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ABSTRACT

Perception and Persuasion in Aristotle's Ethics

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According to Aristotle, human action occurs through a coordination of animalistic urges and rational calculations. The majority of Aristotle's contemporary commentators have thought this account of action to ultimately be rational in nature. On their view, humans can reason about what ends (*telē*) they would like to achieve and, as a result of that reasoning, motivate themselves to pursue those ends. However, this cuts against Aristotle's suggestions, both in the *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics*, that humans do not reason about the ends that they pursue. Rather, their ends are chosen by their non-rational character states, which are responsive to pleasure and pain. Contra the rationalist readings, in my dissertation I present a reading of Aristotle's account of action more closely in line with these non-rationalist or Humean suggestions. However, I do not maintain that reason has *no* influence over our ends as some commentators have argued we must do if we embrace these suggestions. Drawing from the *Rhetoric*, I maintain that reason is capable of indirectly altering the ends that we desire to pursue by manipulating how the non-rational soul perceives these ends.

My argument consists of two parts. First, I maintain that character sets our ends via perception (*aisthēsis* and *phantasia*). We desire to pursue those ends that we have been habituated to see as pleasant and avoid those that we have been habituated to see as painful. Second, I maintain that reason can alter the ends we pursue by altering perception. Through

rhetorically adorned argument, reason can rearrange our perceptions, causing us to see the world in a new way. In doing so, it can move us to see new ends as pleasant, ultimately altering our desires and actions.

Overall, my dissertation presents rational action as a negotiation between reason and desire. In order to motivate action, reason cannot stipulate just any end. The non-rational soul must be able to see that end as pleasant. In order to construct such an end, reason must draw from the non-rational soul's store of perceptions, reconfiguring and manipulating what the non-rational soul already sees as pleasant.

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INTRODUCTION

ESTABLISHING ENDS THROUGH PERCEPTUAL MODIFICATION

Aristotle conceives of human beings as fundamentally distinct from other animals, marked by their ability to reason.¹ In his biological and psychological works, Aristotle presents the human soul as sharing much of the same functionality with plants and animals. Like these organisms, the human soul is capable of nutrition, digestion, desire, and perception. However, despite these similarities, the human soul is essentially distinct among living organisms. For in addition to these animalistic and vegetative functions, the human soul is capable of rational thought.

The human soul's complex composition allows for uniquely complex actions. In movement, we are capable of coordinating the rational with the non-rational, giving our activities a dimension of sophistication not available to non-human animals. Deliberation is the most obvious example of this rational dimension of human action. Through deliberation, we are able to engage in long term planning by mapping out the means needed to arrive at some end (*telos*) that we wish to achieve in the future. In doing this, our rationality directs our non-rational desires towards these means, which ultimately forward us to our desired end.² However, while it is clear

¹ Aristotle, of course, was not the first to think of human beings in this way. Humans have been distinguished by their reasoning capacity at least since the Presocratic philosopher Alcmaeon (see Sorabji 1995, 9).

² This is, at least, one way of interpreting how deliberation works. Another interpretation of deliberation might maintain that these motivational desires are peculiarly rational, not non-rational. Whichever interpretation is right will have no bearing on the discussion that follows, which is focused on ends, not means. My aim here is simply to point out that there is one respect in which reason can direct the non-rational part of the soul in a straightforward and relatively uncontroversial way. If one disagrees with this interpretation, then the relevant point is not that rationality

that reason can determine the means we take to achieve our ends, it has been far less clear whether reason can consider and establish our ends. That is to say, it has not been clear whether reason on Aristotle's account is capable of directing desire—as opposed to desire directing it—towards those ends that it determines to be good. The issue is that some passages of Aristotle indicate that the intellect establishes our ends while others indicate that it is the non-rational soul, particularly non-rational desire and the closely related notion of character. This unclarity in Aristotle's texts raises a fundamental question about our actions: do we have the ability to rationally determine which ends we pursue, those things that most fundamentally determine the course of our actions and lives? Or, are these ends (and hence the course of our lives) determined by our non-rational desires, which are instilled in us by nature and upbringing?

In my dissertation I will answer this question by maintaining that reason can influence our ends, but only by constructing those ends out of desires that we already have, most of which are determined by character. On this view, then, an end can be the product of a combination of desire and reason. However, because gaining rational control over our ends is highly difficult and only available to those willing to struggle against their natures, it will turn out that most of the time, most people's ends and lives are determined by non-rational desire alone.

In defending this view, I offer a new and unique account of how reason influences our ends. I maintain that the rational soul can affect our ends by altering our desires through perception. Looking at the *Nicomachean Ethics*, *De Anima*, *De Motu Animalium*, *De Memoria*, *De Insomniis*, and *Posterior Analytics*, I maintain that our ends are established by our sense perception of what is good. Moreover, I maintain that these sense perceptions of the good are

can direct the non-rational part of the soul, but that it can completely overrule its directives, at least in the case of means.

developed through our experiences of pleasure and pain. Consequently, when we see a particular end as good, this causes us to desire it and ultimately motivates us to act.³ However, I argue that our ends are not always determined by past pleasant experience. Relying on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, I maintain that arguments are capable of changing the way we perceive the world and thus what we see as good to pursue. By creatively combining and rearranging our past perceptual experiences into new perceptions, argument can move us to see an activity as pleasant that we did not previously see as such. In doing so, argument can move us to pursue this activity as an end.

1. A Summary of the Secondary Literature on Action in Aristotle

Traditionally, there have been two competing interpretations of Aristotle's account of action: a Humean interpretation and a rationalist interpretation. Aristotle's discussion of action in *NE* III.3 gives us a schematic picture of how action is structured. Beginning with a *telos* (i.e. an end or goal that we would like to achieve), we use our intellect to deliberate by tracing out the steps in reverse from the end to a particular action that we can perform now. Once we have done this, a desire is created to act and we act. The disagreement surrounding this account focuses on how these *telē* or ends are established. Humean interpretations maintain that they are established by desire alone while rationalist interpretations maintain that reason is capable of establishing them. This disagreement is essentially over what the most antecedent cause of our actions is. Is desire what initially determines the end we pursue? Or, does reason establish the end that desire then pursues? If one sides with the former, then one reads Aristotle in a Humean spirit according to which an agent

³ Or, perhaps, to deliberate on the steps needed to achieve it and then act.

1. has a desire for some end x ,
2. deliberates about the sequence of actions needed to achieve x ,
3. and finally acts.⁴

In contrast, if one sides with the latter, one reads Aristotle in an intellectualist manner in which an agent

1. rationally determines that end x is good,
2. forms a desire for x and deliberates about the sequence of actions needed to achieve x ,
3. and finally acts.

This debate has been provoked by ambiguities in Aristotle's texts. Sometimes Aristotle seem to maintain that the intellect sets ends and at other times he seems to maintain that only desire sets ends. For instance, the overall aim of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*) seems to presume that we have a significant amount of control over our actions. It presents a philosophical reflection on what is good for human beings in general which is supposed to have an impact on the ends that the audience pursues.⁵ In addition and more specifically, in his description of action, Aristotle also seems to say that rational wish determines the ends that we pursue.⁶

However, in seeming contradiction to these passages are other passages that very clearly support Humean interpretations. The most problematic of these is Aristotle's claim in *NE* VI.12, 1144a9-10: "[character] virtue makes the goal correct, while wisdom makes what leads to it correct."⁷ According to Aristotle, there are two kinds of virtue, character virtues which are states of the non-rational, desiderative part of the soul and intellectual virtues, which are states of the

⁴ Adapted from Reeve (2006, 214).

⁵ A much lengthier defense of this interpretation of the *NE* is presented in Chapter 4.

⁶ See Chapter 2 for lengthy discussion of wish.

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all *NE* translations are from Rowe (2002).

rational part of the soul. The character virtues are states of the desiderative part of the soul; they have to do with pleasure and pain (II.3, 1104b16) and are acquired through habituation (II.1, 1103a18). We call a person moderate, for instance, when he is the sort of person to take pleasure in being moderate. We call him courageous when he is the sort of person to take pleasure in being courageous. In contrast, we call a person fearful when he is pained by something that he ought not be pained by, such as the sight of a mouse. In order to take pleasure in the right sorts of things and become virtuous, we must continuously perform virtuous activities (habituation) (II.1, 1103b22) until we take pleasure in them.⁸ Thus, by saying that character virtue makes our goal correct, Aristotle is saying that the non-rational desiderative part of our soul and not reason is responsible for setting our ends. Reason merely determines the means to those ends.

The Humean flavor of this passage is supported by Aristotle's more general view of moral education. According to that view, in order to be educated as a good person, one must be brought up well and habituated to delight in the correct ends. Once one has these correct ends, one can then later use one's rational powers to achieve these ends. Some argue that this is why Aristotle requires his audience to be well brought up.⁹ They must already desire virtue as an end if lectures about the nature of virtue will have any impact on their lives.¹⁰

In light of these passages, Aristotle's statement that "thought moves nothing, but thought that is for the sake of something and practical does" (VI.2, 1139a32-3) looks to provide further support for a Humean reading. The phrase "thought for the sake of something" appears to describe deliberation and thus that deliberation moves us insofar as it is for an end, which we saw is established by character.

⁸ cf. Burnyeat (1980) for a similar interpretation and see Chapter 4 for a more in-depth discussion of this point.

⁹ Particularly Broadie (1991).

¹⁰ cf. Broadie (1991)

2. Humean Views

Recently, there have been few scholars who have defended Humean interpretations of Aristotle. According to D. J. Allan (1977), Humean interpretations of Aristotle were in vogue at Oxford at the writing of his article (which defends an intellectualist interpretation, discussed below) (72-3). Indeed, it was this Humean climate that motivated Allan to articulate his position. Allan cites the views of two scholars that were influential among his Oxford colleagues, Julius Walter of Jena (1874) and Eduard Zeller (1886). Since then, however, Humean readings have become significantly less popular. A sign of this unpopularity is indicated by Irwin's article, "Aristotle on Reason, Desire, and Virtue." For in his discussion of a Humean interpretation of Aristotle, he cites no secondary sources that actually maintain this view. However, a few examples exist. Burnyeat (1980), in his article on moral education might be seen as advocating for a Humean view. C. D. C. Reeve (2006) presents what he calls a "Transgenerational Humean Model" according to which the desires of a community determine which ends are good and bad (215). And most recently Jessica Moss (2012), in *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*, defends an interpretation of Aristotle notable for its willingness to embrace the Humean elements of Aristotle.

Although there is textual support for these Human accounts, they nonetheless face serious interpretive difficulties. First, they make unclear what Aristotle's aims are in the *NE*. As I will argue in Chapter 4, Aristotle is presenting arguments aimed at rationally appealing to his audience about what ends they should be taking up. He is arguing that they ought to take up contemplation or rational activity as an end instead of honor or character virtue. But if the ends

that they pursue are not established by reason but by their feelings of pleasure and pain, Aristotle's aims would seem to be futile. Second, although Moss does an admirable job reinterpreting a huge number of passages that seem to favor rationalist views, the *Rhetoric* (as I will argue) presents passages that Moss did not consider which suggest that ends can be altered through argument.¹¹ Finally, Aristotle seems to think that having knowledge of what is good and bad for man will effect one's actions. For instance in the *Protrepticus* Aristotle maintains that knowledge of what is good will fundamentally change the way that one lives one's life by altering the goals that one takes to be valuable.¹²

3. Rationalist Views

For at least the last fifty years, commentators have by far favored rationalist interpretations of Aristotle, i.e. interpretations that maintain that reason is antecedent to desire in action and thus responsible for setting our ends. Such a reading was initially championed by D. J. Allan in his article, "Aristotle's Account of the Origin of Moral Principles," which was itself an exegesis of (to Allan's mind) an under appreciated German work titled *Die Zurechnungslehre des Aristotile* by Richard Loening ([1903] 2010).¹³ The view that Allan presents is straightforward and elegant, not out of line with Thomas Nagel's (1970) more recent view of rational motivation. According to Allan, Aristotle quite simply thought that reason itself had the ability to motivate us. As humans we are capable of rationally formulating a conception of the good. When formed, this conception of the good provides us with an end that invokes in us a desire to achieve that end.

¹¹ These arguments in the *Rhetoric* will be discussed at length in Chapter 3 and, to a lesser extent, in Chapter 4.

¹² This will be elaborated on in the concluding section of this dissertation.

¹³ *Aristotle's Theory of Assertion*

Assuming there is nothing prohibiting one from achieving it, this conception of the good and the resulting desire for it motivate one to act (75).

Despite the elegance of Allan's view, it fails to fully grapple with passages of Aristotle's that seem to contradict it. Chief among these passages is Aristotle's claim that "[character] excellence makes the goal correct, while wisdom makes what leads to it correct" (*NE* VI.12, 1144a8-9). Thus, since Allan, authors who have championed rationalist readings have usually aimed to defend a rationalist interpretation in light of these textual difficulties.

One way of combating these difficulties is simply by admitting that Aristotle's claim that character sets ends violates Aristotle's own theory. This is Ross's (1923) suggestion. Of course, such a solution is not particularly satisfying and a more explanatory reading would be preferable.

Hudson (1981) and Sorabji (1980) advocate for a view that, in Hudson's words, "takes moral virtue and practical wisdom to be interdependent" (123, n.14). Most of the aspects of practical reason that had previously been thought to be largely non-rational are in fact rational. Thus, Sorabji argues that although character sets our ends, this is not a mindless process. If one "is to become good-tempered, he must not be habituated to avoid danger, come what may. The habit he must acquire is that of avoiding anger on the right occasions, and of feeling it on the right occasions. . . . As a result, habituation involves assessing the situation and seeing what is called for. So habituation is intimately linked with the kind of intuitive perception that we have been discussing" (126). Thus, Aristotle's claim that character sets ends does not violate his own theory because character is a kind of rationality.

Perhaps the most famous rationalist interpretation is offered by Terrence Irwin (1975) in his article "Aristotle on Reason, Desire, and Virtue." For Irwin, Aristotle's claim that

deliberation is not about ends is simply a way of expressing the fact that before we begin deliberating, we must always have some end in mind from which we are deliberating; it is not meant to claim that we cannot reason or deliberate about our ends. For, indeed, ends are deliberated about. When we deliberate about how to achieve a goal, the conclusion of that deliberation is not always an action. Rather, the conclusion of that deliberation can serve as a goal for a later deliberation. For instance, one might deliberate about how to take a vacation in Rome, but vacationing in Rome was likely the consequence of a previous deliberation about where to vacation, and to vacation was itself likely the conclusion of a deliberation about whether one should vacation at all. For this reason, although we do not deliberate about ends in particular situations, those ends can be products of previous deliberations. Thus, we *do* deliberate about ends.

Wiggins (1975-76) and Cooper (1975) present another option.¹⁴ According to them, there are two ways of taking Aristotle's description of deliberation as being about that which is towards the end. First, it can be read as stating that deliberation is concerned with the means that will forward us to some further end. Second, it can also be read as stating that deliberating is concerned with the constituents of an end. In other words, it can be taken to state that deliberation concerns itself with establishing what constituent ends make up a broader end that guides all of our actions. Interpreted in this latter way as Wiggins and Cooper do, it appears that reason does concern itself with establishing our ends.

Another option, articulated by Taylor (2008), holds that practical reason determines the ends that we pursue while character provides the motivation for those ends. As Taylor writes,

¹⁴ Also see Thorton (1982).

At 1144a6 ff. Aristotle is making the point that the achievement of *eudaimonia* requires excellence both of the practical intellect (*phronesis*) and of motivation (i.e. *ethike arete*). The latter, he says, makes one's aims right, the former makes right the things one does to achieve that aim. On the interpretation which I have proposed, both these things are true, though admittedly they do not amount to a complete account of *phronesis*. On the Humean interpretation, *ethike arete* selects the mark to aim at, *phronesis* the means to it. On my interpretation it is *phronesis* which selects the mark, though Aristotle does not say so here (217).

On Taylor's view, then, reason is responsible for choosing what one considers to be an end and character actually makes that end one's *own* end by providing one the motivation to actually pursue it.

Some scholars have presented rationalist accounts of practical reason that are far less schematic than those just mentioned. On these views, action, deliberation, and choice are components of complex processes and as such are not easily accounted for in isolation. In these cases, character sets ends in the sense that this is the most accurate account in a certain stage of this process. But a wider understanding of the process reveals that reason too plays a role.¹⁵

One such theory is presented by Sara Broadie in *Ethics with Aristotle* (1991). Broadie's complex view is best seen as a rejection of the simple picture of practical reason that Allan presents, illustrating instead a more nuanced account of what actually goes into real-world cases of practical reason.¹⁶ On Allan's view, the ends that we pursue are established before we confront any particular situation and as such are more or less constant from situation to situation.

¹⁵ This description is my own and would not necessarily be accepted by either author below. To be clear, the distinction I am drawing between the readings that follow this paragraph and the ones that came before is primarily meant to help present the theories in a more organized manner. I doubt such a distinction would hold up to closer scrutiny. Trying to flesh out the more schematic view would surely result in equally complex readings. This is especially true of Sorbaji's view which could, arguably, be included among the authors below this paragraph. The main point is that the readings above this paragraph can be presented in a fairly straightforward way while the readings below this paragraph require more description.

¹⁶ In the case of Broadie, Richard Kraut not Allan is picked out as the main opponent. The debate between Kraut and Broadie is complex and involves the broader topic of what she calls the "Grand End View" of Kraut's. Insofar as her objection concerns the model of practical reason that Kraut's view implies, Allan's view stands in as a straightforward description of that model.

But this is not what practical reason or deliberation are like, Broadie argues. In making decisions we do not have a fully formed, broad conception of what our goals are. Rather, our conception or conceptions of the good are typically not worked out and even if they are, they are not fully articulated from situation to situation. Rather, our goals, deliberations and choices are worked out and considered on a case-by-case basis, in a far less systematic, more ramshackle way. We arrive at particular situations with a certain character and set of desires. But it is often not immediately clear which of the goals this situation will allow us to achieve. In order to determine this, we must reflect on the situation with intellect (*nous*), and consider what parts of the situation are relevant to what we want to do. Once this reflection is complete and we have a goal picked out, we deliberate, i.e. consider the steps that will help us achieve that goal. Through the thought process of deliberation, we might realize that there is a better goal that we might achieve, or that acting for this goal would upset our ability to achieve another goal that is important to us, or we might realize that in order to achieve this goal would put us in danger. For each of these reasons, we might drop the goal and either pursue another goal or else give up on deliberation all together. Thus, reason does affect the ends we pursue because reason is always in dialogue with desire, reflecting on, considering the consequences of, or abandoning the goals that desire picks out.

Additionally, Kraut (2012, 553-5) suggests that philosophical reflection can alter which ends we pursue. According to Kraut, philosophical thinking about the good can practically affect our actions. Kraut is clear that such reflection does not give us a decision procedure. Deliberation requires much more than a philosophical grasp of the good will give us. For instance,

deliberating well requires foreseeing consequences, imagining alternatives, etc. “But,” Kraut writes,

in addition to these skills, one must also bring to one’s decision-making the general framework that only a philosophical training can provide—a framework in which one seeks something good in every situation, recognizes that some goods are worth choosing over others, that some goods are not to be sought without limit, and that some are to be welcomed only when they are combined with others (554).

Putting this in terms of ends, Kraut’s point is that while philosophical reflection is not all that is needed to hit on the right end, it is a part of what is needed to do so. In particular, it can affect the structure of the ends that we pursue, e.g. by determining that we pursue one end at the expense of another.¹⁷

4. A Different Kind of Rationalist

In addition to these rationalist readings of Aristotle, there is another category of rationalist reading made popular by John McDowell (2009). McDowell identifies *NE VI* as introducing two fundamentally different ways of knowing, scientific and practical, with their own unique modes of acquisition and affective states. Scientific knowledge is closely akin to traditional contemporary conceptions of knowledge: a true belief that is best represented in propositional form. In contrast, practical knowledge or *phronēsis* is identified as a kind of knowledge arrived at through practical pursuits. It is a kind of skill that one gains through having lots of experience performing certain activities in the world. As McDowell puts it, this skill is the “intelligible upshot of being habituated into delighting in the sorts of actions that exemplify the excellences of character” (50). It is akin to the practical knowledge that one gains through playing the piano. When one has played a significant amount of piano, one gains the skill of “reading” the keyboard

¹⁷ I will have more to say about this sort of reflection in Chapter 4 and the Conclusion.

in a way that allows one to skillfully pick the right notes and play well. In having this skill, one need not know what a time signature or scale is, only how to play it. Similarly when one has lots of experience performing virtuous action, one gains the ability to “read” situations in a way that will allow one to determine the right thing to do. That is to say, one is able to see “[situations] in light of the correct conception of doing well” (49). In this case, in order to act well one need not have propositional knowledge about the good for man and how the good life is constructed. What matters is that one have the skill to ‘feel out’ what to do in any particular situation.

Because this practical knowledge is the result of accumulated experience, these theories can be used to make sense of Aristotle’s claim that character sets ends. A good upbringing that habituates one to take pleasure in the right sorts of things and to be pained by the right sorts of things, instills virtuous character states. These states attune one to what is right and wrong which produce in one a cognitive skill that allows one to discern what the right and wrong ends to pursue are any particular situation. Thus, for McDowell, character does set ends. But this turns out to not be a Humean position because character is imbued with a kind of rationality. As McDowell provocatively suggests, character is not separable from practical wisdom (51).

5. Some Problems

Despite the popularity of rationalist readings, there are a number of objections that can be raised against large swathes of the literature which will guide the view that I present in this dissertation. In general, the rationalist views are guilty of over emphasizing the rational aspects of Aristotle’s practical philosophy while at the same time underplaying what are very clear

Humean predilections. For instance, despite their attempts, few of these views adequately provide interpretations of Aristotle's claims our ends are made right by character, a state of the non-rational desiderative part of the soul. Take Taylor's account, which maintains that reason can choose our ends while character provides the motivation to pursue those ends in action. It is true that on this view we can make sense of the statement that character makes our ends correct, deliberation what leads to them. For there is a general sense in which character makes our ends correct. But if this is true in the way that Taylor suggests, Aristotle's statement is extremely misleading. What would motivate Aristotle to bluntly state that *character* makes the goal correct without mentioning that reason ultimately makes the goal correct? Taylor does not say and this would seem to be a significant oversight on Aristotle's part. A similar objection can be raised against Irwin. According to Irwin, ends can simply be the conclusions of prior deliberations. Character grasps the right ends for Irwin because the good person reasons (wishes) for the right end (571). But if so, then in what sense does character make our ends right, deliberation what leads to them, as Aristotle claimed? If Irwin is correct, there may be some sense in which character sets ends—one's character desires correct ends. But Aristotle's statement about character would again turn out to be very misleading. For it seems it would be more accurate to say that deliberation is about both means and ends.

Wiggins and Cooper commit a similar error, I think, although in their case it is more dire. On their view we might say that when Aristotle says that deliberation is concerned with means, character with ends, he is speaking of deliberation in one sense, namely as means-end reasoning. According to this sort of reasoning, the end is happiness and established by character whereas the means are the particular ends that constitute happiness which are established by reason. This is

objectionable for a number of reasons. First, it makes Aristotle's comment about character setting ends trivial since *everyone* desires happiness. The more informative ends that distinguish people and determine the course of their lives are established by reason. If this is the case then again, Aristotle's comment that *character* is concerned with ends, deliberation only what leads to them, seems highly misleading. For, if Wiggins and Cooper are correct, reason also sets ends. Moreover, Wiggins's and Cooper's reading commits them to reading the *NE* as arguing for an inclusive end, i.e. an end composed of many smaller ends. However, if we want to keep Book X as part of the *NE* (as I do), this is clearly not true. The activity of contemplation is the highest good for man.¹⁸

A different objection can be raised against the McDowellian account of practical reason. In order to give character states, states of the non-rational desiderative part of the soul, the cognitive ability to read situations in light of one's conception of the good, McDowell must largely erase the distinction between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul. As such, McDowell's reading is quite plainly at odds with Aristotle's contention that the character virtues are virtues on the non-rational soul while the intellectual virtues are virtues of the rational part of the soul. This interpretation ends up attributing the character virtues and one of the intellectual virtues, *phronēsis*, to the same part of the soul.

