
VI.13 1144b 30-33). We have seen that in order to truly understand the lessons of ethics and achieve phronesis, an individual must be in a good state. These lessons are not fully comprehended until they are integrated into the affective part of the soul as well as into the rational part. Thus, in order to satisfy the requirements for possession of phronesis, a person has to have the proper hexis. The hexis is itself shaped by the intellect and insights constitutive of phronesis, as we have seen. Once the student begins to grasp the lessons of ethics they begin to affect his character. When they are sufficiently firmly held to justify the attribution of phronesis, they will have had enough effect on the student’s hexis for him to have acquired moral excellence. The mutual informing of the intellectual and affective parts of the soul, as explained above, illuminates how the perfection of each in action - phronesis and moral excellence, respectively - depends on the other, as Aristotle asserts in Nicomachean Ethics Book Six.
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