In addition to these objections is a final difficulty, raised in Chapter 2, which applies to all intellectualist accounts generally. In the *De Anima's* discussion of thought and perception, Aristotle describes how thought receives its ideas from perception. In perception we receive forms of objects, and those forms make our thoughts about the world possible. Thus, our ability to think of a triangle is made possible by the form of a triangle in our soul which is received

¹⁸ I will have a little more to say against inclusivist readings in Chapter 4.

through our having perceived triangles in the past. And further, our idea of red is made possible by the form of red that rests in our soul, received from past perceptions of red. This is the same for all thoughts, including those about the good. On Aristotle's account of perception, just as the eyes are able to perceive color, so too are they able to see objects as good to pursue based on the kinds of activities that have been pleasant in the past. Thus, in this case too, our perception of what is good makes it possible for us to *think* of objects as good. This has serious consequences for thought. For just as we are not seriously able to think of poppies as anything but orange because they are perceived as orange, we will not be able to seriously think of anything as good that has not been presented to us as good by perception.

If this account of motivation and thought is correct, even in the cases where Aristotle seems to say that reason determines which ends we pursue, our thoughts are nonetheless constrained by perception which is determined by pleasant experience and desire. So, for instance, Broadie maintains that in particular situations, our character presents us with certain ends that the situation will allow us to pursue. Reason, she thinks, can then reflect on these ends, allowing us to control what action we perform. Reason can pick one of the ends out and pursue it, or it can throw all of the ends away and choose to follow a different end, or it can decline to act on any of the ends at all. But what the *De Anima* reveals is that when one rationally considers alternative ends, these thoughts are ultimately based on past perceptions, and it is these perceptions, not reason, which will determine whether a particular end intellectually seems good to us. Thus, even in cases where it *seems* as though reason is working to determine our ends, the *De Anima*'s psychology gives us reason to think that it is in fact perception that is guiding reason.

Moreover, this also presents a difficulty for Kraut, who thought that rational reflection could alter the ends that we pursue. As I will argue in Chapter 2, one of the reasons why perception establishes our ends and not reason is because perception of an object as pleasant provides us with the motivation to actually pursue that end. Independent of perception, thought can formulate any end it wants. But if an end is to become one's own, one must also *see* it as good, and perception of the good seems to be determined by pleasant experience, not rationality. Thus, assuming this psychology is correct, if reflection on our lives is to have any influence over our ends, it must, somehow, influence our perception of those ends and Kraut has not indicated how this is possible.

6. Another Way

What, then, is to be done? Both sorts of interpretations have significant shortcomings. While these shortcomings might not be decisive, a more ideal account would be able to comfortably accommodate both the rationalist and Humean strains in Aristotle's ethics. Such a view would be a hybrid between the two. It would maintain that character and hence desire sets our ends while also showing that the intellect and philosophy can have a deep impact on our lives. I believe that such a view exists and in what follows I will give an account of it. The rationalist views surveyed above are largely confined to Aristotle's ethics and largely focused on the concepts of deliberation, wish, choice, and *phronēsis*. But as we saw in the last objection above, a reconsideration of Aristotle's psychology makes it difficult to tell whether or not Aristotle means to say that reason establishes ends in these passages.

Moss has maintained that if we accept such a psychology, then we must accept a Humean reading of Aristotle. I will argue that we do not. I will present a psychology similar to Moss's account on which our ends are initially established by what we perceive to be good which is determined by past pleasant experience. However, I will argue that the *Rhetoric* shows us that our ends can indirectly be altered by reason via perception. Through argument, reflection, and rhetorically adorned language, reason can alter the content of our perception and thus alter what ends we see as good to pursue. On my view, ends are still, by and large, set by our character through perception. However, this view allows the possibility of leading a more rationally directed life. Reason, on this view, can alter our ends through a kind of struggle against and negotiation with our desires.

In formulating this view, I have aimed to meet three broad constraints that I believe any account of Aristotle's account of practical reason should meet. First, it should take at face value as much as possible Aristotle's claim that character "makes the goal correct," while reason "makes what leads to it correct" (VI.12, 1144a8-9). Second, it should maintain the divisions in the Aristotelian conception of the soul. In particular, it should treat perception as a non-rational faculty. Third, it should take at face value Aristotle's suggestion that engaging in rational activity, particularly philosophy, can alter what one does with one's life. In meeting these constraints, the resulting view is one that cuts across the traditional divide in practical reason between Kantian interpretations and Humean interpretations. In line with Aristotle's conception of human beings as creatures that are both animalistic and god like, this view demonstrates how this complex nature is presented in the most essential elements of practical human life.

7. Summary of Chapters

The four chapters that follow are broadly divided into two parts. The first two chapters articulate an account of moral psychology that appears strikingly Humean. I maintain that Aristotle's account of motivation in the *De Motu Animalium* applies to both human and non-human animals and is the same account of motivation that he assumes in the *NE* in his discussion of action there. According to this account we are motivated to take as an end what we perceive via our sense organs to be good. Moreover, I argue that what we perceive to be good is developed out of pleasant experiences. The result is an account on which our non-rational desire for pleasure determines our ends via perception. In Chapter 2, I emphasize the way in which perception of the good determines what we think to be good. Because we must think in terms of perceptions (*phantasmata*) and because part of the content of these perceptions is the perception of an object as good or bad, the intellect by-and-large accepts this presentation of the object as good (or bad) and pursues (or avoids) it.

The second set of chapters investigates the extent to which reason can affect perception and through it, our ends. In Chapter 3, I argue that the *Rhetoric* demonstrates that reason can affect the ends that we pursue through persuasive argument and that it presents an account of how reason can do so. It turns out that this latter account centrally involves perception. With a well constructed speech that contains both good argumentation and evocative stylistic flourishes, an orator can bring images before his audience's eyes. In doing so he can cause it to perceive objects in a new way, thereby changing the audience's mind about those objects. This account of persuasion is especially important in the case of ends. For, if our ends are established by what we perceive to be good and reason can alter how we perceive things, then reason can alter our ends.

In light of this account, it turns out that Moss is incorrect in thinking that our perceptions of the good are always determined by past pleasant experiences. Perception can also be determined by reason itself and thus so too can our ends.

In Chapter 4, I argue that the *Nicomachean Ethics* provides an example of how this sort of persuasive argument can be used to convince people to take up new ends. In the *NE*, I maintain that Aristotle's aim is practical. He means to effect a change in the ends that his audience pursues, ideally persuading it to take up contemplation as an end. Throughout his argument, I show that Aristotle uses many of the argumentative and persuasive techniques that he himself suggests the orator use in the *Rhetoric*.

In concluding the dissertation, I bring up a shortcoming of this dissertation and briefly suggest how it can be extended to overcome this shortcoming. Overall, my dissertation presents a hybrid view of how our ends are established. It maintains that by-and-large character is responsible for establishing our ends. However, it also maintains that in certain isolated instances, reason can affect those ends by making alterations to what our character causes us to perceive as pleasant and painful. The shortcoming of this final view is that it only demonstrates how the reason of *another person* can alter our perceptions and desires. Thus, in the final part of the conclusion I argue that the moral psychology described in this dissertation can be used to show how one can alter one's ends using one's own rational capacity.

PART 1

PERCEPTION AND THOUGHT IN ACTION

CHAPTER 1

ANIMAL MOTIVATION

[1] “all animals have at least one of the senses, touch, and for that which has sense-perception there is both pleasure and pain and both the pleasant and the painful: and where there are these, there is also wanting: for this is a desire for that which is pleasant” (*DA* II.3, 414b3-6).¹⁹

[2] “This, then, is the way that animals are impelled to move and act: the proximate reason for movement is desire, and this comes to be either through sense-perception or through *phantasia* and thought” (*De Motu* 7, 701a34-36).²⁰

Taken together, these two passages give a straightforward account of animal motivation, where, notably, “animal” is meant to include human and non-human animals.²¹ Through sense

¹⁹ ᾧ δ’ αἴσθησις ὑπάρχει, τούτῳ ἡδονή τε καὶ λύπη καὶ τὸ ἡδύ τε καὶ λυπηρόν, οἷς δὲ ταῦτα, καὶ ἐπιθυμία· τοῦ γὰρ ἡδέος ὄρεξις αὕτη.

All *De Anima* (*DA*) translations by Hamlyn (1993) unless otherwise noted.

²⁰ οὕτως μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι καὶ πράττειν τὰ ζῷα ὁρμῶσι, τῆς μὲν ἐσχάτης αἰτίας τοῦ κινεῖσθαι ὀρέξεως οὐσης, ταύτης δὲ γινομένης ἢ δι’ αἰσθήσεως ἢ διὰ φαντασίας καὶ νοήσεως.

All *De Motu Animalium* (*De Motu*) translations by Nussbaum (1985) unless otherwise noted.

²¹ That animal is meant to include both humans and non-humans is evident from [1] as Aristotle makes clear that he is talking about the sensory apparatus of all animals. In the next chapter, Aristotle goes on to say that it is necessary to find a definition of the parts of the soul responsible for these functions, thus letting it stand that these definitions will be true of all of those animals that have that particular sort of soul. Thus, all of those animals with perceptual capabilities will have the sort of soul that Aristotle describes.

Furthermore, the *De Motu* opens by noting that it is an investigation of all animal movement: “Elsewhere we have investigated the movement of animals after their various kinds, the differences between them, and the causes of their particular characters (for some animals fly, some swim, some walk, others move in various other ways); there remains an investigation of the common cause of any sort of animal movement whatsoever” (698a1-6). The work to which Aristotle is likely referring here is *Parts of Animals*, and in his discussion there, humans are included among those animals investigated. For instance, in his discussion of which method to follow, Aristotle writes, “One may wonder which courses to follow. For on the one hand it may be urged that as the ultimate species represent substances, it will be well, if practicable, to examine these ultimate species separately, as Man, and Bird—for this genus contains species: about every indivisible species, then, e.g. Sparrow, Crane, and the like. On the other hand, however, this course would involve repeated mention of the same attribute, as the same attribute is common to many

perception (*aisthēsis*), animals perceive something that is pleasant. This pleasant perception provokes a desire, and this desire impels movement. But, this straightforward account raises a puzzle. Perception is of things that are present to us. Yet what impels movement is often something we are not presently experiencing. For instance, a lion is impelled by the delicious taste of the zebra at a time when it is merely looking at the zebra and not tasting it. How then can the animal *perceive* an object as pleasant that is not now giving it pleasure? If Aristotle's account of animal motion is to be saved, an answer must be given. I argue that in all cases of animal motion, perception proper (*aisthēsis*) does not perceive the object as pleasant. Another faculty, imagination (*phantasia*), does. I argue that *phantasia* enriches our present perceptions by imbuing them with related information from past perceptions. This extra information allows the lion to, e.g., *see* the zebra as pleasant because it has experienced the pleasant *taste* of zebra in the past. This pleasant perception then causes in us animals a desire that impels us to move to taste the object.

This account is distinct from the two traditional sorts of interpretations of perception and *phantasia* in the *De Anima*. The first of these views, what might be called “narrow views” takes *phantasia* to be an explanation of what Schofield (1979) calls “non-paradigmatic sensory

species, and so far would be somewhat irrational and tedious. Perhaps, then, it will be best to treat generically the universal attributes of the groups that have a common nature and contain closely allied subordinate forms, whether they are groups recognized by popular usage, such as Birds and Fishes, or groups not popularly known by a common appellation, but composed of closely allied subordinate groups; and only to deal individually with the attributes of a single species, when such species—man, for instance, and any other such, if such there be—are not of that sort” (PA I.4, 644a28-644b8. Trans. Ogle (1984)). Thus, Aristotle goes on to discuss certain features common to many sorts of animals (homogeneous parts of animals) (645b2-646a28). Some of these are common to the group of animals in general, namely perception, bones, sinews, flesh and blood (647a14-44). The first line of the *De Motu*, then, indicates that it is going to be following the same methodology, talking about animal motion in general, as it relates to both human and non-human motion. Indeed, in *De Motu* 7, the chapter covering motivation from which [2] is taken, Aristotle gives examples of particularly human seeming actions (“for example, whenever one thinks that every man ought to walk, and that one is a man oneself, straightaway one walks” (7, 701a12-3)) and then directly transitions to talking about movement of animals in general (701b2), indicating that this account is applicable to both these more rational human actions and to non-human animal action.

experiences,” i.e. cases where we perceive something that is not there. These includes cases of non-veridical sense perception and dreaming.²² The second sort of view, what might be called “broad views,” takes *phantasia* to be a general capacity that works in conjunction with perception. This includes Wedin (1988) who maintains that *phantasia* is responsible for the presentation of all perceptual images and Nussbaum (1978) who argues that *phantasia* is responsible for the interpretation of our sense perceptions.

My view presents an interpretation of *phantasia* distinct from both sorts of views. Similar to the narrow views and unlike the broad views, I maintain that *phantasia* presents us with perceptual objects that we are not currently perceiving. But, similar to broad views and unlike narrow views, I maintain that *phantasia* does not only do so in cases of non-veridical perception; it operates in *all* of our perceptions, enriching our perceptual content with information that we once perceived in the past. Thus all of our perceptions are imbued with imaginative content (*phantasmata*) that increase the perceptual capacity’s cognitive abilities. This account of *phantasia* is not unprecedented. Although Victor Caston presents *phantasia* as explaining error in perception and thought about non-existent objects, the account that he ends up with can be seen to be similar to mine, although it is arrived at in a very different way.²³ More similar to my account are recent views offered by Lorenz (2009) and Moss (2012). Like me, both authors are focused on presenting *phantasia* as playing a central role in explaining movement and motivation. What distinguishes my view is its reluctance to make *phantasia* (and perception more broadly) overly rational. Unlike Lorenz, who claims that *phantasia* allows animals to “envision prospects,” I believe that *phantasia* can play its role simply by allowing us to see

²² For such views see Schofield (1979), Modrak (1986) and Caston (1998). Caston sees *phantasia* as explaining non-veridical perception as well as cases of thought about non-existent entities (as well as thoughts of existing entities).

²³ Caston (1996) and Caston (1998).

objects as pleasant. Moreover, Moss controversially maintains that in playing this role, the perceptual faculty is itself responsible for producing universal concepts. In contrast to her, I maintain that *phantasia* can explain how perception motivates using generalized perceptions rather than full-blown universals.

In what follows, I will begin with an account of perception (*aisthēsis*) that develops two seemingly contradictory features. First, I argue that the text indicates that *aisthēsis* moves us by perceiving things as pleasant. However, I will then argue that, strictly speaking, the perceptual faculty (*aisthētikon*) is not equipped to perceive pleasure in the manner that motivation requires. I will resolve this tension by maintaining that *phantasia* aids *aisthēsis* by imbuing it with information from related past sensory experiences. Much of the chapter will be focused on this resolution. In particular, by looking at a wide range of Aristotle's treatises, I will show that past sensory experiences (*phantasmata*) are saved in our souls with a particular structure that helps to explain how *phantasia* enriches *aisthēsis*. Overall, this structure will allow us to understand how one can be motivated by the pleasant taste of an object that one is merely looking at.

1. *Aisthēsis*

As we learn from [2] above, animals—both human and non-human—are impelled to move by desire through *aisthēsis* or through *phantasia* and thought. Setting thought (and *phantasia* insofar as it is related to thought) aside for now, we can ask, how does *aisthēsis* evoke the desire that motivates movement? [1] gives us an answer: pleasure. From this, we can infer a proto-theory about motivation. *Aisthēsis* is capable of presenting objects as pleasant. When it does so, this pleasant perception evokes in us a desire to act and we act. But is *aisthēsis* in fact

capable of so representing objects? I believe that it comes close. It can present to us perceptions organized into discrete objects and it can also present these perceived objects as pleasant. However, as we shall see, this will not be quite enough for motivation. In order to see this, let us begin by looking at the sort of entities that *aisthēsis* is capable of perceiving. *Aisthēsis* is the word used by Aristotle to refer to sense-perception proper. That is, it refers to the case where a sense object is acting on the body's sense organs, creating a sense impression (*aisthēmata*) in the soul. Moreover, perception on this account, although responsible for an amount of cognition greater than many contemporary accounts of perception allow, is nonetheless limited to cognizing a certain number of sensual qualities. Aristotle's discussion of *aisthēsis* is broken into five parts, corresponding to the five senses: taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell (*DA* II.6-12).²⁴ According to Aristotle each sense has a corresponding organ that is responsible for sensing its respective "special object" (τὸ ἰδίον) (II.6, 418a12-15). What Aristotle means is that each sense is materially constituted in such a way that it is made to receive (or, in Aristotle's language, "take on the form of") a particular kind of property. This is because the sense organs are magnitudes (μεγέθη) (II.12, 424a26) or ratios (λόγοι) (III.2, 426a29). These ratios and magnitudes can be affected by certain sort of sense objects. Thus, when colors act upon the eye via the medium of air, the eye is a certain sort of magnitude that is able to receive these colors (II.7).²⁵ When tastes come into contact with the tongue, the tongue is so constituted

²⁴ In Aristotle's technical terminology, these are five ways that one can pass from being a potential perceiver to being an actual perceiver (*DA* II.5).

²⁵ Note that this way of putting it, although false according to our current theories of vision, accords with what Aristotle believes, namely that objects in the world are painted with color, so to speak, and that this color acts on the eye by coloring the invisible medium that fills the space between the eye and the object. As Aristotle writes, "Colour sets in movement what is transparent, e.g. the air, and that, extending continuously from the object of the organ, sets the latter in movement" (*DA* 2.7, 419a13-15).

to receive these tastes, and so on.²⁶ Aristotle calls these objects of perception the special objects of perception then because they are unique to each sense.

In addition to the special objects of sensation, the individual senses are also able to perceive common sensibles, i.e. perceptible properties that are detectable by two or more senses. The common sensibles include “movement, rest, figure, magnitude, number, and unity” (*DA* III.1, 425a16-7). Explaining why and how the senses can perceive these properties would take us far beyond the scope of this chapter. However, without delving too deeply into the details, there is a straightforward account that one can supply to explain why properties such as these are considered common.²⁷ The reason is because Aristotle does not think the special objects are perceived as bare properties. They are seen as having certain shapes, sizes, distances, etc. For instance, Aristotle describes colors as belonging to objects: “[colour] is not visible without light, but the colour of each thing is always seen in light” (2.7, 418b2-4). And he describes objects that “appear fiery or shining” (2.7, 419a2-3). Color, then, seems to be described as belonging to and attached to particular objects, and color is what makes these objects visible as discreet objects. This strongly implies that the visual capacity thereby also sees figure, for the seen color has a certain shape. A similar story could be told about the other properties. For instance, in addition to a figure, seen objects have a number, unity, magnitude, and a spatial location. Felt objects have a figure, a magnitude, a spatial location, etc. It seems then that the senses, in being

²⁶ Vision, hearing, and smell require a medium to be present between the sense organ and the object of sense. The objects of touch and taste can be sensed directly.

²⁷ The account that follows is in accord with Aristotle’s claim that both the special and common sensibles are sensible *per se*, where that means directly perceivable by the sense organ. This view has been held by a number of commentators. Owens (1982, 225) argues that this view (or else one very similar to it) is consistently held by the tradition of Greek commentators as well as Rodier (1900), Tricot (1934), and Kahn (1966).

able to perceive their respective special objects, also perceive common objects, i.e. those properties of special objects that are common to two or more special objects.²⁸

Back to the matter at hand, we can now see that *aisthēsis* itself is responsible for perceiving the special and common sensibles. But in addition, we know that the particular sense organs are unified into a single central or primary sense-faculty. As Aristotle argues, that there is a single sense faculty is indicated by the fact that we can perceive differences between two kinds of special objects. As evidence for this, Aristotle cites the fact that we can discriminate (*krinein*) between sweet and white which indicates that “both must be evident to one thing” at a single time (426b18-19). Moreover, this one thing is not independent of the sense faculty. That is to say, this discrimination is not the result of the intellectual faculty processing perceptual data, nor is it the result of some other faculty independent of perception and intellect. Rather, it is part of the sense-faculty itself. For, as Aristotle concludes, “since we judge both white and sweet and each of the objects of perception in reference to each other, by what do we perceive also that they differ? This must be by perception; for they are objects of perception” (*DA* III.2, 426b8). When the central sense-organ perceives the special sense objects via the individual sense organs, the information perceived is organized to form a unified perception by the sense-faculty itself.

This is reinforced by an earlier passage:

[3] The senses perceive each other’s special-objects incidentally, not in so far as they are themselves but in so far as they form a unity, when sense-perception simultaneously takes place in respect of the same object, e.g. in respect of bile that it is bitter and yellow (for it is not the task of any further {perception} at any rate to say that both are one) (III.2, 425a22-24).

²⁸ Looking ahead, two of these common properties are unique, motion and rest, as they require the perception of time. As a result, in order to “notice” these common sensibles, the sensory faculty must be enriched with another ability, *phantasia*, that allows for the storage and recall of perceptions.

So when we are looking at the apple we are eating, the sense faculty organizes the discrete perceptions of sweet and red into a single perceptual object.²⁹ The upshot of this is that our cognition of our empirical experience with the world is largely attributable to perception alone.

2. Perception, Pleasure, and Motivation

In addition to the perception of special and common sensibles, there is another aspect of perceiving that is necessary for understanding perception's role in motivation. If perception is capable of motivation, it is not enough that one perceive special and common sensibles; in addition, there must be some normative information that spurs action. What might this additional information be? In *De Motu Animalium*, Aristotle is clear: what motivates is pleasure and pain. Aristotle writes, "...the object we pursue or avoid in the field of action is, as has been explained, the origin of movement, and upon the thought and imagination of this there necessarily follows a

²⁹ In addition to the special and common sense-objects, both of which are perceived "directly," Aristotle lists a third kind of sense object, what are called incidental perceptibles. The definitive example of incidental sense-perception that Aristotle gives is the following: "An object of perception is spoken of as incidental, e.g. if the white thing were the son of Diates; for you perceive this incidentally, since this which you perceive is incidental to the white thing" (418a20-23). There has been significant disagreement about what incidental perception is, although nearly all accounts have recognized that strictly relying on the functions of the perceptual faculty is not enough. Theories have ranged from thinking that it is thought, to thinking that it is experience, to thinking that it is *phantasia*. Among those who think that it is *phantasia*, there is still more disagreement, as commentators have argued for significantly divergent accounts of *phantasia*.

Speaking generally, my view can in general be categorized alongside those theories that take incidental perception to be *phantasia*. However, strictly speaking, I think that this is incorrect. The chapters where incidental perception appears, Aristotle always talks about it in relation to *aisthēsis*; he never claims that it is accomplished through the operation of some other function. This is even true in the chapter on *phantasia*. Thus, if we are to understand incidental perception in relation to *aisthēsis* alone, what might incidental perception be? Looking one more time and the relation between special sensibles and common sensibles will give us an answer. The special sensibles are the perceptual properties properly perceived by each sense. In contrast, the common sensibles seem to be perceived only because they happen to be properties of the special sensibles. They are, so to speak, perceptual free riders. I think that we can describe incidental perceptibles as another sort of free rider. Recall that in addition to receiving information from each of the senses, *aisthēsis* also organizes these perceptions into unities. One of the consequences of this organization is that these properties are organized to constitute discreet objects. Thus, out of these functions of *aisthēsis* results, incidentally, the perception of objects. Now, as it happens (and as I will argue below) these objects can be conceived of in a variety of ways, both intellectually and (I will argue) through *phantasia*. But, considered strictly as an 'object' of *aisthēsis* alone, incidental perception is simply what results from the perceptual organ organizing the perceptions into unities.

heating or chilling. For what is painful we avoid, what is pleasing we pursue, and anything painful or pleasing is generally speaking accompanied by a chill and heating” (8, 701b34-702a2). In other words, the objects that we are motivated to pursue are those that are perceived as pleasant or painful. Once such an object has been perceived this creates a change in the “organic parts” by heating or chilling them, which is accompanied by a desire; once this occurs, one straightaway acts (8, 702a15,18).

Of course, this leaves it open that there could be other motivating factors in motion aside from pleasure and pain or that there could be some further cause of action prior to pleasure and pain. Aristotle admittedly does not explicitly state that movement is always and only motivated by pleasure and pain themselves. However, in further investigating movement, no other ultimate source of motivation in perception is forthcoming. This is likely because what Aristotle seems to be presenting here is *the* account of how motivation operates. If it operated in some other way, it we would expect him to say so. Moreover, if desire is to play a role in movement as Aristotle believes it does, pleasure must be involved. For, as Aristotle says,

whatever has a sense has the capacity for pleasure and pain and therefore has pleasant and painful objects present to it, and wherever these are present, there is desire, for desire is just appetite of what is pleasant (*DA* II.3, 414b5-6).

In any case, what does become apparent is that if pleasure is the ultimate source of motivation, it is perfectly suited to fill that role. Pleasure and pain, it turns out, is central to perception since it accompanies the *aisthēmata* perceived by the senses. Thus the sound of a well-played cello received by one’s ear is not only deep and clear but also pleasant. Consequently, the best way to understand movement is as being motivated by the feelings of pleasure and pain occasioned by perception.

The textual basis for the relation between *aisthēsis* and pleasure/pain was already indicated in [1] at the start of this chapter: “where there is sense-perception, there is also both pain and pleasure” (413b23). The reason sense-perception is accompanied by pleasure and pain is because in perceiving sense-objects, the sense organs undergo physical changes. The individual senses are kinds of proportions and the perception of objects changes these proportions. Different sorts of proportions cause pleasure and pain in the sense organ. For instance, consonant proportions cause pleasure whereas excessive proportions destroy the sense and cause pain. Aristotle writes,

[3] ...things are pleasant when brought pure and unmixed in proportion, e.g. the high-pitched, sweet, or salt, for they are pleasant then; but in general a mixture, a consonance, is more pleasant than either high or low pitch, [and for taste the more pleasant is that which is capable of being further warmed or cooled. The sense is a proportion; and objects in excess dissolve or destroy it (*DA* III.2, 426a27).

Given this, we can see that pleasure is intrinsic to *aisthēsis*. Sensations (*aisthēmata*), as we saw in section 1 above, are magnitudes or ratios. The eyes, for instance, are able to perceive color because they are magnitudes capable of being affected by colors. We now learn, though, that along with color (or sound or touch or taste or smell) also comes feelings of pleasure and pain such that colors themselves, along with all other perceptual objects, are themselves pleasant and painful. The reason for this is intrinsic to the way perception occurs. Because perception affects us physically, this physical sensation necessarily also causes a pleasure or pain. Often we are not aware of these pleasures and pains because they are too minimal to take notice of (*MA* 8, 792a2). But we do take notice when they are exceptionally pleasant or painful, the most extreme of which is when the object destroys the organ. Thus, pleasure and pain are intrinsically part of all

of our sensations. Some of those sensations are experienced as pleasant, others as painful, and others are neutral and experienced as neither pleasant nor painful.

3. A Problem With Motivation

This account of perception presents us with many of the elements necessary for explaining motivation. As we have seen, movement is motivated by a desire for pleasure and a desire to avoid pain. Moreover, we have also seen that pleasure and pain are a part of our perceptual experience. In addition to receiving information typically considered perceptual, such as colors, tastes, sounds, etc., the content of our perceptions (i.e. the *aisthēmata*) are also pleasant and painful. Putting these elements together, we might give the following account of motivation: when one has a perceptual experience of an object that is pleasant, this experience invokes a desire for that pleasant object which then impels one to act. For instance, imagine that a lion sees a zebra. In addition to seeing a black and white zebra shaped object, the zebra also appears pleasant to the lion for it is a potential meal. This pleasant perception invokes a desire in the lion which is finally impelled to act for it.

However, there are at least two problems with the account as it stands so far. Looking at the account of pleasure above, if the lion is to get pleasure from the sight of the Zebra, that pleasure must be the result of the visual data that the lion is receiving. But it seems dubious to maintain that every time a lion, or any other organism capable of perception, is motivated by a visual perception, that the visual information itself (i.e. the colors that are the *aisthēmata* perceived by the eyes) must also be perceived to be pleasant. For it seems that one is often motivated to pursue an object that one sees regardless of how pleasant one's vision of that object

is. Thus, there must be a way of understanding how perception is pleasant without having to stubbornly maintain that in every case a vision directs us to pursue some object, that vision itself is visually pleasant.

The second problem is that even if we were willing to stubbornly maintain that the lion's (and other similarly situated organisms') vision is pleasant, this would still not be enough to explain such cases of motivation. For if the lion's visual perception of the zebra were pleasant, this pleasure would not motivate the lion to do anything more. The lion would already have the pleasure. At best, such a pleasure would motivate the lion to continue looking so that he could maintain the visual pleasure. What likely moves the lion to act for the zebra is the perception that the zebra is delicious. But our current theory is not rich enough to allow for such an explanation. The lion is *not* eating the zebra so the perception of eating the zebra and the pleasures associated with it are not part of the lion's cognition as it looks upon the prey. Therefore, as best, this sort of visual pleasure would motivate the lion to simply look longer. It would not explain why the lion and other similarly situated animals actually move to pursue the zebra.

In what follows, I will argue that Aristotle's account of perception proper (*aisthēsis*) is enriched by the closely related notion of *phantasia* (usually translated "imagination").³⁰ This will explain why Aristotle so often mentions *phantasia* alongside *aisthēsis* in contexts where he is discussing movement and action. *Phantasia* is capable of presenting images of perceptual objects not immediately available to one's senses. By presenting these images alongside ordinary sense

³⁰ This translation has long been controversial and often seen as an impediment to a true understanding of Aristotle's notion of *phantasia*. The contemporary "imagination" has too many meanings and connotations not part of the Greek notion of *phantasia* and similarly, *phantasia* has meanings not associated with "imagination." This difference in meaning between the English and Greek affects my account below. In English, "imagination" is often associated with the ability to call things to mind that are not real and merely imaginary. In contrast, I will maintain that one of *phantasia*'s primary functions is to call to mind perceptions that are real and a part of our regular perceptual experience. Thus, rather than use the usual translation, I will keep *phantasia* in its transliterated Greek form.

perception, *aisthēsis*, *phantasia* gives us a way of explaining how a wide range of pleasant perceptions can be a part of a merely visual perception. Ultimately, this will allow us to explain why the pleasure of eating an animal can motivate even when the interactions with it are merely visual.

4. *Phantasia* and the presentation of images

De Anima III.3 is arguably Aristotle's most definitive discussion of *phantasia*.³¹ In it, he clearly demonstrates two of its key features. First, he shows that *phantasia* can operate independently of perception. Second, he shows that the objects of *phantasia*, called *phantasmata* (images),³² can affect us in a way similar to perceptions. Together, these properties will allow us to demonstrate that *phantasia* is capable of enriching our perceptual experience with further content that is qualitatively similar to *aisthēmata*. The result is a richer perceptual experience capable of presenting the kind of normative information needed to explain action.

DA III.3 demonstrates these features in tandem. One of the aims of *DA* III.3 is to argue that *phantasia* is a unique function of the soul and not reducible to the function of perception.

Phantasia, says Aristotle, is “that in virtue of which an image [*phantasma*] arises for us, excluding metaphorical uses of the term” (III.3, 428a1-5).³³ For example, when images appear to

³¹ Although Aristotle refers to and relies on *phantasia*, *phantasmata*, and their cognates extensively outside of the *De Anima*, III.3 is Aristotle's formal introduction of *phantasia* as a constituent of his considered psychological theory.

³² *Phantasmata*, plural of *phantasma*, is traditionally translated “images.” Like the translation of *phantasia*, translating *phantasmata* is fraught and in this case the standard translation is particularly difficult. As we will see below, *phantasmata* are fundamentally connected to the objects of perception (*aisthēmata*) and contain the same kind of information as sense objects. As such, while *phantasmata* may be images, they can also be sounds, smells, etc. For this reason, I have elected to leave *phantasmata* in its untranslated, transliterated form.

³³ To be precise, imagination as “that in virtue of which an image arises for us” is introduced as the protasis in a conditional statement: “If then imagination is that in virtue of which an image arises for us, excluding metaphorical uses of the term, is it a single faculty or a disposition relative to images, in virtue of which we discriminate and are

us when we are sleeping or dreaming. Given this description, one might wonder whether this isn't exactly what perception does. Perception, too, is responsible for presenting (φαίνεται) us with perceptual images (428a16); thus *phantasia* (one might think) just is perception. But, Aristotle argues, these functions cannot be identical. As we saw above, Aristotle has a carefully worked out theory of perception that accounts for how perceptual objects act on special organs which can discriminate certain kinds of data and organize that data into complete perceptual objects. In this account, what was necessary was that a sense object be acting on a sense organ. Only then can one be considered to be engaged in the activity of perception. But in the case where we are closing our eyes and dreaming, we are presented with sensory-like objects even though nothing is acting on our sense organs. What explains these kinds of sensory experiences? In these cases, Aristotle maintains that *phantasia* is responsible for presenting these images, called *phantasmata*. As Aristotle writes, “[t]hat imagination is not perception is clear from the following consideration: Perception is either a faculty or an activity, e.g. sight or seeing; imagination takes place in the absence of both, as e.g. in dreams” (428a5-7).³⁴

Thus, *phantasia* and perception are different functions of the soul. But additionally, note that what prompted this argument was an implicit assumption that *phantasia* and perception present to us qualitatively similar data. When we close our eyes, what we are presented with are sensory-like objects. And when we dream, we dream sensory like experiences. Because of this

either in error or not” (*DA* III.3, 428a1-3) However, despite its provisional appearance at this stage, Aristotle’s subsequent discussion of *phantasia* is entirely based on this protasis and gives much evidence in its support. Indeed, Aristotle seems well aware of its provisional nature at this point. Thus, just before the above passage, Aristotle writes, “we must therefore first mark off the sphere of imagination and then speak of judgment” (III.3, 427b29-428a1). Aristotle’s method seems to be then, (1) give a provisional statement about what imagination is, and then (2) give an analysis of imagination and its relation to perception and judgment to show that this provisional statement is in fact the case.

³⁴ I’ve altered Smith’s (1984) translation of *aisthēsis* from “sense” to “perception” so that it is consistent with this chapter’s translation of the technical terminology.

similarity, Aristotle was concerned to show that in fact *phantasia* and perception are distinct. Had the consensus been that these experiences were qualitatively distinct, Aristotle would hardly have need for these arguments; he could have taken it for granted that perception and *phantasia* were distinct functions. Aristotle acknowledges this similarity when he states that “because imaginations remain in the organs of sense and *resemble sense sensations*, animals in their actions are largely guided by them . . .” (429a5-7).³⁵ In *De Motu Animalium* this similarity is further confirmed. As Aristotle writes, “For sense-perceptions are at once a kind of alteration and *phantasia* and thinking have the power of the actual things” (701b18-20). That is to say, as we saw above, sense-perceptions are alterations that arise when sensory objects act on the senses. When Aristotle says that *phantasia* (and thinking, but more on that in the next chapter) has the power of actual things, he means that *phantasia*, in place of these external objects, has the ability to cause the same sort of alterations that give rise to sense perceptions.³⁶ This means that *phantasia* affects us in a way that is very similar to sense perception even when the objects needed for that sense perception are not present.³⁷

Further evidence of the qualitative similarities of *phantasia* and sense perception will be seen later in this chapter in the sections on *De Insomniis* and *De Memoria*. In both of these works, Aristotle is less concerned with distinguishing these two functions of the soul and often collectively refers to them as “perception” (*aisthēsis*). In *De Insomniis*, for example, Aristotle writes:

³⁵ Emphasis is mine.

³⁶ I am, more or less, in agreement with Moss (2012) on this point.

³⁷ N.B. I do not mean to imply that there is necessarily no difference between the qualitative experience of perceiving and imagining. There likely is, but the difference is not a difference in kind. Rather, it is better described as a difference in vividness or intensity of a single kind of image. This is discussed in more detail below and in Chapter 3.

[4] But since we have, in our work on the soul, treated of *phantasia*, and the faculty of *phantasia* [*phantastikon*] is identical with that of sense perception [*aisthētikon*, i.e. the faculty of sense perception], though the being of a faculty of imagination is different from that of a faculty of sense perception; and since imagination is the movement set up by a sensory faculty when actually discharging its function, while a dream appears to be an image (*phantasma*) (for which occurs in sleep—whether simply or in some particular way—is called a dream): it manifestly follows that dreaming is an activity of the faculty of sense-perception, but belong to this faculty qua imaginative (459a15-22).³⁸

Thus, *phantasia* and perception are very similar, they are functions of the same faculty.

Phantasia is a function of the perceptual faculty when the faculty is, in fact, discharging its normal function, namely *aisthēsis*. Because of this similarity, in the remainder of the treatise, Aristotle refers to what happens during sleep with words usually reserved for sense perception proper (i.e. *aisthēsis*). For instance,

[5] But by night, owing to the inaction of senses, and their powerlessness to realize themselves, which arises from the reflux of the hot from the exterior parts to the interior, they are borne down to the source of sense-perception, and there display themselves as the disturbance subsides (461a4-7).

and later:

[6] Each of them [i.e. each interior movement caused by a sense impression] is however, as has been said, the remnant of a sensory impression, taken when sense was actualizing itself; and when this, the true impression, has departed, its remnant is still there, and it is correct to say of it, that though not actually Coriscus, it is like Coriscus. When the person was actually perceiving, his controlling and judging sensory faculty did not call it Coriscus, but prompted by this, called the genuine person yonder Coriscus. Accordingly, that which, when actually perceiving, says this..., now, as though it were perceiving, is moved by the movements persisting in the sense-organs, and that which is like the thing seems to it to be the thing itself (461b20-28).

In either case, we see that Aristotle does not see it necessary to make explicit that what is presented in sleep are imaginations. Rather, it is enough to say that they are sense perceptions that arise in sleep such that one seems to be perceiving.

De Memoria uses a similarly wide sense of sense perception:

³⁸ All *De Insomniis* translations by Beare (1984).

[7] But when one has knowledge or perception (αἴσθησιν) apart from the objects, he thus remembers as to the former, that he learned it, or thought it out for himself, as to the latter, that he heard, or saw, it or has some sensible experience of it (1, 449b19-22).³⁹

However, it becomes clear that *aisthēsis* apart from objects is not *aisthēsis* at all, but a function of *phantasia*. Aristotle writes,

[8] If asked, of which among the parts of the soul memory is a function, we reply: manifestly of that part to which imagination also appertains; and all objects of which there is imagination are in themselves objects of memory, while those which do not exist without imagination are objects of memory incidentally (450a21-25).

One might interpret this passage as saying that, in fact, memory is a function of the perceptual part of the soul distinct from imagination. However, Aristotle's discussion of *phantasia* (discussed above) and the context of this passage tells against such an interpretation. For right before this passage, Aristotle turned to imagination in order to reveal how memory functions, noting that it has already been discussed in *De Anima*. And indeed, as I discussed above, *phantasia* is precisely that faculty responsible for presenting images apart from those images' objects. Moreover, as *De Anima* explains, *phantasia* represents a distinctive function of the soul, in addition to perception, thought, and nutrition. Memory, notably, is not mentioned as a distinctive function. Thus, it is technically open to us to interpret this passage as saying that memory is a distinct function of the soul that operates in a way strikingly similar to but distinct from *phantasia*, making memory's absence in Aristotle's discussion of the soul curious and making Aristotle's discussion of *phantasia* in *De Memoria* mysterious. Or we can interpret this passage as claiming that memory operates "on top of" *phantasia*, so to speak, as one of the ways that *phantasia* is used (another way is dreaming). I find the latter interpretation far more likely, for not only is it a more elegant account of memory, it is better textually grounded. Given this,

³⁹ *De Memoria* translations by Beare.

Aristotle's usage of perception (*aisthēsis*) to refer to cases where in fact *phantasia* is taking place, indicates that perception and *phantasia* are qualitatively similar.

Thus, based on *DA* III.3, *De Insomniis* and *De Memoria*, we have good reason to think that *phantasia* is functionally distinct from *aisthēsis* but that their objects (*aisthēmata* and *phantasmata*) are qualitatively similar. That is to say, *phantasia* is capable of presenting a perceiver with information that is qualitatively similar to information presented by perception proper. Moreover, *phantasia* is capable of presenting this information at times when perception proper is not in operation.

5. Saved Perceptions as the origin of *Phantasia*

Earlier we saw that Aristotle's account of perception provides us with many of the ingredients needed to explain motivation: it is capable of presenting objects with the normative, action inducing properties of pleasure and pain. However, we also saw that in many cases of motivation, the pieces of normative information needed to tell a full motivational story are not actually being perceived, as when a lion is motivated by the pleasant taste of a zebra that he is merely looking at. We saw that what was needed was an ability to inject perceptions with extra perceptual information going beyond one's present perceptions. Because *phantasia* is capable of presenting perceptual-like information independent of perception, it appears that *phantasia* is a promising candidate for this role. In this section, I will continue filling out an account of *phantasia* in order to show that it does indeed fill this role.⁴⁰ In particular, I argue that it fits this

⁴⁰ It is common to relate *phantasia* to motivation in this way as Aristotle explicitly makes this connection in *De Motu*. Indeed, Nussbaum makes this connection in her essay "The Role of *Phantasia* in Aristotle's Explanation of Action", accompanying her translation of *De Motu*. For interpretations similar to mine see Moss (2012) and, especially, Lorenz (2009).

role by culling information from stored past perceptions and injecting it into our present perceptual content on the basis of that content's likeness to past perceptions.

First, we will look at the soul's ability to store past perceptions. Following Caston (1996), a significant amount of evidence for this can be found in *De Insomniis* (*Insomn*). In this work, Aristotle takes great pains to show that perceptions (which, as we just saw, is in this work used as a general term to capture both perception proper and *phantasia*) persist in the soul.⁴¹ Aristotle shows that when an agent causes a patient to move, that patient can continue to move long after the agent that caused the movement is stationary. This basic observation is then applied to his account of sensation with the aim of explaining dreams. As Aristotle writes,

[9] This we must likewise assume to happen in the case of qualitative change; for that part which has been heated by something hot, heats the part next to it, and this propagates the affection onwards to the starting-point. This must therefore happen in sense-perception, since actual perceiving is a qualitative change. This explains why the affection continues⁴² in the sensory organs, *both in their deeper and in their more superficial parts*, not merely while they are actually engaged in perceiving, but even after they have ceased to do so. That they do this, indeed, is obvious in cases where we continue for some time engaged in a particular form of perception; for then, when we shift the scene of our perceptive activity, the previous affection remains; for instance,

⁴¹ As Aristotle writes, "But since we have, in our work on the soul, treated of imagination, and the faculty of imagination (τὸ φανταστικόν) is identical with that of sense-perception (τῷ αἰσθητικῷ), though the being of a faculty of imagination is different from that of a faculty of sense-perception; and since imagination is the movement set up by a sensory faculty when actually discharging its function, while a dream appears to be an image (for which occurs in sleep—whether simply or in some particular way—is what we call a dream): it manifestly follows that dreaming is an activity of the faculty of sense-perception (τοῦ αἰσθητικοῦ), but belongs to this faculty qua imaginative (φανταστικόν)" (*Insomn* 459a15-22).

The statement "one in number but two in being" is something of a commonplace in Aristotle as is disagreement amongst scholars over what exactly he means. In this context, I am sympathetic to an interpretation put forth by Wedin (1988) which maintains that perception and *phantasia* are identical in the sense that there is no unique sense-organ with which *phantasia* is associated; the organ associated with *phantasia* is the same organ associated with perception. However, imagination is a distinct function played by the sense organ. Whatever the true explanation may be, Aristotle is clear about his usage of terminology in the final sentence: "sense-perception" is being used in a generic way and if we are to speak more precisely, dreams are a function of *phantasia*. Thus, in what follows, Aristotle's use of perception should be understood as including *phantasia*.

⁴² What Beare translates "continues" here and Hett "persists" is simply the verb *ἔστιν*. Thus, the text is perhaps best read as saying that the affection exists both when perceiving and when not. This is a small point but significant for what I believe the passage says, namely that the affection is in the sense organ when perception has ceased and that the examples that Aristotle provides are simply supposed to be evidence of its continuing to exist. They are not offered as the primary phenomena that these persistent perceptions are meant to explain.

when we have turned our gaze from sunlight into darkness. For the result of this is that one sees nothing, owing to the motion excited by the light still subsisting in our eyes. Also, when we have looked for a long while at one colour, e.g. at white or green, that to which we next transfer our gaze appears to be of the same colour. Again if, after having looked at the sun or some other brilliant object, we close the eyes, then if we watch carefully, it appears in a right line with the direction of vision (whatever this may be), at first its own colour; then it changes to crimson, next to purple, until it becomes black and disappears. And also when persons turn away from looking at objects in motion, e.g. rivers, and especially those which flow very rapidly, things really at rest are then seen as moving; and persons become deaf after hearing loud noises, and after smelling very strong odours their power of smelling is impaired; and similarly in other cases. These phenomena manifestly take place in the way above described (459b1-23, emphasis is mine).

And further,

[10] In order to answer our original question, let us now, therefore, assume one proposition, which is clear from what precedes, viz. that even when the external object of perception has departed, the impressions it has made (*τὰ αἰσθήματα*) persist (*ἐμμένει*), and are themselves objects of perception (*αἰσθητὰ*) (460b1-4).⁴³

As these passages make clear, Aristotle indeed thinks that perceptions persist in the soul (as *phantasmata*).⁴⁴ In the more detailed first passage, Aristotle notes (in the italicized clause) that they persist both deep down and on the surface. Aristotle clearly explains that perceptions persist on the surface, evidenced by the fact that after we see a bright light, the image of that light persists, even when that light is turned off. These surface events are indications of the sensory apparatus's deeper workings which retain images even after the superficial residue has faded. Aristotle's thought is that these deeply stored perceptions are always present, but only noticeable in certain circumstances.⁴⁵ As Aristotle writes:

⁴³ πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς σκέψιν ὑποκείσθω ἐν μὲν, ὅπερ ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων φανερόν, ὅτι καὶ ἀπελθόντος τοῦ θύραθεν αἰσθητοῦ ἐμμένει τὰ αἰσθήματα αἰσθητὰ ὄντα

⁴⁴ See note 42 for comments on persistence. See note 41 for evidence that Aristotle is here using perception in a loose way that often refers to both perception and *phantasia*.

⁴⁵ Always present although likely always changing. Thus, while perceptions will always persist, which perceptions perception will fluctuate and change as time goes on.

[11] In the daytime, when the senses and the mind are active, they are thrust aside or obscured just in the same way as a smaller fire is obscured by a greater, and small pains and pleasures by great, although when the latter have ceased even the small ones come to the surface; but at night, because the particular senses are at rest and cannot function...these stimuli reach the starting point of sensation and become noticeable, as the bustle subsides (460b32-461a).

And concluding he writes, “it becomes quite clear that our account is true, and that there are imaginative stimuli in the sensory organs” (462a8-9). Aristotle’s idea seems to be that after we perceive an object, the perception remains in the soul. These movements, which are slighter and hence less vivid and noticeable than sense perceptions, are covered up by the movements made by sense perception. However, when these perceptual movements subside, these deeper movements come to the fore and become more noticeable, causing images to appear and dreams to occur.

6. Remembering *Phantasmata*

What *De Insomniis* shows is that the soul stores sense experiences. When we have a perceptual experience, the *aisthēma* which results does not dissipate. Rather, it remains and is saved in the sense organ as a *phantasma*. But this is only half of the story. Once stored, how are these *phantasmata* retrieved and experienced for a second time, not as dreams, but as part of our waking perceptual experience? As a number of commentators have thought, particularly Lorenz (1998), I believe that the answer is to be found in Aristotle’s account of remembering (μνεμονεύειν) as explained in *De Memoria (Mem)*. Although it may be *prima facie* odd to say that remembering takes place in everyday occurrences of perception, Aristotle’s technical notion of memory fits well with the preceding account of *phantasia* and helps fill out an account of perception needed to explain motivation. In particular, this account will demonstrate that (1)

memory essentially involves *phantasia* and (2) that links forged between perceptions in past experience explains how stored *phantasmata* are retrieved. I will discuss (1) and (2) in order below.

7. Memory as an Operation of *Phantasia*

First, similar to motivation, memory essentially involves perception and is thus a non-rational ability shared by both humans and non-human animals. In arguing that memory belongs to the perceptual faculty, Aristotle begins by considering what the object of memory is so that he may then consider what capacity is responsible for cognizing that object. His answer is that the object of memory is of things that are past and no longer present. This ability to cognize things in the past is described by Aristotle as an ability to cognize time, thus Aristotle concludes, only those with the capacity to cognize time will be capable of memory.

Which faculty cognizes time? The two primary capacities of cognition, perception and intellect, cognize objects in the present. For instance, we perceive objects present to our senses and we can contemplate objects at present. However, we sometimes speak of the objects that we are perceiving or thinking about now as being objects from the past. For instance, we can contemplate something that we remember from the past and we can envision something now that is an image of something that we experienced in the past. Both of these faculties, then, can be involved in cognizing the past, but which faculty is most essential to cognizing the past? Aristotle concludes that whatever it is, it must be a state or affection (ἔξις ἢ πάθος) of one of these faculties (*Mem* 1, 449b25).

In considering whether perception or intellect is most centrally responsible for cognizing time, Aristotle begins with thought by making the following statement: “Without an image thinking is impossible” (*Mem* 1, 450a1). The argument that follows is, in short, this: Aristotle determines that although we might be able to intellectually conceive of time, this is simply a grasp of something presented by the perceptive faculty. Thus, perception is responsible for cognizing time. In an expanded form, Aristotle’s argument (*Mem* 1, 449b28-450a14) can be described by the following premises.

- 1. The capacity responsible for memory is the capacity responsible for perceiving time.
- 2. Without an image, thinking is impossible.
 - 2.1. Example of geometry aimed at demonstrating how images are necessary for thought even in difficult cases where it seems that thought is too abstract to be imagistic.
 - 2.1.1. In geometry, we draw a determinate figure with a particular quantity to think of an abstract object, indeterminate without any particular quantity.
 - 2.1.2. Likewise, when we merely want to think about a triangle, what we do first is envisage a triangle with a particular quantity and then, with thought abstract from that envisaged triangle to think of a triangle without a particular quantity.
 - 2.2. Thus, Thinking without images is impossible.
- 3. (Unstated assumption) one cognizes magnitude and motion by perception.
- 4. One must cognize time with the same faculty that cognizes magnitude and motion.
- 5. Thus, by 2 and 3, one cognizes time through perception.
- 6. Perception is responsible for perceiving time
- 7. Thus, perception is responsible for memory.

The argument begins by stating that memory is the capacity responsible for perceiving time.

Aristotle then immediately turns to his claim about thinking: that it is impossible without an image. The analogy that he gives in support of this essentially shows that thought operates by abstracting from images presented by perception. We begin with a perception of a single triangle,

but we can abstract from that and consider a triangle with no particular quantity.⁴⁶ The same happens, presumably in the case of time. We can perceive time, and Aristotle thinks that this is clear by considering the fact that perception cognizes magnitude and motion. Given this, we can conclude that although we might be able to think about things in time, this is taken from an original perception of an object in time. Therefore, the perceptual capacity is essentially responsible for perceiving time. It is the faculty that initially cognizes things in time. In contrast, although thought is also able to cognize time, it does so incidentally, for what it cognizes and contemplates is originally something received through perception.

What this argument shows is that Aristotle does indeed think *that* perception is responsible for cognizing time. However, it is a little difficult to understand *how* perception can cognize time; time seems more like an intellectual concept. What, one might wonder, does time *look* like or *sound* like? I think that this difficulty can be resolved if we look again at premise 4 above. Aristotle says that the faculty that cognizes magnitude and motion must cognize time. Why might Aristotle think this? According to one way of looking at it, one might object that these things are separate. One can see objects moving and perceive their magnitude while having no notion of what time is or having the concept of time at all. Thus, just because we can perceive motion and magnitude does not mean that we can perceive time.

⁴⁶ There is a complexity to this example that should be acknowledged here and will be discussed further at the end of this chapter and in the next chapter. The complexity is this: this example succeeds in showing that even in cases of abstract thought, an image is involved and thus so to the perceptual capacity. However, it does not obviously succeed in showing that this image must be an image derived from past experience, something that seems to be necessary in the case of remembering. For in geometrical thought, it seems that the image used by thought to think about triangles can itself be synthesized by the intellect. That is to say, while we might use the recollection of a triangle that we saw drawn on a board in grade school to contemplate triangles, we can also, so to speak, draw a triangle in our mind to contemplate a triangle. Both accounts would satisfy the condition that thought always involves an image, but the latter point about drawing an image in the mind divorces thought from actual perceptual experiences. As we will see at the end of this chapter in the section titled "Experience," Aristotle likely thinks that even in the case where it seems that thought is synthesizing an image, it is in fact taking it from experience.

However, in Aristotle's analysis of time in the *Physics* (*Phys.*), motion is closely associated with time, for time is apprehended in terms of motion (*Phys.* IV.10-3). Time, says Aristotle, is a recognition of a before and after. That is, it is a recognition of a number of occurrences that have happened in succession, one after the other (IV.11, 219b10-12, 220a25-6). And this is precisely what movement is. Movement is a perpetual succession (IV.11, 219b10). To perceive things in motion is to perceive certain events as occurring before and after (IV.11, 219a33). For instance, when we perceive an object at point x_1 and then at point x_2 we recognize that a movement has taken place, and in recognizing this change in position, we recognize time. Hence Aristotle writes, "we apprehend time only when we have marked motion, marking it by before and after; and it is only when we have perceived before and after in motion that we say that time has elapsed" (IV.11, 219a23-5).⁴⁷ Thus, by "perceiving time" Aristotle should be interpreted as saying something like, "perceiving things in the present that have follow upon things that are in the past." He should not be interpreted as meaning that the abstract concept of time is conceptualized. Given that Aristotle is using "perceive" in the wide sense, this account demonstrates how the perception of time can be a purely perceptual cognition. We perceive an object in front of us now while at the same time we are presented with the image by *phantasia* of the object as it was.

Moreover, if this account is right, it explains why those who perceive time also remember (449b28-9). For, if perceiving time requires one to have *phantasia* to perceive objects and events that happened prior in time, then such an animal has the ability to be presented by past perception generally.

⁴⁷ All *Physics* translations by Hardie (1984) unless otherwise noted.

This account, that memory essentially involves *phantasia*, is confirmed by Aristotle's concluding sentence, which we have already seen above in our discussion about the qualitative similarity between perception and *phantasia*. The passage, again is,

[12] if asked, of which among the parts of the soul memory pertains, we reply: manifestly of that part to which *phantasia* also appertains; and all the objects of where there is *phantasia* are in themselves objects of memory, while those which do not exist without *phantasia* are objects of memory incidentally (*Mem* 450a21-5).⁴⁸

Thus, memory is closely associated with *phantasia*. However, a critic might point out that the story is not so simple. Aristotle does not outright identify memory with *phantasia*. He says that it is of that part of the soul of which *phantasia* is also a part. Given this, one might maintain contrary to my interpretation that Aristotle is here claiming that memory is another function of the perceptual part of the soul *in addition* to *phantasia* rather than being a phenomenon that is essentially explained by *phantasia* (as I would like to maintain).

As I have already argued above, I think this interpretation, that memory is a function of the perceptual soul in addition to *phantasia*, is incorrect. It over complicates Aristotle's understanding of the soul by adding an additional function to the soul that could otherwise be explained in terms of *phantasia*. Moreover, it is textually dubious, as in the *De Anima*'s enumeration of the soul's functions, memory is not mentioned as a distinctive part of the soul. I think that the best way of interpreting this passage is as relating *phantasia* to memory in such a way that memory, like dreaming, is a phenomena whose explanation essentially involves *phantasia*. On this account, memory is a certain state of the perceptual part of the soul in which

⁴⁸ τίνοσ μὲν οὖν τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστὶ μνήμη, φανερόν, ὅτι οὐπὲρ καὶ ἡ φαντασία· καὶ ἐστὶ μνημονευτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ μὲν ὧν ἐστὶ φαντασία, κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς δὲ ὅσα μὴ ἄνευ φαντασίας.

the perceiver is presented with *phantasmata* by *phantasia* in certain contexts. In other words, memory is a certain way that *phantasia* can be used.⁴⁹

8. The Memorial State

After specifying that memory is a state of the part of the perceptual soul responsible for *phantasmata*, Aristotle describes the character of memory and remembering. What this discussion reveals is that when one is presented with a memory, one is presented with an image that is considered as a representation of an object from one's past. One might wonder, he says, if in remembering a perception, whether it is the affection itself that one remembers or the object that originally caused it? Comparing perception to viewing a picture, Aristotle argues that we can attend to our perceptions in either way:

[13] A picture painted on a panel is at once a picture and a likeness: that is, while one and the same, it is both of these, although the being of both is not the same, and one may contemplate it either as a picture, or as a likeness. Just in the same way we have to conceive that the image (*phantasma*) within us is both something in itself and relative to something else. In so far as it is regarded in itself, it is only an object of contemplation, or an image; but when considered as relative to something else, e.g. as a likeness, it is also a reminder. Hence whenever its movement is actual, if the soul perceives this in its own right, it appears to occur as a mere thought or image; but if the soul perceives it qua related to something else, then—just as when one contemplates the painting in the picture as being a likeness...—of the objects in the soul, the one presents itself simply as a thought, but the other, just because, as in the painting, it is a likeness, presents itself as a reminder (1, 450b19-451a3).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ This is largely in agreement with Bloch (2007) who notes that “[t]he image (*phantasma*) that is viewed when somebody is remembering is ontologically no different from images used in thought or *phantasia*; what kind of process or state occurs is determined by the particular mode of viewing the image” (83).

Note that even if one disagrees with this particular interpretation, it turns out that memory is the state of being cognizant of *phantasmata*, as the next section of the chapter shows. Given this, any alternative interpretation will not affect the larger picture that I am presenting: namely that the non-rational, perceptual part of the soul is responsible for motivation. As worst, it might have terminological consequences for how I describe the functioning of the perceptual soul in motivation.

⁵⁰ The bracketed portion of the passage is what is omitted from the English translation at the ellipses:

οἷον γὰρ τὸ ἐν πίνακι γεγραμμένον ζῶον καὶ ζῴον ἐστὶ καὶ εἰ κών, καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ἐν τοῦτ' ἐστὶν ἄμφω, τὸ μέντοι εἶναι οὐ ταυτὸν ἀμφοῖν, καὶ ἔστι θεωρεῖν καὶ ὡς ζῶον καὶ ὡς εἰκόνα, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν φάντασμα δεῖ ὑπολαβεῖν

The *phantasmata* stored in our souls can be considered in two ways. First, they can be considered in themselves, as a complex of colors and shapes when, for example, we might consider a painting of a crow as just splotches of paint on a canvas. However, we can also consider the painting as representing something beyond it, namely an actual crow. Considered in this way, we look past the painting, so to speak, and see it as a crow. When our past perceptions are considered in this latter way, we are in a state of remembering. Thus, Aristotle states in his definitive conclusion of his discussion of memory that

[14] As regards the question, therefore, what memory or remembering is, it has now been shown that it is the having of an image, related as a likeness to that of which it is an image; and as to the question of which of the faculties within us memory is a [state], it has been shown that it is a [state] of the primary faculty of sense-perception; i.e. of that faculty whereby we perceive time (451a15-7).⁵¹

It is notable that although memory requires a *phantasma*, which is an image caused by a past perception, missing from this description is an explicit recognition that time must be cognized in order for the state to count as a memory. This has been a matter of some debate in commentary on *De Memoria* and it is not clear that Aristotle thinks time must be a factor at all.⁵²

This debate has centered around the following single passage:

καὶ αὐτό τι καθ' αὐτό εἶναι καὶ ἄλλου [φάντασμα]. ἢ μὲν οὖν καθ' αὐτό, θεώρημα ἢ φάντασμα ἐστίν, ἢ δ' ἄλλου, οἷον εἰκὼν καὶ μνημόνευμα. ὥστε καὶ ὅταν ἐνεργῇ ἢ κίνησις αὐτοῦ, ἂν μὲν ἢ καθ' αὐτό ἐστὶ, ταύτη αἰσθάνηται ἢ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, οἷον νόημά τι ἢ φάντασμα φαίνεται ἐπελθεῖν· ἂν δ' ἢ ἄλλου καὶ ὡσπερ ἐν τῇ γραφῇ ὡς εἰκόνα θεωρεῖ καί, [μὴ ἑωρακῶς τὸν Κορίσκον, ὡς Κορίσκου, ἐνταῦθά τε ἄλλο τὸ πάθος τῆς θεωρίας ταύτης καὶ ὅταν ὡς ζῶον γεγραμμένον] (451a) θεωρῇ, ἐν τε τῇ ψυχῇ τὸ μὲν γίγνεται ὡσπερ νόημα μόνον, τὸ δ' ὡς ἐκεῖ ὅτι εἰκὼν, μνημόνευμα.

⁵¹ Translation by Beare is slightly amended. Instead of providing “function,” I believe it is better to provide “state” since this is the way that Aristotle defines memory.

τί μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ μνήμη καὶ τὸ μνημονεύειν, εἴρηται, ὅτι φαντάσματος, ὡς εἰκόνοσ οὗ φάντασμα, ἕξις, καὶ τίνος μορίου τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τοῦ πρώτου αἰσθητικοῦ καὶ ὅ χρόνον αἰσθανόμεθα.

⁵² Bloch (2007) diagnoses the root of this disagreement, suggesting that he does “not think that this was of great concern to Aristotle. Since memory is causally derived from perception, then, necessarily one must have experienced the content before—and this applies to both human beings and animals. Whether or not the experiencing is part of the memory varies, I suppose, and is not a matter that has claimed Aristotle’s attention” (84).

[15] ...even though one does not remember with actual determination of the time, he genuinely remembers, nonetheless. People often say that they remember, but yet do not know when whenever they do not know determinately the exact length of time (453a2-5).

One way of understanding this passage is as confirming that the perception of time must be included in memory, even if that perception of time is quite minimal. So, we might say, we have a memory if (1) we cognize an object that we experienced in the past and (2) we cognize that we experienced this object in the past. The difficulty with this interpretation is that memory is supposed to be a capability available to both humans and animals and thus achieved through perception alone. However, it is not clear how perception would be capable of a cognition as sophisticated as (2). How, then, should we understand this passage so that it harmonizes with Aristotle's claim that animals are capable of memory? Unfortunately, Aristotle does not tell us so we can only speculate. Perhaps a cognition of time can be achieved simply through the cognition of something that is past (a cognition like (1) above) together with the cognition that one is not perceiving it now. Such a cognition would be very close to the kind of cognition required for *phantasia* and so plausibly available to animals. However we interpret this passage, what is important is its suggestion that it is possible to be presented with a *phantasmata* that is in all respects a *memory* except for the fact that it lacks a cognition of time.

9. Connections Between *Phantasmata*

In *De Memoria*, Aristotle famously (or perhaps infamously) distinguishes memory and remembering from what he calls recollection and recollecting (ἀνάμνησις/ἀναμνήσκεσθαι). Aristotle makes clear that this is an intellectual exercise,⁵³ a kind of search in which one attempts

⁵³ For evidence that recollection is intellectual see *Mem* 2, 453a5-14.

to get oneself into the frame of mind that evokes a certain memory.⁵⁴ For our purposes what is important about Aristotle's discussion of recollection is that it reveals a structure among *phantasmata* that has, heretofore, gone unmentioned. It turns out that *Phantasmata* are saved in such a way that they are connected to one another. This allows us to, for instance, remember where we put our keys by first recalling the connected experience of where we entered the house. However, this also explains a more passive sort of remembering by which one's perception can lead to the remembering of a related *phantasmata*. This latter sort of remembering will help us explain why, upon seeing a zebra, a lion is reminded of its pleasant taste and impelled to act.

Let us begin with Aristotle's suggestion that *phantasmata* are stored in such a way that they are connected to other *phantasmata*. Describing the formation of these connections, Aristotle writes, "Acts of recollection are due to the fact that one movement has by nature another that succeeds it. If the order be necessary, whenever a subject experiences the former of two movements thus connected, it will experience the latter; if, however, the order be not necessary, but customary, only for the most part will the subject experience the latter of the two movements" (451b10-4). Aristotle is here relying on general facts about movement and causation, as discussed, for instance, in *De Motu Animalium*, and applying them to the movements of perception. In the *De Motu*, all movements are initiated by previous movements (with the exception of the divine first movement). For example, the movement of the eight ball is initiated by the movement of the cue, whose movement is, in turn, initiated by the cue stick. Aristotle's idea is that when we recollect one perception, this can initiate the movement of another perception to come to our attention. Which perception's movement is initiated is

⁵⁴ This is a controversial position to take. Sorabji (1972) argues that recollection represents an entirely different kind of memory. Here, I suggest that recollection is, rather, a way of evoking a memory. Bloch (2007) has defended this view at length.

determined by which perceptions have been experienced in close proximity to one another.

Now, the connections between some of these perceptions will be necessary connections, others incidental. For instance, the experience of fire is necessarily connected with the experience of heat. They are linked in the object by nature. The consequence is that in considering fire, one is nearly always reminded of heat.⁵⁵ In contrast, other connections might merely be the case for the most part, dependent on one's particular experiences. Thus, the perception of black and white may nearly always be connected with the experience of a zebra whereas for others it may typically be connected to an experience of skunks and bad odor. This allows memory to be subject to training, such as habituation and the memory exercises that Aristotle discusses in *De Memoria*. We can now make the important point towards which we were working. Perceptions which are saved in the sensory organ are not simply saved in isolation. They are saved with connections to other perceptions which are established by the setting and order in which they are experienced.

This structure of *phantasmata* is used by Aristotle in his discussion of recollection. As Bloch (2007) notes, Aristotle's discussion is largely addressed to practical problems and for that reason reads at times like a treatise on mnemonics (74). Indeed, Sorabji relates Aristotle's discussion to ancient mnemonic techniques in his essay, *Mnemonic Techniques* (Sorabji [1972] 2004). In this intellectual theory, recollection operates by exploiting the connections that exist between the *phantasmata* saved in our souls. By moving from one perception to another along these connections, the intellect can forge a path that will take one from an initial *phantasmata* to

⁵⁵ There may be some instances, perhaps instances of extreme concentration, where the image of fire does not remind one of heat, although such cases are not, I think, very typical. For instance, in thinking of fire, one might be moved to the image of smoke, and finally the image of a cloud. But even in this case, although heat is not the end that one is searching for, one is nonetheless reminded of it. It seems that one would have to be deeply focused on the smoke and cloud to not be reminded of heat at all.

a final *phantasmata*. The aim of this intellectual effort is get oneself into a position or frame of mind such that the perceptual organ brings a particular perception to the fore, causing one to experience again a prior *phantasma*.

More important to our purposes, Aristotle indicates that one can be led down these paths without any intellectual activity at all but rather as an unintentional consequence of perception. After introducing the notion of recollection at the beginning of *De Memoria 2*, Aristotle notes "...it is obviously possible, without any present act of recollection, to remember as a continued consequence of the starting perception or other experience..." (451a32-451b1). Although brief, this is something that we should expect as it is necessary for maintaining that animals are capable of memory, as Aristotle insists.⁵⁶ In this case, the starting point of a memory does not have to be an intellectual search, but it can be a presently occurring perception. For instance, glancing at one's plant can immediately recall one's friend who gave one the plant. And similarly, having caught a glimpse of black and white figure, the lion is immediately reminded of a zebra and its taste.

It is this automatic, non-recollective type of remembering that can, finally, help us explain the role of perception in motivation. In the beginning, we saw that the *De Motu* described action as motivated by the perception of an object as pleasant or painful. When we perceive something as pleasant, this evokes in us a desire to obtain that object, ultimately impelling us to act. We then saw that while perception is capable of perceiving things as pleasant, such perceptions required that the object be acting on the sense-organ. But in many, if not most cases of

⁵⁶ "Hence not only human beings and the beings which possess opinion or intelligence, but also certain other animals, possess memory. If memory were a function of the thinking parts, it would not have been an attribute of many of the other animals, but probably, in that case, no mortal beings would have had memory; since, even as the case stands, it is not an attribute of them all, just because all have not the faculty of perceiving time" (*Mem.* 1, 450a14-19).

motivation, the pleasant object that one perceives is *not* acting on the sense organ. For instance, the lion may see the zebra and be motivated to go after it, but what motivates it is not the *look* of the zebra but the delicious taste of its flesh. Thus we asked, how does this theory of Aristotle's work? How does *perception* motivate us? After taking a survey of Aristotle's corpus, we now have a significant part of our answer. When we have perceptions, these perceptions are stored in the sensory organ, connected to other perceptions that are similar in some way. When we perceive new objects, these objects cause memories in us to arise based on these connections. Thus, when the lion sees a black and white striped animal, this reminds him of striped animals that he has seen in the past and, together with these previous perceptions, the animals' taste, the satiation they provided, and any other perceptions connected to them.

This of course, is not quite enough for a complete answer. For the lion should not simply be reminded of a past zebra. He should associate the attributes of the past zebra with the zebra he sees now, so that he sees *this* present zebra as pleasant.

10. Experience

Aristotle's account of experience will help us complete our answer by addressing a difficulty in Aristotle's account of memory. As we just saw, the *De Memoria* explains that *phantasmata* are saved in such a way that they are connected by similarities in time and in the object. Thus, if I regularly experience the sight of roses with my mother's house, the smell and my mother's house will be connected. This connection, Aristotle indicated, explains why whenever I see roses again, I will be reminded of my mother's house. However, what is not explained is why my current perception of roses is connected to my past perception of roses at

all. In other words, why is my current perception of a rose connected as similar to my past *phantasmata* of a rose? If this initial connection cannot be made, then no kind of passive, purely perceptual remembrance would seem to be possible. Given Aristotle's account of experience and knowledge acquisition, this problem is essentially a problem of induction. I have no intention of attempting to solve this longstanding problem here. Rather, what I aim to show is that Aristotle indeed believes that the perceptual faculty plays a generalizing role that helps explain how perceptions become connected with stored *phantasmata*. In addition, this association will give us an indication of why, upon recollection, we see the object of perception as having the attributes of the similar *phantasmata* that are recalled.

In resolving this problem, a recent account from Moss (2012) has relied heavily on a particularly controversial interpretation of *Posterior Analytics* (*APo.*) II.19 according to which perception alone is responsible for providing us with universals. As an alternative to Moss's view, I will develop my account out of an account of experience (*empeiria*). While this account will nonetheless touch on induction and the *Posterior Analytics* it will not be forced to make a claim about the nature of *Posterior Analytics* II.19 or about how it is possible to derive full blown universals from particulars. In what follows I will be focused on simply giving an account of experience (*empeiria*) and then, when this account is complete, discuss what we can take from this account to understand *phantasia* and animal motion.

That there is a relation between *phantasia* and *empeiria* is evidenced by comparing the *DA* with Aristotle's mentions of experience in both the *Metaphysics* (*Met.*) and *APo.* As we saw above, animals do many things because of *phantasia*, and in order to have *phantasia*, it is required that an animal also have perception. This ordering is what we might call a "progressive

order”: in order to have a higher capacity, it is necessary that an animal have lower capacities.

This progressive ordering extends also to the other parts of the soul. For while *phantasia* requires perception, if an animal has perception, it must also have nutrition (*DA* II.2, 431a32-4). In the *Posterior Analytics*, and *Metaphysics*, we see repeated a portion of this same progressive relationship: animals that have memory must have perception. As Aristotle writes,

[16] And *this* evidently belongs to all animals; for they have a connate discriminatory capacity, which is called perception. And if perception is present in them, in some animals retention of the percept comes about, but in others it does not come about. Now for those in which it does not come about, there is no knowledge outside perception So from perception there comes memory, as we call it . . . (*APo* II.19, 99b35-100a5).⁵⁷

[17] Any animal is provided by nature with its senses; but in some animals sensing leads to memory, whereas in others it does not (*Met A*, 980a30-1).⁵⁸

These passages present us with nothing new. In order to have *phantasia* (and hence persisting sense-impressions, i.e. *phantasmata*) one must have perception. However, both the *Met.* and *APo.* go beyond the *DA* by taking this cognitive development one step further. Animals that are capable of having memory can develop experience:

[18] . . .from memory (when it occurs often in connection with the same item) experience. . . (*APo* II.19, 100a3-5).

[19] Thus, all animals except man live by what they perceive and by memories, but have little experience. . . (*Met A*, 980b25-7).

[20] From memory men can get experience; for by often remembering the same thing they acquire the power of unified experience (*Met A*, 980b29-981a2).

What this shows is that the retention of *phantasmata* can lead to a higher cognitive ability, experience. Some commentators have argued that experience is something especially rational (Scott 1997, 111; Ross 1953, 116). But these commentators are clearly wrong. For animals are

⁵⁷ All *Posterior Analytics* translations by Barnes (1984) unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁸ All *Metaphysics* translations by Ross (1984) unless otherwise noted.

non-rational and Aristotle extends experience to at least some of them. Thus, unless we want to introduce an artificial distinction into Aristotle's discussion, we must assume that whatever experience is, it is non-rational ability related to perception.

To return to the question at hand, in a recent article titled "Aristotle's Notion of Experience," Pavel Gregorić and Filip Grgić (2006) have investigated what experience might be, given that it is non-rational. They start with a discussion of a passage in *Met A*: "Nevertheless, we believe that knowing and understanding characterize art rather than experience. And so we take experts in art to be wiser than men of mere experience.... Men of experience discern the fact 'that,' but not the reason 'why;' whereas experts know the reason why and explanation" (981a25-31).⁵⁹ This is a familiar distinction in Aristotle. One can know *that* when one takes aspirin it will ease one's pain, but one will not know why. In contrast, the expert who has knowledge of the art of medicine will know the why. This also extends to animals, although in the animals' case, there is no possibility of acquiring the why. For instance, a bear might understand that rubbing up against a certain tree's bark will ease the pain of a bee sting, however he will not know why it does so.

Now, Gregorić and Grgić argue, if knowing "that" is all there is to experience then there is no difference between simply having perception and having experience (8). For, as Aristotle notes, both perception and experience inform us *that* something is the case (*Met A*, 981a13-981b8). But experience is presented as being a higher cognitive ability than mere perception and only some of the animals capable of perception are capable of experience. Thus there must be *something* that we gain with experience beyond perception, but what is it?

⁵⁹ Trans. by Hope (1952).

The key to answering this question, I believe, lies in the role that memory plays in gaining experience.⁶⁰ As Aristotle states in the *Met.*: “In human beings experience comes about from memory; for many memories of the same thing bring about the power of one experience” (980b28-981a1). We have already seen in *De Memoria* that the soul can save perceptions which will remind one of a particular object. We learn now that one may have many memories of a particular thing and that these memories can result in one gaining a further power. What might this power be?

The answer to this question lies in the generalizing capability that is developed out of memory. Aristotle is perhaps most explicit about this in the *APo*. There he indicates that what comes to be in the soul when one has many experiences of a single type of thing is a universal-like or generalized perception, and it is on the basis of this generalized perception that one is said to have experience. As Aristotle writes,

[21] And from experience, or (ἦ) from all the universal which has come to rest in the soul (the one apart from the many, i.e. whatever is one and the same in all of these items), there comes a principle (*archē*) of skill or of understanding—of skill if it deals with how things come about, of understanding if it deals with how things are (*APo* II.19, 100a6-9).

This same generalizing ability is echoed in the *Met.*:

[22] From memory men can get experience; for by often remembering the same thing they acquire the power of unified experience (*Met* 980b28-981a2).

And further,

[23] *Technē* is born when out of the many bits of information derived from experience there emerges a grasp of those similarities in view of which they are a unified whole (*Met* 981a5-8).

⁶⁰ Gregorić and Grgić also think that memory extends perception. However, at this point the details of my argument diverge from theirs.

Studied together, these three passages show, at the very least, that the perceptual faculty produces generalized *phantasmata*. Over time, as one has experiences of very similar objects, the perceptual capacity has the ability to organize perceptions into groups. What comes from this organization is something that is beyond the mere particular stored *phantasmata*, something more general, a “unified experience” or “unified whole,” as the *Metaphysics* describes it. Some, such as Barnes (1993) and Moss (2012) have argued that this experience allows us to arrive at universals from which first principles can be directly derived; i.e. universals that group things based on their essential features. However, such interpretations are controversial and not, I think, obviously borne out by the text, either in *APo* II.19 or in connection with other parts of the text or Aristotle’s corpus. It has been pointed out, for example, that Aristotle’s discussion of “induction” (*epagoge*) varies widely and is not always in line with the sense that Barnes and Moss attribute to it in II.19. Ross (1949) for instance, argues that because of this variation, we can only attribute to “induction” the very thin meaning of going from particulars to universals (48).⁶¹ Additionally, many others who have attempted to come up with fuller accounts of induction have maintained that perception and induction only play a limited role in arriving at first principles.⁶²

Another difficulty arises when we consider the texts discussed above. For instance, in *De Memoria*, perceptions are grouped together by time and the sequence in which they are experienced. Thus, the look of fire will likely be closely associated with its heat, but so too may be the crackling sound it makes, the wood from which it burns, the fireplace in which it is located. Perhaps with extended experience, only the essential characteristics would be left in

⁶¹ See Gálik for another discussion of the different senses of induction.

⁶² See Hamlyn (1976), Bayer (1997), Irwin (1998), Bronstein (2012), McKirahan (1983).

associated with fire. But this would seem to leave it to chance. Perhaps one only experiences fire in one's fireplace or perhaps one only experiences fire in association with burning wood. If so, it would seem that one would never arrive at the most general and essential universals. However, even if it were plausible to assume that, eventually, one would acquire enough experiences to arrive at the essential characteristics of fire, it is not clear why, before that time, reason could not be used to distinguish the essential from the non-essential attributes.

However, regardless of the correct interpretation of II.19 and how far induction/perception can get us to full-blown universals, in order to understand how perception motivates action, we need only maintain that perception is capable of arriving at generalities or quasi-universals. We can think of such generalities as perceptions of that which is identical among all similarly grouped *phantasmata*. These generalized perceptions can be thought of as general patterns that emerge from or supervene on the collections of many different *phantasmata* that are perceptually similar. These generalities will likely not be universals that specify the essence of things but will instead specify a collection of sensory attributes shared by a group of objects. For instance, zebras might be grouped by their black and white stripes, their overall shape, their delicious taste, and their dusty smell.

These supervening patterns give us the ability to understand how perception can recall the relevant *phantasmata* necessary to explain experience. As we learned above, when one perceives an object, this perception creates a *phantasma* which is then stored in the soul. We now know that when these *phantasmata* are stored, they are organized by similarity (as *Mem* indicates, but also *APo* and *Met*) and the result of this similarity is a generalized *phantasma*. For instance, if one has spent time inspecting a number of objects that are visually similar in some

way, these various perceptions will be grouped together, resulting in a more generalized perception. This general perception will be different from the original particular perceptions on which it supervenes, as it will contain only those details that the individual perceptions share. For instance, when one experiences a number of very similar objects with a flat top and four legs, these are stored together. And as these very similar perceptions multiply, they are grouped, resulting in supervenient perceptions that are more and more generalized. Now, when one comes upon a flat surface supported by four legs again, this perception too is grouped with similar perceptions. But in conjunction with this grouping, we know from *De Memoria* that this movement results in a *phantasmata* being presented as a memory—or in this case something memory-like—namely the generalized *phantasmata*. Thus, what one perceives is not only the *aisthēma* but also another perceptual object, the general *phantasmata* with which the *aisthēma* is connected as a likeness. In this way, perceptions, even perceptions that are significantly visually distinct, will have the capability of recalling more general perceptions. And as more experience is gained, and this general perception changes and becomes more fleshed out, our *aisthēmata* are connected with more and more information contained in similar *phantasmata*. Thus, when we see a table again, the visual perception will be connected with a host of experience taken from past perceptions of tables: that they can hold things, that dinner is often eaten on them, etc. This is why experience can lead a rational animal to *technē*. For, with a wealth of past perceptions, one accumulates experience that gives one a richer perceptual experience. This richer experience, allows one to intellectually grasp information that one would not have already had.

Finally, we can explicitly connect this account of experience to motivation and action.

The account of experience above is developed by Aristotle explicitly in connection with *technē*

and understanding and hence with the making of a product or the acquisition of knowledge. But it can easily be adapted to motivation. In order to do this, what is needed is simply to include among one's stored sense perceptions (and hence among the generalized *phantasmata*) the experience of pleasure and pain. Fortunately, this is straightforward since, as we saw above, perceptions and *phantasia* have pleasure and pain built in. To briefly review, when objects of perception hit the sense organ, this causes a physical change. The primary consequence of this change is the perception itself. But, because it is a physical change, it is also accompanied by pleasure and pain. Often, this pleasure and pain is too slight to perceive, but sometimes not. Images with pleasant colors, for example, can alter the eye in such a way that pleasure is created. Or, more likely, food can alter the tongue in such a way that pleasure is created. Because *phantasmata* are qualitatively similar to sense perceptions (*aisthēmata*), imaginations will cause us pleasure and pain in a way similar to perceptions. Thus, when the lion sees a zebra, the general perceptual experience (imagination) of a zebra is brought forth. This general experience will not only include the lion's experience eating it, but also the pleasure associated with this eating. Hence, the zebra will appear as a pleasant thing to eat, and upon seeing it, the lion will move to eat it.

11. A Clarification

Now, it might be objected that if pleasure is a part of the *phantasia* that compose sense perception, then we are stuck with the very same problem with which we began. The earlier problem, I noted, is that something like the pleasure of smell cannot explain why an animal acts to eat what it smells. For if what is pleasant is the smell and the animal is already smelling, there

is nothing more the pleasant smell can impel it to do. On this new account of perception/*phantasia*, there seems to be the same problem. If *phantasia* affect us like the objects of perception do, then this would seem to imply that upon recalling the experience of eating the zebra's pleasant flesh, the lion is already receiving the pleasure of the eating and thus there is no reason for it to act.

This objection, I believe, is easily overcome. In *De Somno*, Aristotle makes it clear that *phantasia* can be regarded in various ways depending on the state we are in. When our state is somehow compromised, the presentation of *phantasia* can seem real and lead to deception. Aristotle writes, "For, speaking generally, the controlling power affirms the report given by each sense, unless another power still more authoritative contradicts it. In every case the image (*phainetai*) is there, but the image (*to phainomenon*) does not in every case seem real, but only when judging faculty (*to epikrino*) is restrained, or is not moving with its proper movement" (461b4-8).⁶³ The judging or moving faculty here applies to both perception and thought. Thus, for instance, if we put an object between two crossed fingers it will appear, by means of touch, to be two objects (number, remember, is something that is perceived by the senses). However, if our vision is functioning, this is a more authoritative sense than touch and will contradict the information provided to us by touch. If vision is not working, then the object between the fingers will seem to be two. Something similar happens with sleep, as we've already seen above. In the waking hours, Aristotle thinks that we still have imaginations, but they are "obscured in the same way as a smaller fire is obscured by a greater, and small pains and pleasures by great." But when we sleep and perception stops, the "small ones come to the surface" and are seen as real (461a2-5). Thus, although Aristotle does not say it explicitly, we can assume then that when

⁶³ All *De Somno* translations by Beare (1984) unless otherwise noted.

one is awake and perceiving, the *phantasia* that occur with perception are less present to us than the actual perceptions, although they are nonetheless present. And because the lion, for instance, sees the zebra off in the distance, the *phantasia* of pleasure that comes from previously eating the zebra will not be seen as being the case now, but more closely akin to a property of the zebra. It is something that the zebra has which the lion does not have.

Such a perception is, I think, enough to motivate action. If the lion perceives the zebra's taste as pleasant and, at the same time, perceives that he does not now have that taste, the pleasure will attract the lion, pulling him toward the zebra, causing him to act. However, if one thinks this insufficient, the lion has access to additional perceptions. For as we saw in *De Memoria*, perceptions are organized in time. Thus, the visual appearance of the zebra will be grouped with the lion's perception of its taste, and this perception will be connected to the lion's experience killing the zebra, which will in turn be connected with his experience attacking it, and then running after it, and so on. This allows the lion to see the zebra now as similar to the sort of animal that tasted pleasant in the past, a pleasure that is got by killing the animal, which is got by running after it. In short, contained in the perception is not only the pleasure, but the steps needed to achieve that pleasure to make it real.

The result of this account is a rich perceptual experience. Merely considering the *aisthēmata* present to the senses at a particular time, perceptual experience consists of discrete objects that are colored, pungent, emit sound, and have certain textures. But considered in a wider sense and enriched by *phantasia*, the objects that populate perceptual experience are also seen as pleasant and painful, as objects that are inviting or objects that are repulsive. Looking around the hot mid-day landscape, the lion sees rocks, trees, shade, water, etc. The rocks appear

hot, something painful to the touch, and thus, looking at it, the lion is deterred. In contrast, the dark shade of the tree appears cool and inviting, something that will bring relief from the beating sun. Finally, the glassy water, although bright in the sun, is perceived as refreshing and inviting, something that pulls the lion forward.

This enjoyable or pleasant look of objects Moss equates to perceiving objects as good. The reason for this is that Moss thinks, and I agree, that the good does not have to be conceptualized as such; it can be conceived of under the guise of another property. The good is that which motivates action and as such is considered as something to be gone for. Something taken as pleasant or as honorable that motivates one to pursue it is something that is thereby taken to be good. This seems clear in *NE* 1, where Aristotle, in discussing the good, notes that most people take pleasure itself to be the good. In this case, it hardly seems necessary that such people actually conceive of pleasure as a good. Indeed, it does not even seem necessary that people conceptualize the fact that all of their actions are aimed at the good. The point is that in being motivated by pleasure or honor, such people are taking these things as goods. Consequently, in being able to perceive certain objects as pleasant and hence as objects to be pursued, one thereby perceives them as good.

One might maintain that even if it is granted that we do not need to conceive of an object as good in order to pursue it as such, to pursue an object as good requires a greater amount of conceptualization than mere perception allows. For instance, one might maintain that in order to pursue an object as good, it is not enough to merely see an object as pleasant; one must rationally acknowledge that it is pleasant. Or, one might argue that in order to take an object as good, one must consider it the best option out of a number of alternative options rationally weighed against

one another. In response to these objections, there is some evidence that animals do perceive the good. For instance in the *De Anima* Aristotle writes,

[24] Desire is influenced by what is just at hand: A pleasant object just at hand presents itself as both pleasant and good (433b8-9).

And then, in further explaining movement:

[25] All movement involves three factors, (1) that which originates the movement, (2) that by means of which it originates it, and (3) that which is moved. The expression ‘that which originates movement’ is ambiguous: it may mean either something which itself is unmoved or that which at once moves and is moved. Here that which moves without itself being moved is the realizable good, that which at once moves and is moved is the faculty of appetite . . . while that which is in motion is the animal (433b12-19).

Passage [24] indicates that an object perceived as pleasant is also thereby perceived as good. And moreover, [25] indicates that this perception of the pleasant/good is what originates movement.

We have an appetite for the pleasant/good. Thus, when we perceive an object as such, we are moved by the “realizable good.” This explanation is meant to apply to “all movement,” says Aristotle, and hence must apply to motion in all animals. Thus, according to these passages, it does seem that non-rational animals pursue the good and hence that the good can be grasped simply through perception.

Moreover, that pleasant objects perceived as objects to be pursued are thereby perceived as good gains strong support from the *NE*. As I will argue in the next chapter, the end, i.e. that which motivates us to act, is that which is thereby perceived as good.

Despite this evidence, even if one prefers to deny that the good can be perceived, this denial will have no deep philosophical consequences for my view. Most of all, it will have terminological consequences. To avoid controversy, I will sometimes refer to the perceived object as I have been referring to it here: as an object “to be pursued” or an object seen as “worth

pursuing.” I will reserve “good” to refer to the pursued object when it is explicitly rationally endorsed. However, in certain instances where this becomes overly awkward or where perception and reason are operating together, I will refer to the perceived object as “good.”

Thus, we have an account of perception rich enough to explain how it motivates movement. It allows animals to perceive pleasures that they are not now experiencing through *aisthēsis* and which draw them in to act. Unlike Moss’s account, this account does not rely on an overly controversial reading of *APo* II.19 according to which the perceptual faculty alone synthesizes universals. Rather, it succeeds by simply requiring that the perceptual faculty be able to generalize over what it has experienced in the past and apply it to what is perceived in the present. Moreover, the resulting cognition needed for action, although similar to Lorenz’s account, stops short of requiring the animal to “envision prospects.” The problem with envisioning prospects is that it must be accomplished by perception alone but it is not clear how perception could produce such a high level cognition. Fortunately, I don’t think that envisioning prospects is needed to explain movement. On my account, the animal simply perceives a pleasure which he does not have, which is seen as “over there,” and which draws him forward. If one objects that this is not enough, more resources can be drawn and generalized from the animal’s past experience, e.g. that this pleasure is had by attacking the animal and killing the animal. What we do not have to do—and indeed cannot do given the non-rational resources at our disposal—is maintain that a cognition of potential prospects is needed for action. The resulting view is not just a less rationalistic account of perception. By not drawing on overly rationalist cognitions, my view presents an account of perceptual cognition that only uses

resources clearly at perception's disposal and in doing so, I believe it paints a more accurate picture of what perceptual cognition is like.

CHAPTER 2

THE RELATION BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND THOUGHT

The previous chapter developed a psychological explanation of how animals, both human and non-human, are motivated to move without employing an intellectual capacity. It showed that what ultimately spurs movement is the perception of an object or activity as pleasant (using “perceive” to broadly refer to both *aisthēsis* and *phantasia*), which then creates a desire that motivates us to move for the perceived object.

In contrast to motion, Aristotle’s account of action explains how reason is involved in our movements. Broadly speaking, action is a coordination between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul: the non-rational, desiderative part of the soul to which character virtues apply and the rational part of the soul to which the intellectual virtues apply. As in movement, there is in action a motivational object or activity. In discussions of action, Aristotle calls this object an end or good and it is grasped by wish. When one selects an object as an end or good, a desire is formed for it and reason deliberates about how to achieve it. This deliberation then leads to a choice to perform a particular action which, if one’s deliberation was good, will lead one to the end that one wishes to achieve.

Putting these two accounts of motivation side by side raises a question of how they are related, if they are related at all.⁶⁴ There are at least three ways of understanding the relation

⁶⁴ Note that this question and the topic of this chapter, is psychological. I am specifically interested in what characteristics an object or activity must be cognized to have in order to be taken up as an end or good. I will leave aside the question about the nature of the good and whether that nature can be articulated independent of our psychology.

between motivation in movement and action. First, Aristotle's account of motivation in action can be seen as entirely distinct from his account of motivation in action. On this view, reason alone is sufficient for action. By rationally conceiving of an end as honorable, virtuous, or advantageous, this can create in us a desire to pursue the end and motivate us to act. The second way of characterizing the relation between movement and action admits that Aristotle's account of motion plays a role in action but maintains that rationality can direct this motivation. According to this account, in order for us to be moved to pursue an end, we must see that end as pleasant, but what we see as pleasant can be rationally determined. Thus, rationality ultimately controls action, because what we rationally take to be an end is prior to what we take to be pleasant.⁶⁵ Lastly, the third characterization maintains that perception of what is pleasant determines the ends that we pursue, and that this perception is not controlled by reason. On this account, the non-rational perception of pleasure is prior to reason; reason merely plays the part of determining the means to the ends set by perception.⁶⁶

The question of what the relation between movement and action is closely mirrors the rationalist vs. Humean interpretations of Aristotle mentioned in the introduction. For, if one of the first two characterizations is taken to be true, then action will turn out to be a peculiarly rational way of being motivated and hence Aristotle will be found to have had a rationalist account of action. Aristotle's account of action can be seen as stating that reason can determine which ends are good to pursue, thus motivating us to pursue them. However, if the third characterization is true, and the two accounts are more closely connected, then human

⁶⁵ See Broadie (1993, 313-363)

⁶⁶ Moss (2012), Hardie (1965)

motivation, even when rationality is involved, will be more Humean insofar as it will be determined by non-rational cognitions of what is pleasant.

In this chapter, I will consider an argument that favors the third interpretation, namely that perception of pleasure should be understood as determining the ends that we pursue. By and large, the moral psychology that I present will be similar to an account that Jessica Moss argues for in *Aristotle on the Apparent Good*. According to this account, character establishes ends through perception, since it determines which activities we enjoy and thus determines which ends we see as good or bad to pursue. Many passages in the *NE* recommend this sort of Humean interpretation, particularly Aristotle's claims that character, not reason, sets ends as well as his use of perceptual language in discussing ends.

Moreover, like Moss, I maintain that perception's ability to establish ends seriously limits the functionality of thought. Thought, Aristotle says, thinks in terms of perceptions. This means, for instance, that when considering a poppy, we call to mind a flower that is orange and thereby think of the flower as orange. Similarly, when we think of a certain activity, we call to mind our experience of that activity. If that activity appeared good, the intellect thereby *thinks* of it as good. Or, if it was seen as bad, the intellect thereby thinks of it as bad. This account of the intellect does not deny that one can rationally survey a series of potential ends to pursue. Rather, it maintains that in surveying these ends, what seems to one to be most worthy of pursuit will be those that *look* best to pursue.

However, despite this similarity with Moss, we draw different conclusions. Moss comes to the radical conclusion that perceptions of the good are entirely determinate of what we think to be good. In contrast, I will argue that perception is *largely* determinate of what we think to be

good, but that this account leaves open the possibility for thought to alter our ends by altering perception. Chapter 3 will explore how thought can do so.

There are three benefits that recommend my account. First, it has long been acknowledged that Aristotle uses his ideas about biology and the soul in the *NE*. My account will further illuminate how he does so by showing strong connections between the *NE*, *De Anima* and *De Motu Animalium*. Second, it will uncover the relationship between perception and thought by articulating the cognitive limits that perception puts on thought. Third, while I do not think that these limits are so constrained that Aristotle is a Humean, I think that they are severe enough that they show that gaining rational control over one's actions is more difficult than usually acknowledged.

The argument that I present in this chapter will begin by noting Aristotle's usage of perception words in the *NE*. I will argue that these should not be taken as a way of referring to intellectual cognitions, but as references to sense perception as presented in the *DA*. Second, I will argue that by importing Aristotle's account of perceptual based motivation from the *De Motu*, we will better understand how character sets ends. Thus, I will conclude that we take as ends/goods those things that appear to us to be pleasant. Finally, I will argue that thought does not play a role in establishing our ends due to Aristotle's understanding of the role that perception, particularly *phantasia*, plays in thought. Aristotle's view allows him to maintain that character sets ends through our perception of what is pleasant/good.

1. Wish and the perception of goodness

In the case of action, Aristotle calls the object that motivates one to act an end. It is that which one sees as worth pursuing and, hence, as good. There is good evidence in Aristotle's ethics that what picks out this end is not only perceptual but non-rational, and thus that the explanation of how it does so can be cashed out using Aristotle's account of motivation as described in Chapter 1. In this and the following section, I will give a preliminary explanation of this account.

The connection between action and perception is immediately drawn in Aristotle's discussion of ends in action, which Aristotle says are picked out by wish. Aristotle writes,

[1] That wish is for the end, we have already said; but to some it seems to be for the good whereas to others it seems to be for the *apparent* good (τοῦ φαινομένου ἀγαθοῦ). The consequence, for those who say that the object of wish is the good, is that what the person making an incorrect choice wishes for is not wished for (for if it is wished for, it will also be good; but in fact it may have been bad); while for those who say that the apparent good (τὸ φαινόμενον ἀγαθόν) is wished for, the consequence is that there is nothing naturally wished for, only what seems an object of wish to each particular person; and different things appear so (φαίνεται) to different people, perhaps even contrary ones. But if, then, we are not content with these views, should we say that the good is without qualification (ἀπλῶς) and in truth the object of wish, whereas what appears good (τὸ φαινόμενον) to a given person is the object of wish for that person? We shall then be saying that for the person of excellence the object of wish is the one that is truly so, whereas for the bad person it is as chance will have it, just as on the physical level too the things that are truly healthful are healthful for people in good condition, whereas a different set of things is healthful for those that are diseased; and similarly too with bitter, sweet, hot, heavy, and every other sort of thing; for the good person discriminates correctly in every set of circumstances, and in every set of circumstances what is true appears (φαίνεται) to him. For each disposition has its own corresponding range of fine things and pleasant things, and presumably what most distinguishes the good person is his ability to see (ὁρᾶν) what is true in every set of circumstances, being like a carpenter's rule or measure for them (1113a15-35).

Wish is a rational activity and as such is sometimes translated "rational wish." The object of wish is an end, i.e. a good. In this passage, Aristotle is considering whether this good is *the* good

(i.e. the real good or the good “without qualification”) or what appears good? At the beginning of this passage, Aristotle notes the shortcomings of each view. If we say that wish is for *the* good, it will be difficult to explain why people sometimes wish for what is not good. We will have to say something that seems paradoxical such as, “what is wished for is not wished for.” On the other hand, if everyone always goes for what appears good, there will seem to be no standard by which we can say that some of the ends wished for are truly good, whereas others are not.

In resolving this puzzle, Aristotle distinguishes between two types of objects: the objects wished for by particular people and the object of wish considered independent of any particular person. Aristotle’s calls these latter sorts of objects the objects of wish without qualification. Everyone takes as the object of his or her wish what *appears* (φαίνεται) to them to be good, and what appears to one as good is relative to the kind of person one is.⁶⁷ Hence, contra Socrates, what each person wishes for is what is *apparently* good, i.e. what one perceives to be good. Yet, this does not force us to say that “there is nothing naturally wished for;” that is to say, we do not have to maintain that there is no fact of the matter about what is good, only what seems to people to be good. This is because there is something that is good independent of people’s psychologies, based on their nature, on the sort of beings they are.

This last point is, admittedly, not explicitly stated in this passage. However, Aristotle’s reference to this latter sort of good as that which is the object of wish “without qualification” and “in truth” indicates that this is indeed what Aristotle has in mind. Aristotle uses “without qualification” (ἀπλῶς) many times in the ethics (more than eighty, approximately thirty of which are translated by Ross “without qualification”). Importantly, ἀπλῶς is used in *NE* I.4, 1095a30-1095b3, in Aristotle’s description of the methodology he will be following which he takes from

⁶⁷ More specifically and as will be argued later, what we see as good is relative to the sort of character we have.

Plato. According to this methodology, we must begin with what is better known to us and proceed to what is better known by nature or, in other words, without qualification. Thus, Aristotle begins by considering what individual people (or groups of people) take to be good and works toward considering what is actually good. It turns out that one of the central methods employed to discover this good is the function argument. By analyzing the sort of beings we are, Aristotle is able to reach an account of what is by nature good for man, or good for man without qualification, independent of what anyone takes to be good. If *this* good is the object of one's wish, then one is good and the object of one's wish and the object of wish without qualification are identical. For, As Aristotle says, what is truly good is apparent to the good person in all situations.⁶⁸

Thus, in this passage, Aristotle is making a distinction between two things: what particular people wish for and consider to be good in their own activities and what is good independent of any particular person's psychology. Since I am concerned with giving an account of motivation in action, I will for the time being be concerned only with the apparent good, since it is this good that actually figures in the deliberations of individual people.

2. Three Interpretations

What is notable about passage [1] is that each person's object of wish, i.e. the apparent good, is described using perceptual language, φαίνεται, φαινόμενον, and ὁρᾶν.

⁶⁸ Aristotle might also be making a further point in this passage, which should be noted but is not entirely relevant to my argument. In addition to noting that what appears good to the excellent person is what is good without qualification, Aristotle also seems to be making the point that for non-excellent people, there is also something that is truly good, although it will not be *the* good. This is not to say that non-excellent people will be able to discern what they actually need. Indeed, because they are not virtuous, they will likely not be able to discern that. What distinguishes the person of excellence is his ability to see just that, for himself and for other people. This is not relevant to my argument here because I am interested only in what makes an object appear to someone to be good. I am not concerned with giving an account of what is actually good.

However, in using this language, it is not necessarily the case that Aristotle means to refer to sense perception proper (i.e. sense perception as discussed in the *DA*). It might also be used to refer to a kind of intellectual seeming, similar to how an English speaker might say, “it appears to me that you’re lying.” In this latter case, perceptual language is used to refer to a kind of intellectual belief. Given this ambiguity in language, there are at least three ways of interpreting this passage. First, we can understand Aristotle as introducing a sort of rational cognition that goes hand-in-hand with a peculiar sort of knowledge that today we would call “know-how.” This type of cognition would be perceptual-like and akin to a sort of skill acquisition. Second, we can understand Aristotle’s use of perceptual language as indicating specifically intellectual cognitions. Or third, we can take Aristotle to be referring to sense perception proper, i.e. the sort of perception that is accomplished by the perceptual soul rather than the rational soul.

The first option can be set aside since it lacks strong textual support. While *NE* 6 has a few lines referring to an intellectual function, *phronēsis*, with perceptual language (e.g. 1144a30), these lines can support other interpretations and ones that do not require us to posit an entirely new type of especially intellectual perception that Aristotle virtually ignores everywhere else in his corpus.

The second option is on firmer ground. It is obviously true that not all of Aristotle’s language is technical and moreover, there is evidence that Aristotle does use perceptual language to refer to intellectual seeming.⁶⁹ This gains support from the fact that this meaning is part of the definition of the Greek words. It is therefore sensible for Aristotle to use these words to indicate an intellectual seeming.

⁶⁹ For instance, I.2, 1094a26-7: “[The chief good] would seem to belong to the most sovereign, i.e. the most ‘architectonic.’ Political expertise appears (φαίνεται) to be like this.”

Despite the strengths of this second view, I think that this interpretation is less ideal than the third interpretation, which treats the language as perceptual. I will defend this interpretation below. If it is correct, it unifies Aristotle's ethics, psychology, and biology to a great extent. This integration offers several benefits. First, it reveals the biological and psychological foundations of the *NE*, a foundation commonly recognized with respect to the function argument but often overlooked in Aristotle's account of action. Second, it allows us to resolve a central difficulty in Aristotle's account of action in the *NE* by demonstrating how Aristotle can claim that character sets ends while appearing to assume that rationality also influences ends. This integration will allow us to better understand the relation between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul and how the rational can influence the non-rational.

To begin, let us look at some textual support for the perceptual reading in the wish passage itself. As we have learned, animals (human and non-human) are motivated to move because *phantasia* can present *phantasmata* of objects as pleasant and painful, i.e. good or bad. This directly connects with Aristotle's usage of *phainetai*. Although not identical, *phainō* and *phantasia* are very similar and denote a particularly sense-perceptual type of appearance. First, the words have a similar sense, since both are used to present sensory information. As the LSJ notes, *phantasia* is a "verbal noun of *phantazomai* and (in sense) of *phainomai*, appearing appearance" (1915). Second, Aristotle often uses *phainetai* to describe the presentation of information that is explicitly sensory in nature within his discussion of the senses in the *De Anima*. Here are some examples:

[2] Perception is either a potentiality like sight or an activity like seeing; but something can appear (φαίνεται) to us when neither of these is present, e.g. things in dreams (428a6-8).

[3] Further, it is not when we are exercising {our senses} accurately with regard to objects of perception that we say that this appears (φαίνεται) to us to be a man, but rather when we do not perceive (αἰσθανώμεθα) it distinctly; and then it may be either true or false. And as we said before, sights appear (φαίνεται) to us even with the eyes closed (428a13-17).

[4] But things can also appear (φαίνεται) falsely, when we have at the same time a true supposition about them, e.g. the sun appears (φαίνεται) a foot across, although we believe it to be bigger than the inhabited world (428b1-4).

In each of these cases, *phainetai* is used to denote a particularly sense-perceptual type of appearing that is directly connected to *phantasia*. These passages discuss whether or not *phantasia* is distinct from perception (*aisthēsis*) and these are a number of examples that show that it is: things can appear when our eyes are closed and things can appear falsely, i.e. when there is no perceptual object in front of us. These passages show that Aristotle's usage of perceptual language in the wish passage ([1]) can be read as distinctively perceptual and not as a loose way of referring to intellectual seeming.

Aristotle's discussion of the voluntary at *NE* III.5 and his contention that character makes the end right lend further support to this interpretation of [1]. First, Aristotle turns to the discussion of the voluntary immediately after his chapter on wish. In his discussion, Aristotle maintains that our actions, whether they are good or bad, are voluntary and therefore up to us. He then considers an objection to his position and responds to it. For the purposes of our discussion, this response is important because it indicates that the perceptual language used in [1]'s description of wish refers to sense perception and not to an intellectual kind of seeming.

In III.5 Aristotle initially takes it for granted that our actions are up to us, maintaining that because our actions are up to us, so too are our character states. He writes, "Given, then, that what is wished for is the end, while what we deliberate about and decide on are the things that

forward the end, the actions relating to the latter will be based on decision and voluntary. But the activities that constitute the excellences are concerned with these. Excellence too, then, depends on us, and similarly badness as well” (1113b3-7). Here, Aristotle takes it as given that the activities that we undertake because of deliberation are up to us. This is likely because deliberation is a rational activity, and rationality is something that we can control and hence up to us.⁷⁰ In contrast, the excellences (i.e. the character excellences) are states of the non-rational part of the soul and thus less obviously up to us. However, since these non-rational character excellences are developed out of performing many individual activities through deliberation (which is up to us), so too are the excellences up to us.

But a problem still remains. Deliberation is only about means, not ends, and ends are arguably more important to our actions, since they guide all of our deliberations. Thus Aristotle notes that someone may raise the following objection: “suppose someone said that while every one of us aims at what appears to us good, we are not in control of the appearance, but rather the sort of person each of us is, whatever that may be, determines how the end, too, appears to him” (1114a31-1114b2). Now, this objection works by treating perception as a non-rational function of the soul, something that is not up to us, and hence like sense-perception. The objector’s point is that—as Aristotle said in his discussion of wish—we aim at what *appears* good, and what *appears* good is not up to us but is based on the sort of person one is. This connection will be further developed below. For now, it is enough to note that character is developed through habituation, which is closely related to experience. Thus, as we have seen, since experience determines how things (sensually) appear to us, habituation too will determine how things

⁷⁰ As Aristotle writes later in the *NE*, “people are called self-controlled or un-self-controlled by reference to whether intelligence is in control or not” (IX.8, 1168b34-6).

(sensually) appear to us. If this is true, and ends are established by (sense) appearances, which are themselves determined by our non-rational character states, then it seems that our actions are ultimately not up to us.

Now, if Aristotle had in the wish chapter been treating “appearances” as intellectual appearances, then he could respond to this objection by stating that the objector had misunderstood him. Wishing is a rational activity that establishes our ends. Consequently, it is voluntary and up to us. But this is not his response. Rather, Aristotle assumes along with the objector that appearances are non-rational and determined by character. Rather, if our ends and actions are up to us, it must be because we are somehow responsible for the underlying character states which determine those perceptions. He writes, “Well, if each of us is himself somehow responsible for causing his disposition in himself, he will also be somehow responsible for the appearance in question. If he is *not* somehow responsible for this disposition, no one is responsible for its being the case that he himself does bad things” (1114b2-4). Later, he relates this point to what he calls “excellent things,” noting that if we are not in control of our disposition, then excellence will be similarly involuntary: “If, then, all this is true, how will excellence be any more voluntary than badness” (1114b13-14)?” Aristotle of course thinks that our dispositions and hence actions are up to us and some of the strategies that can be used to influence character will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3 and the Conclusion.

The important point here is that Aristotle does not object to the implication of the objection that appearances are determined by our character states and non-rational. Rather, he notes that if our appearances and thus actions and ends are going to be voluntary, then it must be that we can somehow rationally influence the underlying character states that determine these perceptions.

This very strongly suggests that Aristotle is referring to *sense* perception in [1], not some kind of intellectual seeming.

Second, the perceptual interpretation of [1] is supported by Aristotle's suggestions that character, not reason, establishes our ends. The perceptual reading harmonizes nicely with these passages while the more rationalist reading seems to contradict them. Here are the relevant passages:

[5] Again the 'product' is brought to completion by virtue of a person's having wisdom and excellence of character; for excellence makes the goal correct, while wisdom makes what leads to it correct (*NE* VI.12, 1144a7-10).

[6] Now that we have discussed preliminary questions let us state our view. It is possible for the aim to be right, but for a man to go wrong in what contributes to that aim; and again the aim may be mistaken, while the things leading to it are right; or both may be mistaken. Does then excellence make the aim, or the things that contribute to that aim? We say the aim, because this is not attained by inference or reasoning. Let us assume this as starting-point (*EE* II.11, 1227b19-25).

[7] If, then, of all correctness either reason or excellence is the cause, if reason is not the cause, then the end (but not the things contributing to it) must owe its rightness to excellence (*EE* II.11, 1227b33-36)

[8] Still choice is not of this but of the things done for the sake of this. To hit on these things—I mean what ought to be done for the sake of the object—belongs to another faculty; but of the rightness of the end of the choice the cause is excellence (*EE* II.11, 1227b37-1228a2).

Further, there are passages that lend support to [5]–[8]. Although they do not state what sets ends, they indicate that the rational activity of deliberation is limited to determining means:

[9] We deliberate not about ends but what contributes to those ends (*NE* III.3, 1112b12).

[10] Now about the end no one deliberates (this being fixed for all), but about that which tends to it—whether this or that tends to it, and—supposing this or that resolved on—how it is brought about (*EE* 1226b10).

[11] But since in deliberating one always deliberates for the sake of some end, and he who deliberates has always an aim by reference to which he judges what is expedient, no

one deliberates about the end; this is the starting-point and assumption, like the assumptions in theoretical science (we have spoken about this briefly in the beginning of this work and minutely in the *Analytics*) (*EE* 1227a6-10).

Looking at passages [5]–[8], we see that what sets our ends is not reason but character or excellence. This limited role of reason is confirmed by passages [9]–[11]. The contention that character or character excellence sets our ends gives *prima facie* support to the contention that perception sets our ends: in both cases, it is the non-rational part of the soul that establishes our ends.

Moreover, if we bring in Aristotle's account of motivation articulated in Chapter 1, we can see in more detail how these positions support each other. In movement, perception establishes the object we pursue when we perceive something as pleasant. This is because they are enriched with extra perceptual information (i.e. *phantasmata*). *Phantasia* stores perceptions in our perceptual organ and organizes them in such a way that similar sense perceptions are stored together. As similar *phantasia* build up, the perceptual faculty produces more general perceptions. In turn, these general perceptions allow the animal to see particular things as being of a certain sort, with certain attributes.

In ethics, habituation represents one of the primary ways of bringing up children. By habituation, I mean the act of instructing children to have repeated experiences of similar kinds. As Chapter 1 indicated, accumulated similar perceptual experiences develop into a more general experience that allows one to recognize future experiences as similar to those that one has had in the past. For instance, when we have many experiences that share a certain sort of character, say experiences involving being honored, these experiences are stored by the perceptual organ so

that, as one gains more experience, a more general perception emerges which allows one to see and imagine further activities as honorable.⁷¹

This much is essentially already contained in Aristotle's psychology articulated outside of the ethics and sketched in Chapter 1. What the *NE* adds to the story is that the perceptions/*phantasmata* that are found pleasant are not only those that one finds pleasant by nature. By repeating an experience, children can be trained to develop a character disposed to find this experience pleasant and therefore, as Aristotle states, as good.⁷² As Burnyeat writes, "There is such a thing as learning to enjoy something (painting, music, skiing, philosophy), and it is not sharply distinct from learning that the thing in question is enjoyable... I learn that skiing is enjoyable only by trying it myself and coming to enjoy it" (76). The same is true in the case of moral action. If one comes to be habituated to what is noble or selfless, one comes to thereby enjoy those activities. And similarly, if one is habituated to bad activities, such as being selfish or harming others, one comes to delight in those.⁷³ Thus Aristotle's statement that "moral excellence is concerned with pleasures and pains; it is on account of the pleasure that we do bad

⁷¹ My definition of habituation follows that of others. It is similar to Moss's (2012) account of development and also resembles the interpretation of Burnyeat (1980) (although it is not identical to it. Burnyeat writes, "The thesis is that we first learn (come to see) what is noble and just *not* by experience of or induction from a series of instances, nor by intuition (intellectual or perceptual), but by learning to do noble and just things, by being habituated to noble and just conduct" (73). In the context of this dissertation, the parenthetical phrase "come to see" acquires a different meaning from the meaning that Burnyeat means for it to have. For Burnyeat, there is an especially intellectual kind of seeing that we develop, a faculty distinct from what might be called intuitionism. As I have argued, I think that this position is a non-starter for the simple reason that perception is a non-rational faculty. By simply stipulating that there can be a kind of rational seeing one sidesteps the difficult question of how the non-rational faculty of perception can be so involved in the rational process of action and practical reason.

⁷² It is noteworthy that even this distinction between things found pleasant by nature vs. things found pleasant by habituation roughly tracks the distinction made in Aristotle's account of memory between memories that are connected by nature and memories that are connected incidentally, through one's individual experience. In the case of memory, heat and fire are two things that are usually connected in one's memory since heat is an essential property of fire. It is part of fire's nature, so to speak. However, based on one's personal experience with fire, one might also associate it with cold nights in front of the fireplace.

Similarly, in the ethical case one might find something pleasant because it is simply in one's nature to do so. For instance, sweetness is thought to be innately pleasant to humans (Ventura 2011). However, one can also come to enjoy activities through one's unique experiences, e.g. playing guitar.

⁷³ I am following Burnyeat here.

things, and on account of pain that we abstain from noble ones. Hence we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth, as Plato says, so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought” (*NE* II.2, 1104b9-13, quoted in Burnyeat 1980, 77). The picture then is that children are initially directed to do what is noble and just by parents who accomplish this direction through praise (pleasant) and blame (painful). But as children gain experience, they come to take pleasure in these activities themselves and gain pleasant experiences. Children come to see noble and just actions as pleasant and to desire to do these activities themselves, as ends and thus goods.

Thus, we can see that Aristotle’s contention that character sets ends is harmonious with and supported by the contention that perception sets ends. Perception establishes our ends through its ability to produce generalized perceptions that appear pleasant and in being pleasant, as things to be pursued as ends/goods. These general perceptions are developed through pleasant experiences. Some of these experiences are pleasant because we find them pleasant by nature. However, through habituation, we can also learn to enjoy certain activities. Thus, as a child, by being continually instructed to perform a certain action, one comes to find that sort of action pleasant, and hence one takes it as an end/good.

3. Objection

An upshot of this account is that the sole motivating force of our actions is the perception of an object as pleasant or painful. That is to say, pleasure and pain are both necessary and sufficient for action. Given this, we should expect Aristotle to say that the sole motivating force in the *Ethics* is what is most pleasant. Sometimes Aristotle does appear to say this. For instance,

in his discussion of contemplation as the happiest life, Aristotle writes, “what belongs to each kind of creature by nature is best and most pleasant for each; for man, then, the life in accordance with intelligence is so too, given that man is this most of all. This life, then, will also be the happiest” (*NE* X.7, 1178a5-8). However, one might worry that Aristotle contradicts this upshot elsewhere. In particular, in *NE* II.3, Aristotle says that we are also motivated by the noble and the advantageous (1104b30-1105a1). This text suggests, one might argue, that although we might be motivated when we perceive something to be pleasant, we are also motivated when we believe something to be noble or advantageous. I will argue that in fact, the text does not say this. Rather, it says that the noble and the advantageous succeed in being motivational when they are seen as pleasant. In what follows, I will argue in section 4 that desire is always for objects that are pleasant and to avoid objects that are painful. Then, in section 6, I will argue that this is in fact confirmed by the *NE* II.3 passage discussing the noble and the advantageous.

4. Desire is for Pleasure and Pain

The clearest case in favor of the claim that desire is always for pleasure and pain is (quite simply) Aristotle’s statement that desire is for pleasure and pain (already quoted in Chapter 1): “whatever has a sense has the capacity for pleasure and pain and therefore has pleasant and painful objects present to it, and wherever these are present, there is desire, for desire is just appetite of what is pleasant” (*DA* II.3, 414b5-6). In the context of Aristotle’s ethics, we see that this is also true of character states, i.e. states of the non-rational appetitive part of the soul. As we have seen, character sets our ends and this means, I contend, that a good character will find most pleasure in those ends that are actually good for us, and hence give us the most pleasure, while a

bad character will delight in those things that are not good for us and in fact bring pain.

Aristotle confirms this in his discussion of character and character virtues in *NE* II.3. In this chapter, Aristotle is giving us reasons in favor of thinking that “the pleasure or pain that supervenes on what people do should be treated as a sign of their dispositions” (1104b4-5). His reasons are, to put it simply, because one does those things that one finds pleasant and avoids those things that one finds painful, and what one finds pleasant and painful is determined by one’s character.⁷⁴ If we are pained by the sight of a mouse and flee, we are cowardly; if we do not fear it and do not flee, we are not. Aristotle begins his defense of this view with the following passages:

[12][a] For excellence of character is concerned with pleasures and pains; it is on account of the pleasure that we do bad things, and on account of the pain that we abstain from noble ones. [b] Hence we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth, as Plato says, so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought; this is the right education (II.3, 1104b9-14).

[13] Again, if the excellences have to do with actions and affections, and every affection and every action is accompanied by pleasure and pain, this will be another reason for thinking that excellence has to do with pleasures and pains (II.3, 1104b14-6).

Despite its brevity, passage [12] hits on a number of central topics concerning character. First, [12][a] indicates that character takes pleasure and pain as its object. Aristotle begins with the somewhat ambiguous statement that excellence of character is “concerned with” pleasure and pain. This same point is reiterated slightly later in [13]. There the suggestion seems to be that

⁷⁴ To anticipate, one might have the following worry in mind at this point: sure, it is true that character determines which things we find pleasant and painful, but *in addition*, thought too can cause us to find certain things pleasant and painful. Thus, while one might characteristically take some action *x* to be pleasant, one might think to oneself that it is wrong, thus causing one to see it as painful. This is an important point and one that I take up and use in the next chapter in order to show that indeed, despite the Humean-esque view I sketch here, what we see as pleasant and painful can be altered by reason. However, note that given the psychology presented in the remainder of this chapter, it is not easy to see how reason could possibly change our perception of what we see as pleasant. The reason for this is two-fold. First, our perceptions of pleasure and pain are (at least as we have seen so far) determined by our experiences, which are not easily (if at all) amenable to manipulation by thought. Second, given the relation between perception and thought, what we think to be good seems to be entirely determined by perception.

excellence has to do with pleasure and pain because in every case where character is in play, i.e. in action, there is always pleasure and pain. The second clause of [12][a], it seems, aims to clarify what “has to do with” means: it is because of pleasure that we do bad things and because of pain that we abstain from good ones. Although it is not made explicitly clear what the relation between the two clauses in [12][a] is, it is not hard to draw the connection. Aristotle’s idea is presumably that our character—and thus character excellence—determines what we consider pleasant and what we consider painful. This is significant because we do that which we find pleasant and abstain from that which we find painful. This seems to harmonize with Aristotle’s previous contention that character sets ends. It does so, at least in part, by determining which ends we find pleasant and worth going after and which we find painful and worth avoiding.⁷⁵

This interpretation is further reinforced by [12][b], which mentions the topic of character development. Returning to Aristotle’s distinction between intellectual and character excellences, one of the ways in which these excellences differ is in how they are taught. The intellectual excellences can be taught through ordinary teaching. In contrast, the character excellences cannot. They must be instilled in one through habituation, i.e. through a repetition of action. [12][b] gives us an indication of *why* (although not *how*) this habituation is supposed to work: “...we ought to have been brought up in a particular way from our very youth, as Plato says, so as both to delight in and to be pained by the things that we ought;...” When one is brought up in a particular way and habituated to a certain action, one comes to take pleasure in that action. This means that if one is brought up poorly, one will come to take pleasure in things that are not, in

⁷⁵ This is not to say that the end or goal of one’s deliberations would be pleasure itself. Indeed, this is contrary to the way that Aristotle understands pleasure: it is a part of the object and is what leads us to take up an object as pleasant. But in our deliberations, the object itself will be the goal of one’s deliberations. Hence, if one is liberal, then liberality itself will function as an end in one’s deliberations.

fact, very good. By contrast, if one is brought up well, one will come to take pleasure in those things that are in fact good. For instance, a child who is brought up and allowed to eat as much candy as she wants will come to develop an intense pleasure for candy while failing to take pleasure in things that are actually good for her. A child who is brought up well will take pleasure in eating healthy food and will be pained by eating too much candy.

This is supported by a remark that Aristotle makes shortly after [12]:

[14] Further, as in fact we said just now, every disposition of the soul by nature relates to and has to do with the sorts of things that make the soul worse or better; and it is through pleasures and pains that people become bad, i.e. by pursuing them and running away from them, either the ones they shouldn't, or when they shouldn't, or in a way they shouldn't, or however many other distinctions are made in one's prescriptions.

To paraphrase, it is said that a character has to do with what makes people good and bad and we now have an explanation of why that is so. Our character determines which things we take to be pleasant and painful and we pursue what is pleasant and avoid what is painful. The consequence is that in order to be a good person, one must be brought up to enjoy the right sorts of things. If one is poorly brought up, one delights in doing what one should not. A good character is developed when we repeatedly pursue what is actually pleasant and avoid what is actually painful. When repeatedly pursued, these actions form a part of our character and we become disposed to take pleasure in the correct sorts of things.

One might argue that contrary to my interpretation, [14] maintains that pleasure and pain are concerned with motivation *only in the case of bad decisions that make the soul worse*. The claim is both true and false. It is true in the sense that one goes wrong when one pursues what appears pleasant without exercising thought. Thought allows one to calculate about what will happen and to consider alternatives. However, the claim is wrong if it denies that in thought

pleasures play no role. Indeed they must. For, given that thought depends on *phantasia*, in thinking about what to do, thought about what is good depends on one's perception of what should be pursued (this will be expanded in detail in the next section).

We can now put [12][a] and [b] together. Our character determines the things that we take to be painful and pleasant, and we do those things that we take to be pleasant and abstain from those things that we take to be painful. Hence, Aristotle says, it is important that one be well brought up, i.e. well habituated. If one is well brought up, one will be habituated to enjoy the right sorts of things and, consequently, to *do* the right sorts of things. Thus Aristotle concludes, "It is, then, a basic assumption that this kind of excellence is a disposition to act in the best ways in relation to pleasures and pains, while badness is the opposite" (1104b27-29). That is to say, excellence of character is a disposition to take the most pleasure in the right sorts of things, in the right amount, in the right way. While badness is to take pleasure in the wrong sorts of things, in a way that is bad, to a degree that is bad.

5. A Difficulty

As noted above, one might point out that this interpretation does not harmonize well with Aristotle's description of the excellences. According to Aristotle, the excellences are means between two extremes. Courage, for instance, does not mean having *no* fear. Rather, it means having the right amount of fear, which means enduring some amount of pain. If the character were simply responsive to pleasure and pain, an excellent character ought to regard courage as the *most* pleasant. However, courage is by definition mixed with pain. Thus, there seems to be a motivating factor other than pleasure and pain. The implication, it would seem, is that motivation

cannot be a matter of pleasure alone. There must be something else that motivates us to pursue what is painful.

This view of action in relation to courage is too myopic. If courage is mixed with pleasure and pain, then there must be some other factor motivating one to be courageous. What might that be? One option is that it is a further pleasure, namely the pleasure of being courageous itself. This, I believe, is Aristotle's answer, as revealed in his further discussion of the affections. Although his characterization of courageous actions involves a balance of fear and confidence, when one performs courageous acts, several other feelings come into play. For instance, the feelings of shame and honor seem to be associated with a wide range of actions. Young people, Aristotle says, are prone to making many errors in action. Shame is what keeps them from making these errors (*NE* IV.9, *Rhet.* II.6). When we apply this notion to courage, we see that courageous action is the most pleasant. To flee from all danger will be seen as cowardly and thus shameful. Similarly, if one is well brought up or if one lives in a good society, acting without any fear will also be seen as shameful. Courage, although mixed with the painful feeling of fear, itself lacks the feeling of shame and is accompanied by the pleasant feeling of honor.

The same can be said about the rest of the virtues. Take the example of magnanimity. A naïve person might think that pursuing honor at all costs is the best thing to do because honor is associated with the most pleasure. But a magnanimous person will see that there is pleasure, in fact the most pleasure, in being magnanimous itself. To be a base, honor-seeking person will be felt as shameful, just as being dishonorable is.

6. The Noble, the Expedient, and the Pleasant

In light of this discussion of the character excellences and their relation to pleasure, we can now look at what initially seemed to be a troublesome passage indicating that the intellect could motivate apart from pleasure and pain. Aristotle writes,

[15] But the following considerations also will give us further light on the same point. There are three things that are the motives of choice and three that are the motives of avoidance; namely, the noble, the expedient, and the pleasant, and their opposites, the base, the harmful, and the painful. Now in respect of all these the good man is likely to go right and the bad to go wrong, but especially (*malista*) in respect of pleasure; for pleasure is common to man with the lower animals, and also it is a concomitant of all the objects of choice, since both the noble and the expedient appear to us pleasant (1104b30-1105a2).

On a cursory reading, this appears to state that three different sorts of things motivate us: the noble, the expedient, and the pleasant. This would contradict my thesis that pleasure and pain are the sole motivating principles of action. However, a closer look at the passage reveals that this is not the case.

This passage occurs in a list of considerations arguing that character “has to do with” pleasure and pain. The opening sentence, then, “But the following considerations also will give us further light on the same point” (1104b28-30) reminds us from the outset that what follows aims to demonstrate that character is always concerned with pleasure and pain. Aristotle then writes the difficult sentence enumerating three motives of choice. Given the introductory sentence and the passage’s context, the reader’s question ought to be, “if there are three objects of choice, how can it be that character is concerned only with pleasure and pain? Shouldn’t character be concerned with the noble and expedient in addition to pleasure and pain?”

The answer, of course, is “no” and the remainder of the passage explains why: it is true that the good person gets right what is noble and expedient. But most important is that the good

man get right what is pleasant and painful. For this is actually what moves the non-rational desiderative part of the soul,⁷⁶ the part of the soul necessary for action. Thus, while the intellect might conceive of certain things as honorable and expedient, these will motivate action insofar as they are things that we see as pleasant. If we didn't see them as pleasant, then we would not be so motivated. Consequently, the passage above supports and clarifies the view that pleasure and pain are the sole motivators of action. Pleasure and pain are what motivate pursuit and avoidance, but in action our ends need not be conceived of as such. We can conceive of some things as being honorable, or some things as being pleasant, but these motivate us insofar as these things are seen as things that are pleasant.

7. The Perceptual Basis of Thought

Now, it may be objected that we can admit that all this is true while declining to agree that this is all there is to the story of ends. For in addition to perceiving that something is to be sought after, we must also intellectually endorse it as good. This intellectual cognition of the good might involve the consideration of other competing ends or even an all-things-considered judgment about what is good. Given these intellectual considerations (and setting aside the text for a minute), one might argue that this shows that one can perceive an end as something to be pursued and yet intellectually override this perception by determining that that end is not good and ought to be avoided.

This is a perfectly reasonable objection and I think that something like this must be true. However, there is a serious and compelling challenge to this view, also highlighted by Moss,

⁷⁶ This is, I take it, what Aristotle's mention of the lower animals is supposed to indicate. The part of our soul necessary for getting ourselves to move is that part of ourselves that is responsive to pleasure and pain and the part we share with non-human animals.

which significantly complicates such a picture. According to this view, thought is closely related to perception. The ability to think develops out of the ability to perceive, for perception provides us with the forms that thought is about and through which thought cognizes objects in the world. In the case of scientific thought, this means that our idea of a triangle is derived from our perceptions of triangles. As we saw in Chapter 1, perceptions are saved in the perceptual organ as *phantasmata*. In experience, these are generalized into more generic perceptions that the intellect then grasps. Something similar happens in the case of practical thought. What we take to be good is also developed out of our experience with the past. In this case, this is developed out of our perception of what is worth going for, i.e. of what is pleasant. This fits nicely with Aristotle's account of habituation. We begin with particular perceptions that are either pleasant or painful. Through experience and habituation, these perceptions are generalized into more generic perceptions of what sorts of things are pleasant. Through habituation, we are disposed to find certain sorts of activities as pleasant and others as painful. On the basis of this disposition, we see certain ends as worth going for and others as worth avoiding. Those that we go for we take up as ends and hence as goods. As in the case of theoretical cognition, in practical cognition, we grasp as good what perception presents as being good, namely what is pleasant. It is true that the intellect can, in a more intellectual spirit, consider the nature of the good independent of pleasure. For instance, we can, in a certain sense, conceive that the best activity for humans is contemplation based solely on a study of human functionality. But, unless we have experienced contemplation as good in the past, this will remain a good only in theory. It will not be a good or end *for us*. For the non-rational soul will not be driven to pursue it and thus it will not move us toward it.

8. Thought in General

To see the sense in which thought is based on perception, let us begin with an account of thought in general, rather than practical thought. In Aristotle's account of the soul, the perceptual soul and the intellectual soul are closely related. Earlier, we saw what I referred to as the "progressive structure" of Aristotle's soul: the lower parts of the soul enable the functioning of the higher parts. For instance, because memory is a presentation of past perceptions, the capacity for perception is a prerequisite for memory. The same is true of thought: the ability to store perceptions, i.e. *phantasia*, is a prerequisite for thought. We have already seen the reason for this in *De Memoria*: without an image, thinking is impossible (1, 450a1); this is because perception provides the content for thought. Indeed, it was because of this relationship that Aristotle was able to maintain that memory was a state of the non-rational perceptual part of the soul and not the result of intellectual activity. For instance, consider a basic case of having a thought: in order to think of an oak tree, one calls to mind a *phantasmata* of an oak tree. This basic view is what Aristotle presents in his discussion of psychology in the *De Anima*:

[16] Knowledge and perception are divided to correspond to their objects, the potential to the potential, the actual to the actual. In the soul that which can perceive and that which can know are potentially these things, the one the object of knowledge, the other the object of perception (431b24-27).

[17] Since there is no actual thing which has separate existence, apart from, as it seems, magnitudes which are objects of perception, the objects of thought are included among the forms which are objects of perception, both those that are spoken of as in abstraction and those which are dispositions and affections of objects of perception. And for this reason unless one perceived things one would not learn or understand anything, and when one contemplates one must simultaneously contemplate an image; for images are like sense-perception (*aisthēmata*), except that they are without matter (432a3-9).

In [16], Aristotle makes a parallel between intellection and perception, dividing them in accordance with the objects they are concerned with. Knowledge is concerned with objects appropriate to knowledge and perception is concerned with the objects of perception. To the consternation of modern commentators, in both cases, these objects are forms.⁷⁷ The senses are capable of receiving forms of objects, insofar as those objects are forms of perception. As Aristotle says, perception takes the form of an object without that object's matter (*DA* II.12, 424a17-20). Hence, sight can take on the form of the red shape, the ear the form of the harsh sound (see passage [18] below as well as *DA* II.5, 418a3–6; II.12, 424a17–21). When the sense organ is not in use, it is blank and not presenting any perceptual objects. The sense organ is potentially sensing. When the object acts on the sense, the sensing becomes actual, in that the sense perceives a perceptual object.

What about intellect? Intellect too is concerned with forms. As [17] says, these forms are among the forms received from perception. Like perception, the presence of forms actualizes thought. These forms include things spoken of “in abstraction and those that are dispositions and affections of objects of perception.” Relying on my account of memory and experience in Chapter 1, we can understand what this means. There, we saw that particular sense experiences are stored as *phantasmata* and that thought can abstract from these particular perceptions to cognize objects without certain properties. Evidently, thought can take up the image of a particular triangle and abstract from it the fact that it is a particular, single triangle to contemplate it as a generic triangle (1, 450a1-8). Aristotle makes the same claim here. Thought can take as its object abstractions of *phantasmata*. It can also take as its object “dispositions and

⁷⁷ One of the difficulties is what sort of form the senses take on? Because the senses are of particulars, does this mean that there are forms of particular things? This seems to be an atypical account of a form, which is usually something general.

affections of objects of perception.” As “dispositions and affections of objects” are meant to contrast with “abstractions of objects,” we can, I think, understand “dispositions and affections” as indicating that thought can cognize specific aspects of particular perceptions. This might be the property of a certain perceptual object such as the redness of a ball or else the particular ball itself. Thus, what emerges is an account on which the senses are capable of perceiving objects of sensation. The resulting sense perceptions are stored by *phantasia* as images or *phantasmata*, and these images provide the content of thought, allowing us to think. Thus Aristotle goes on to say in this passage that “unless one perceived things one would not learn or understand anything.”

Thought’s reliance on perception is also clearly shown in Aristotle’s comments on thought in the *De Memoria*, which we saw above. In *Mem.*, Aristotle is even stronger in his words: “without an image thinking is impossible” (1, 450a1)⁷⁸ What all of these passages on the intellect’s relation to perception demonstrate is that the objects of thought are received from perception.⁷⁹

9. Perception and Intellect in Action

This account of thought in general affects practical thought in particular, i.e. thought about what to do, in a particular way. For, in addition to presenting us with things like shape and color, some perceptual content is also normative. That is to say, things appear to us as worth

⁷⁸ I disagree with Sorabji’s ([1972] 2004) contention that it must always be imagistic: thought can clearly abstract away from these images to consider something for which an image cannot be drawn.

⁷⁹ The upshot of this theory is difficult to ascertain in the case of theoretical thought. For instance, one might wonder, if perception provides the content for thought, then can one not think of a triangle without seeing a triangle? Or is it merely necessary that one has seen a line? Or perhaps seeing any two dimensional figure would suffice? Given these basic elements, can thought put individual lines together to contemplate a triangle? These are difficult questions and ones that I don’t have to address to understand the upshots of this theory for practical thought.

going for and worth avoiding. Consequently, we should expect that just as our thoughts about triangles are derived from our perceptual experience, so too are our thoughts about what should be pursued and avoided. In practical thinking about what to do, the objects that we have enjoyed *appear* to us as pleasant and worth pursuing; consequently, we come to *believe* they are good and worth pursuing. Aristotle is strikingly clear about this relationship between perception and thought in practical matters:

[18] That which can think, therefore, thinks the forms (εἶδη) in images (ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι), and just as in those what is to be pursued and avoided is determined for it, so, apart from sense-perception (καὶ ἐκτὸς τῆς αἰσθήσεως), when it is concerned with images (ἐπὶ τῶν φαντασμάτων), it is moved (κινεῖται), e.g. perceiving (αἰσθανόμενος) that the beacon is alight you recognize when you see it moving that it belongs to the enemy, but sometimes you calculate on the basis of images or thoughts (φαντάσμασιν ἢ νοήμασιν) in the soul, as if seeing (ὡσπερ ὁρῶν), and plan what is going to happen in relation to present affairs. And when one says, as there, that something is pleasant or painful, so here one avoids or pursues—and so in action generally” (DA 431b2-10).⁸⁰

[19] Perceiving, then, is like mere assertion and thought; when something is pleasant or painful, {the soul} pursues or avoids it, as if it were asserting or denying it; and to feel pleasure or pain is to be active with the perceptive mean towards the good or bad as such. . . . To the thinking soul images serve as sense-perception (*aisthēmata*). And when it asserts or denies good or bad it avoids or pursues it. Hence the soul never thinks without an image. (431a8-431a16).

Together, these passages indicate that the normative content of perception is largely determinate of what we think to be good or bad to pursue. Passage [18] begins by confirming what we already saw in [16] and [17], namely that thought thinks the forms that are in the images. But it goes on to comment specifically on how this relationship between thought and *phantasmata* affects action. In Chapter 1 we saw that perceptions (*aisthēmata* together with *phantasmata*) are

⁸⁰ τὰ μὲν οὖν εἶδη τὸ νοητικὸν ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι νοεῖ, καὶ ὡς ἐν ἐκείνοις ὄρισται αὐτῷ τὸ διωκτὸν καὶ φευκτὸν, καὶ ἐκτὸς τῆς αἰσθήσεως, ὅταν ἐπὶ τῶν φαντασμάτων ἢ, κινεῖται· οἷον, αἰσθανόμενος τὸν φρυκτὸν ὅτι πῦρ, τῇ κοινῇ ὁρῶν κινούμενον γνωρίζει ὅτι πολέμιος· ὅτε δὲ τοῖς ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ φαντάσμασιν ἢ νοήμασιν, ὡσπερ ὁρῶν, λογίζεται καὶ βουλευεται τὰ μέλλοντα πρὸς τὰ παρόντα· καὶ ὅταν εἴπῃ ὡς ἐκεῖ τὸ ἡδὺ ἢ λυπηρόν, ἐνταῦθα φεύγει ἢ διώκει—καὶ ὅλως ἐν πράξει.

capable of determining what we pursue and avoid. Here, at the beginning of [18], after noting that thought thinks the forms in *phantasmata*, Aristotle notes that *phantasmata* alone also determine what we pursue and avoid (“in those [i.e. *phantasmata*] what is to be pursued or avoided is determined for it [i.e. that which can think]”). The consequence of this is that perceptual content is also responsible for moving us independent of our current perceptions, for as I noted initially, thought thinks the forms that are in the *phantasmata*. And in doing so, the normative content in *phantasia*, which can, on its own, move us to pursue an object, also moves thought to pursue the object. As Aristotle says at the end of [18], in action in general, when one intellectually determines that this object is pleasant or painful—judgments received from the perceptions themselves—one pursues or avoids it.

Passage [19] contains an elaboration on this. When perception sees an object as pleasant or painful and consequently pursues or avoids it, it forms a judgment that the object is good or bad. As Aristotle puts it, “to feel pleasure or pain is to be active with the perceptive mean towards the good or bad as such.” The best way of understanding this is as saying that when we perceive something as pleasant or painful, this is just to see it as good or bad. Indeed, in the *NE* Aristotle takes people who pursue pleasure to be pursuing a good. In modern terminology, we might say that the good appears under the guise of the pleasant. The same happens in thought, except in this case the judgments are about *phantasmata*—i.e. images apart from our present perceptions. *Phantasmata* appear as pleasant or painful. What is pleasant is judged as good and is pursued; what is painful is judged as bad and is avoided.

Passage [18] illuminates this claim. It contains an example of a lighthouse whose light is rotated to signal the approach of an enemy. When one perceives this lighthouse in the distance

with its light rotated, this perception recalls the related image of an enemy, something that in turn reminds one of suffering, and defeat; in short, something painful. This then causes one to retreat. In this way, perceptions come pre-packaged, so to speak, with normative information. What is worth pursuing is already determined by perception itself.

However, Aristotle continues, sometimes you “calculate on the basis of images or (ἦ) thoughts in the soul, as if seeing.” What Aristotle seems to be imagining here is a case where one is not presently seeing the light which reminds one of the enemy, but rather, without such prompting, recalls the image of the light and the enemy in one’s mind. In particular, it seems that Aristotle is characterizing a situation in which one is deliberating about what to do. In such calculations, one brings up a *phantasia* in one’s mind. If that *phantasia* is pleasant, Aristotle says, then one pursues it, determining the right steps that will lead one there. If it is painful, then one will make a different calculation to determine the steps needed to avoid the object of thought. Thus, without the lighthouse, we can call up in our minds the image of the enemy approaching. Generally, Aristotle is describing a picture in line with the kind of psychological development described in *APo* II.19. Our particular sense perceptions are saved in the sensory organ as *phantasmata*. As one gains more perceptions, these are organized by their similarities, creating *phantasmata* that are more general, what Aristotle calls experience. Thought is able to then operate by grasping these more general experiences.

One might acknowledge that perception of what appears good determines what we think of as good but reject that thought is limited to accepting as good whatever perception presents as good. One can forgo what one perceives as good in favor of something else that thought determines is better. However, if we describe this case further, an escape is not so easily

achieved. Consider a situation in which a person, Jane, is at dinner and presented with a serving of ice cream. Jane's perception of the ice cream is pleasant. Having eaten ice cream before, the ice cream appears delicious. It makes Jane's tongue tingle with anticipation as it draws her in. However, say that Jane also knows that she is lactose intolerant, and that if she eats the ice cream she will become quite ill. One might think, here is a situation where thought is rejecting what perception presents to it. Jane perceives the ice cream as good but intellectually rejects this perception.

But given the relation between perception and thought just described, this is an inaccurate description. When Jane sees the ice cream before her and considers its delicious look, the perception (an *aisthēma*) very clearly factors into her thought. This is akin to the situation in which one is seeing the beacon that signals the enemy. But a perception (a *phantasma*) is also involved when she considers her intolerance to lactose, for all thought requires a *phantasma*. In thinking of her lactose intolerance, she considers her past experience with it. This consideration might include a number of *phantasma*. Perhaps milk or other dairy food, but also the pain that that dairy brought with it in the past. In considering these things then, Jane's thoughts are still determined by her past pleasant and painful experiences. Thought does not allow Jane to escape from her perceptual cognitions, as the original scenario implied. Rather, thought allows her—and all others with intellect—to escape her present perceptions by considering the consequences of her actions and comparing alternative ends.

On the basis of this account of the relation between perception and thought, Moss maintains a Humean reading of Aristotle. On her account, Moss maintains the following:

(1) that perception determines our ends/goods in action and that our thoughts about what is good are derived from these perceptions.

(2) That thought cannot not affect our perception or ends.

We have already seen much of the evidence for proposition (1) above. According to this account, perception establishes what we take to be ends, both in movement and action. The reason it is able to do this is because the perceptual faculty is able to present certain objects and activities as pleasant and in doing so, present those objects as ends worth pursuing and hence as good.

Moreover, our thought of what is worth pursuing and hence good is received from perception.

Just as one's experiences (*aisthēmata* as well as *phantasmata*) of what is red, for example, determine one's beliefs and thoughts about what is red, so too do our experiences (*aisthēmata* as well as *phantasmata*) of what is pleasant and thus worth pursuing/good determine one's beliefs about what is worth pursuing/good. Activities that we have had pleasant experiences with we will perceive and think to be things that are good for us to pursue. Activities that we have had unpleasant or less pleasant experiences with we will not see or think good for us to pursue.

In order to see how this works, let us consider two examples. First, consider a straightforward example. For instance, we might come upon a cake that looks delicious, straightaway judge that it is a good thing to eat, and act to eat it. But it is not always so straightforward, for instance in coming upon the cake and seeing it as delicious, one might still decide not to eat the cake. In such a case, one sees the cake as something pleasant while also imagining some competing end, such as health, as being pleasant to achieve. If the perception of health is strong enough and is seen as providing us with a more enjoyable outcome than eating the cake, one will forgo eating cake for the sake of health. In such a case, even though the

pleasure of the cake is declined, the action is still explained in terms of the appearance of what is pleasant/good and our thoughts about what is good are ultimately derived from our perception and experience of what is pleasant.

In addition, in order to maintain a Humean account, Moss also defends (2) above, that thought cannot affect our ends or the perception of them. This point is closely related to (1) (although, as I shall argue is not a necessary consequence of it). To see this, consider the example of cake and health again. In that case, one declined the cake in favor of health. But the reason one did this is because one had the experience needed to see health as pleasant, more pleasant than the cake. In an alternate scenario, where one considers health but is not motivated by it, this lack of motivation is also because of past experience: one might have experience that causes one to see health as pleasant, but not pleasant enough to pull one away from pursuing the cake. In this case, our thought about the good is not only derived from perception, it is entirely determined by it. This is why, for Moss, thought cannot affect our ends.

The close connection between (1) and (2) moves Moss to argue that thought *cannot* affect our ends. To see why she might think this, consider a further example. Imagine a case where one attempts to articulate an account of what is good independent of one's perception of what is good. In such a case, this account would fail to be motivating except in the instance where one happened to have already had the experience of seeing this intellectual account of the good as pleasant. Through these intellectual considerations, a person might be able to come to a better understanding of what the good for man in general is, but what the person will not be able to do is make that good *their* good and *their* end.

To put this point more sharply consider a final analogy. Imagine a person who does not like listening to J. S. Bach. Moss's point is that we cannot get this person to enjoy Bach by strongly insisting that Bach is good. In order to enjoy Bach, this person must come to hear the music as pleasant and this change cannot be effected by argument. We cannot get a person to see an end as good by rationalizing why they should. In order to effect this change, one must come to see it as pleasant, which is accomplished through habituation.

I believe that Moss is correct about (1) but incorrect about (2). I agree with (1) because it solves many of the problems that initially motivated this chapter. In particular I hoped to make sense of how the non-rational capacity of perception and the related notion of character established our ends, as the *NE* indicates and the *EE* supports. By maintaining that the perception of what is pleasant establishes our ends, we are able to maintain that what does so is a non-rational cognition closely connected to character. Moreover, given the close relation between perception and thought, it seems likely that perception determines the content of our thought to a significant and important degree. Moreover, it makes philosophical sense. For on this account, perception determines whether a thing appears as an enjoyable activity. It makes sense to claim that we would not pursue a goal that we did not enjoy.

However, I object to (2), Moss's contention that thought can have no affect on the ends that we take up. For Moss, there is little room between perception and thought. On her reading of *APo* II.19, experience fully determines our conception of what is good and thought can simply grasp that conception. In contrast, I believe that there is more room between perception and thought than she allows. While experience might present us with some generalized *phantasmata*, *APo* II.19 leaves it open that these *phantasmata* can be further developed intellectually to

approximate ever more general and essential *phantasmata* and finally into full-blown universals. This extra room allows for what might be called creative thought. By this, I mean the ability for thought to create new *phantasmata* by taking apart or connecting forms presented to us by perception and experience. For instance, although one has never experienced a unicorn, one can combine images of a horn and a horse to create an image in one's mind. Similarly, as pleasure is a part of one's perceptual experience, one can combine one's thought of a certain activity with the experience of pleasure, creating in one's mind a pleasant experience, even if one has never experienced that activity before. The intuition behind this can be brought out by a different reading of the music analogy that was meant to illuminate Moss's defense of (2). While it might be true that intellectual knowledge does not usually alter how one perceives music, it is possible that such knowledge *can*, thereby helping one to enjoy that music. For instance, if the friend's claims about what makes Bach good help the listener focus on a particular aspect of the music, abstracting away other things that one was previously focusing on, this intellectual suggestion can change what the person is hearing, potentially allowing her to hear the music as good.

In the next chapter, using the *Rhetoric* I will argue that Aristotle thinks that reason can alter our perceptions and through it our ends with this sort of creative thought. An orator, he maintains, can construct arguments that bring images before his audience's eyes and in doing so alter their beliefs about the world. Through these sorts of arguments, the orator can persuade an audience to see an end as good that they previously did not and thus act for it. In Chapter 4, I will show that the argument in the *Nicomachean Ethics* is an example of how one might present such an argument.

PART 2
PERCEPTION, PERSUASION, AND ETHICAL ARGUMENT
CHAPTER 3
PERCEPTION AND PERSUASION IN THE *RHETORIC*

In the introduction, I noted that it is most common to read Aristotle as presenting a rationalist theory of motivation in the *NE*. However, the moral psychology I developed in Chapters 1 and 2 presents difficulties for even a very modest rationalist reading of Aristotle. On this moral psychology, our ends are set by what we perceive to be good, which is, in turn, determined by habituation and past pleasant experience. One might think that reason can reject what perception presents to it, choosing a new end. But the moral psychology presented earlier undercuts this view by demonstrating that what we believe to be good is determined by our perception of the good. This confines us to our own personal myopias. Because our perception of the good is determined by what we have experienced as pleasant in the past, our thinking about what is good will also be confined to this experience. Within this myopia, anything that we have not experienced as pleasant will not look good to pursue. Thus, while in some instances reason appears to be establishing ends, my psychology shows that it is in fact character and pleasant experience that determine our ends.

However, this same moral psychology also shows us a way to a solution. Given that perception of the good determines what we take to be ends, if we can find an account of how reason alters perception, we will thereby have an account of how reason can alter ends and break

us out of our moral myopias. In what follows, I will present an account of the relationship between reason and perception that demonstrates just this. Working from the *Rhetoric*, I will argue that Aristotle gives us a psychological explanation of how an orator can present an argument that affects the ends that the audience pursues.

In the secondary literature, discussions of how one's ends can be altered by another usually fall under the topic of moral education. These discussions typically recognize that one's ends are altered not by reason, but through a process of habituation. As Chapter 2 discussed, this process shapes one's experiences by directing one to perform a particular activity repeatedly. Through repetition, one's experiences cause one to see the particular activity as pleasant and good. Consequently, one desires the activity as an end. Burnyeat (1980) defends this view and Moss largely accepts it. But as a method of shaping one's ends, habituation only goes so far. Habituation happens when people are young, when their characters are unsettled and unmolded. As a habituated adult, one's character is settled and resistant to further change through habituation.

In contrast to these views, I will argue that reason or argument (*logos*) itself can be used to change a person's ends, even when that person is an adult. Insofar as it has been addressed, commentators have been skeptical of the ability of reason to alter our ends. In particular, in a discussion related to this topic, Moss writes, "the intellect's grasp of the end consists merely in agreeing with—assenting to—what character supplies" (224). She then goes on to imagine the case of a teacher attempting to argue his student into taking up a particular end (225). The student may very well do what the teacher argues, but not as an end. We can only imagine that the student takes it up because, e.g., he wants to be admired by the teacher. For Moss then, given

Aristotle's psychology, we cannot imagine that an argument could alter the ends one pursues.

Contra Moss, I will argue below that the *Rhetoric* demonstrates how one's ends can be altered by reason and argument. In this work, Aristotle presents types of arguments that he thinks can sway an audience to take up a new end. Moreover, in a discussion of style, he also indicates how this is psychologically possible, namely because such arguments are able to alter the audience's perceptions. As such, this account will allow us to embrace the moral psychology of chapters 1 and 2, according to which perception establishes our ends, while also allowing for reason to have a role in altering those ends.

The benefits of this account are twofold. First, this view allows us to maintain a hybrid reading of the *NE*, one that allows for ends that can be rationally affected while also accommodating Aristotle's troublesome comments that character, not reason, sets ends. More broadly, it contributes to the literature on moral education. As noted, scholars widely agree that habituation is a means of education. In this chapter I will show that reason, too, can be a tool for education as it can alter what appears to one as good and in doing so alter the ends one pursues. Through rhetorically adorned arguments, an orator can manipulate the way an audience sees the ends that motivate it to act, causing it to perceive as desirable what was previously not desired and vice-versa. In the case of moral belief, people who have not been brought up to desire virtue can be convinced to see virtue as a good in and of itself and worth pursuing.

The argument that follows will be developed in two parts. First, I will survey evidence in the *Rhetoric* indicating that Aristotle assumes that a person's ends can be rationally altered. Scholars have not considered these passages in this light. In the second part I will demonstrate

how these arguments succeed at altering an audience's ends, even if we assume that non-rational desire sets those ends.

1. Arguments About Ends

At the conclusion of *NE* 1, Aristotle plainly states that reason can alter the non-rational, desiderative part of the soul responsible for determining the ends we pursue. The desiderative soul, although non-rational, has a share in reason, “in so far as it is capable of listening (κατήκοον) to it and obeying (πειθαρχικόν) it [i.e. reason]” (1102b30-1). Aristotle then goes on to say, “the non-rational is in a way persuaded (πείθεται) by reason” (1102b34). These passages indicate that our desires, and hence our ends, can be altered by reason. In particular, Aristotle's use of “persuasion” (πείθεται) indicates that the non-rational desiderative element of the soul is not just susceptible to compulsion and force. It is also moved by rational argument.

Unfortunately, with respect to reason's ability to specifically influence ends, these passages are far from decisive. We have desires about all sorts of objects and activities, not just end-worthy activities such as health and pleasure. For instance, one might desire the end of health and, because of reason's deliberations about how to achieve health, come to desire to go to the doctor as a means to achieve the end of health. In this case, reason only determines which means we desire to pursue in order to achieve a particular end. It does not affect the end that we desire. Thus, in the passages above, it may very well be that Aristotle is implicitly restricting the desires subject to rational alteration to those desires for means rather than ends. Thus, these statements alone do not show that reason can alter our desires for ends.

Fortunately, Aristotle’s language here points us in a direction of more decisive evidence. His characterization of the desiderative part of the soul as capable of being “persuaded” recalls another work, the *Rhetoric*, which is devoted to discussing persuasion. In fact, the *Rhetoric* itself contains a passage reminiscent of this *NE* passage. Aristotle writes, “[I call] ‘with reason’ whatever we desire as a result of persuasion” (*Rhetoric* 1.11.5/1370a25).^{81,82} This line is significant because the *Rhetoric* contains methods of argumentation that can be used by an orator to persuade his audience to take up new ends. However, commentators have overlooked it. Even Jessica Moss (2012), in her remarkably thorough survey of seemingly pro-rationalist evidence, does not discuss it. This is likely due to the fact that the rationalist accounts she surveys typically confine themselves to Aristotle’s ethical works, particularly the *NE* and his discussions of deliberation and practical wisdom. In the remainder of this section I will discuss these arguments and show how they are meant to operate.

The *Rhetoric* is a text devoted to discussing the means of persuasion available to an orator. Among these means of persuasion is a category that Aristotle terms “deliberative rhetoric” (1.3.3/1358b8). It is concerned with investigating how to exhort and dissuade an audience to act (1.3.3/1358b8, 1.4.1/1359a30ff.). Generally speaking, Aristotle outlines two kinds of arguments available to the orator as tools of persuasion: arguments about means and arguments about ends (1.6-1.7). Arguments about means consist of arguments aimed at convincing an audience that a certain course of action (that is, a means) is to its advantage because it will allow the audience to achieve an end it already holds. The second type of

⁸¹ μετὰ λόγου δὲ ὅσα ἐκ τοῦ πεισθῆναι ἐπιθυμοῦσιν.

⁸² Because many of the Greek texts of the *Rhetoric* and their English translations favor citation numbers referring to the Oxford Variorum edition of 1820, I have listed these numbers along with the Bekker numbers. The *Rhetoric* translations are from Kennedy, unless otherwise noted.

argument—arguments about ends—aims to convince an audience that it ought to take up an action because that action is in itself worth pursuing; that is to say, it is an end.

Because we are interested in understanding how reason can alter ends, arguments about means are not directly germane to our discussion. However, a brief look at these arguments will be useful for clarifying Aristotle's examination of arguments about ends. Aristotle begins his examination with an account of the supreme end, i.e. happiness, which is notably similar to his discussion of the same topic in the *NE*. Everyone aims at happiness, Aristotle says, and people largely take happiness to be one of the following:

[either] well-being combined with virtue, or independence of life, or the life most agreeably combined with security, or abundance of possessions and slaves, combined with power to protect and make use of them; for nearly all men admit that one or more of these things constitutes happiness (I.5.3/1630b14-19).

Information about the audience's ends gives the orator persuasive power in presenting an assortment of arguments. For instance, the orator can use his knowledge of the ends that the audience holds to persuade it to take up a certain action because the action is a means to those ends. Aristotle calls such actions “advantageous” (συνφέρον). For instance, one might try to persuade one's friend to go to the dentist by saying, “you want to be healthy and going to the dentist will aid you in that pursuit. Thus, although the dentist is unpleasant, you ought to go.”

Aristotle's discussion of arguments about means leads to a discussion of arguments about ends (see *Rhet.* I.7). He writes, "Since both sides in a debate often agree (ὁμολογοῦντες) about what is advantageous [to achieving a particular end] but disagree about which is more advantageous, something should next be said about greater good and the more advantageous"

(I.7.1/1363b5-8).⁸³ Having just argued that an orator can persuade an audience that an action is advantageous because it is a means to one of the audience's ends, Aristotle here admits that such arguments might be insufficient to successfully persuade the audience. Aristotle's point is that an audience will often agree with an orator that an end is worth pursuing and thus agree that it is to its advantage to perform an action that will lead to that end.

However, despite this agreement, the audience may fail to be persuaded on account of the fact that it sees some other end as *even more* worthy of pursuit. Consequently, the argument about means will fail to persuade the audience. For instance, imagine an orator attempting to convince an audience of farmers that they ought to vote to divert funds ordinarily used to subsidize farming expenses to fund the building of a public library. The audience might agree that reading and education are goods and therefore that a library would be to their advantage. However, such an argument would not convince farmers to support the building of a library, because they regard farming as a greater good than education. Aristotle recognizes that in order to persuade this audience, the orator would have to convince them that the end of education is greater than farming. Only then would he be able to convince the audience to vote for the building of a library. Thus, the orator needs arguments capable of altering the ends that the audience holds.

In the next part, I will discuss particular examples of arguments about ends. However, before that, a clarification is in order about what has just been said. One might worry that if all Aristotle is offering are arguments capable of showing that one end is *greater* than another, he cannot successfully alter the audience's ends. They merely convince the audience to pursue an

⁸³ Ἐπεὶ δὲ πολλάκις ὁμολογοῦντες ἄμφω συμφέρειν περὶ τοῦ μᾶλλον ἀμφισβητοῦσιν, ἐφεξῆς ἂν εἴη λεκτέον περὶ τοῦ μείζονος ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τοῦ μᾶλλον συμφέροντος.

end it already had, albeit one that it took to be less valuable than before. Thus, one might conclude, the text does *not* show that Aristotle thinks that the orator can alter an audience's ends.

This objection misses the significance of the passage. One's upbringing and past experience do not merely determine the coarse distinction between what one broadly sees as good and what one sees as bad. It also makes fine-grained distinctions between what one sees as a good and what one sees as a greater good. Consider the following example. Imagine a person, Jill, who has been habituated to delight in both eating hamburgers and eating broccoli and who consequently sees the ends of tasty food and health as goods. However, based on the specifics of Jill's past experience, it turns out that she gets more pleasure from eating hamburgers than she does eating broccoli. Given this, although Jill might see both tasty food and health as goods, tasty food will be seen as more worthy of pursuit than healthy food. It is true that in isolated moments, Jill might choose to go for broccoli, for she does see health as good. But whenever Jill has a choice between a hamburger and broccoli, she always chooses the hamburger because the desire for tasty food is stronger than the desire for the pleasures that come from health. In short, one's non-rational desires determine one's ends in a fine-grained manner.

This example shows that even if all reason can do is invert one's preferences by causing one to see a particular end as better than another, this alteration is significant because it changes the ends that one ultimately acts for. Had desire been left to its own devices without the involvement of reason, a different end would have been pursued. Thus, even if Aristotle is only saying that the orator can persuade the audience to prefer an end more strongly than it did before, this passage is significant and shows that reason can alter our ends.

However, I do not think that Aristotle is committed to such a narrow claim. Aristotle says that the audience is often in *agreement* (ὁμολογοῦντες) over what is advantageous but in disagreement about what is more or less advantageous and more or less good. There are many ways in which an audience can agree that something is good. An audience can, for instance, agree that going to the gym is to its advantage because this activity promotes health, even if the audience is rather slovenly and never really interested in doing anything healthy. If this were the case, and if the orator were able to convince the audience that health was a superior end to pursue, this act of persuasion would not simply be inverting the structure of their ends. The argument would persuade them to pursue a brand new end.

Having made this clarification, let us turn to examples that Aristotle provides of what I have been calling arguments about ends. Each is a consideration about how the orator can show that some particular end is superior to another end that the audience already holds. First, let us look at the most straightforward sort of example. In it, Aristotle notes that the orator can convince an audience to take up a new end if he can show it that the end it currently holds is not an end at all, but rather a means to an end. He writes:

[1] And if one thing is an “end” and another is not, [the “end” is a greater good]; one is sought for its own sake, the other for something else, for example, exercise for the sake of bodily fitness (I.7.9/1364a2-5).⁸⁴

⁸⁴ The insertion “the ‘end’ is a greater good” is Kennedy’s and is made necessary by Aristotle’s highly compressed style in this chapter. As mentioned above, in *Rhet. 7* Aristotle begins compiling a list of reasons for thinking that one end is greater than another. Thus he writes, “Since both sides in a debate often agree about what is advantageous but disagree about which is more advantageous, something should next be said about greater good and more advantageous” (I.7.1/1363b5-7). When he goes on to list reasons why one might consider one end to be greater than another, he does not continually repeat the fact that this is what he is doing. So when Aristotle writes that “if one thing is an ‘end’ and another is not” it is implied that the end is a greater good than what is not actually an end. Paraphrasing Aristotle, he says that it must be discussed what makes one good better than another. One way that one good may be better than another is that one might be an end and another a means to an end. In this case the former is greater than the latter.

This consideration indicates that if the orator can show that what the audience takes to be good is not an end, but rather a means to an end, the orator can argue that the audience ought to abandon its original goal. Instead, it ought to adopt another goal, one that actually functions as an end.

Let us take an example from Aristotle's comments about wealth in *NE* I.3.1095a17-25 and I.5.1096a5-8. These passages indicate that many take wealth to be an end. But, as Aristotle notes, wealth is simply a means to another end and cannot function as an end in and of itself. In the context of the *Ethics*, Aristotle's audience does not need to be convinced that wealth is not an end and thus Aristotle provides no argument. However, one could argue based on [1], that the achievement of wealth would leave someone feeling unsatisfied and looking for another end. One should not take wealth to be an end but should instead take up some other end beyond wealth.

In contrast to this first example, the majority of the suggested arguments in the *Rhetoric* grant that the end the audience holds is end-worthy. However, they maintain that there is some other end that the audience ought to pursue because, given some feature it has, it is even *more* end-worthy. This is precisely what Aristotle attempts to do in this second example:

[2] And [what precedes is greater] when one good follows [using *follows* in the sense of resulting simultaneously or successively or potentially] from another but the relationship is not reciprocal; for the use of what follows is already inherent in what precedes. Life follows from health simultaneously, but not health from life (1.7.5/1363b28-32).⁸⁵

In this passage, Aristotle describes a relationship that two ends (what he calls "goods" here) may potentially have. It might be that these two ends—let us call them "End A" and "End B"—have a non-reciprocal relationship. This means that, if one achieves End A, one thereby also achieves

⁸⁵ I have altered the sentence structure of Kennedy's translation for clarity.

End B, but if one were to achieve End B, one would not necessarily achieve End A. Aristotle suggests that if the orator finds that two ends have this relationship, the orator can formulate an argument to persuade the audience to take up End A rather than End B.

Aristotle's example of life and health shows how such an argument might proceed. If one were to achieve the goal of health (End A), it is necessarily the case that one would also possess life (End B). However, if one possesses life (End B), one does not necessarily have health (End A). Consequently, health is superior to life and one should aim at health rather than mere life.

The example above is fairly abstract, but it can easily be made more concrete. Imagine an orator who wants to convince the members of his audience that they ought to give up a part of their land for farming so that the city can better feed the population. He knows that the audience will almost certainly resist this: audience members will want to live out their current lives without interference. In other words, the orator knows that the audience's primary aim is life. However, Aristotle notes in this passage that the orator can get the audience to change its primary end to health if he can somehow show that by taking up health as an ultimate end, the audience will, along the way, also have life. Using this strategy, the orator can argue that the audience ought to give up part of their land to farming, for farming brings not merely life but a healthy life.

Consider one further example. One might persuasively argue (regardless of whether it is true or not) that though the possession of freedom is good, one ought to work instead toward the possession of security. One might point out that the achievement of freedom does not necessarily entail the achievement of security. But in contrast, by having security, one would both safeguard

one's wellbeing while ensuring one's ability to live freely. Thus, we ought to strive for having a secure state and not one that is only free.⁸⁶

The examples above indicate a strategy that begins with an end that the audience desires and then, with the help of that end, moves the audience to a new, related end. A politician might want to argue that security is something that is good in itself and which the population needs. Recognizing that the population desires freedom, the politician can show the audience that security is better by showing them that security contains what is desirable about freedom plus more. In doing so, the politician shows the audience that this new end is better because it has greater value, effectively persuading the audience to pursue an end that they would not have otherwise pursued.

In addition to [1] and [2], Aristotle lists a variety of other considerations that the orator can use to convince an audience to take up a new end. Most focus on a miscellany of properties that seem to qualify or disqualify something from being a superior end.⁸⁷ A single example suffices:

⁸⁶ One might object to this example by noting that security does not always entail freedom. This is true, but the *Rhetoric* is not concerned with truth. It is concerned with what might persuade an audience, so a speech along these lines is potentially persuasive (1.1.14/1355a3-4). Indeed, I have chosen this particular example because it is a line of argument that has become familiar in American political discourse and one that contemporary politicians take to be persuasive. See Obama (2013) for an example.

⁸⁷ This is an incomplete list of considerations found in the *Rhetoric* (see 1.7.1/1363b6 ff.):

- (1) What precedes is greater than what follows. So, Aristotle says, life follows from health; in this sense health can be seen to be a greater good than life.
- (2) What is preferable in itself is greater than what is not. For instance, strength is greater than the wholesome because one does not choose wholesome for the sake of wholesome, but one does choose strength for the sake of strength.
- (3) If one thing is an end, the other not, then the end is greater.
- (4) What has less need than another for other things is greater (for it is more independent and one thus has less need of other things).
- (5) When one thing cannot come into being without another but the latter can exist without the former the latter is the greater good, for it is more independent.
- (6) A thing is greater if it is a first principle.
- (7) If it is a cause and the other is not: for existence or coming to be is impossible without a cause and first principle.

[3] More generally: the hard thing is better than the easy, because it is rarer (1.7.15/1364a29).

This consideration can show that one end is better than another on account of the end's possessing a particular positive attribute. According to [3], that attribute is rarity. Gold, for instance, is valued on account of this trait. Similarly, the possession of virtue is rare and valued. Hence, in considering two ends, one might be persuaded to deem one superior to the other on account of its rarity.

In sum, these arguments show that Aristotle takes it for granted that reason can convince an audience to take up an end that they previously did not see as worth acting for. Assuming that ends are set by non-rational desire, this means that reason can alter the desires that establish our ends.⁸⁸

2. The Psychology of Persuasion

So far I have argued that despite previous contentions, evidence from the *Rhetoric* shows that Aristotle does think that people can be rationally persuaded to take up new ends that guide their action; he presents arguments that he clearly thinks can effect such persuasion. But, psychologically speaking, how is this possible? To begin answering this question let us sketch an

(8) If there are two causes, what comes from the greater cause is greater; and conversely, of two first principles, the first principle of the greater thing is the greater, and of two causes the cause of the greater is the greater cause.

(9) What is scarcer can be considered to be greater than what is abundant.

(10) But what is abundant can, in a different light, be considered greater than what is scarce.

(11) The more difficult is greater than what the easier.

(12) Things whose superiority is preferable are better (e.g. sight to hearing, being fond of friends to being fond of money).

(13) And combination and building up [of phrases or clauses make something seem greater].

(14) And the things people wish to exist in reality [are preferable] to their semblance.

(15) What is less painful and what is accompanied by pleasure is greater than what is more painful or not accompanied by pleasure.

⁸⁸ One might object that in *NE X* Aristotle contradicts this conclusion when he maintains that those who are not well brought up, i.e. those who are corrupt, cannot be taught. I address this objection at the end of the chapter.

account of how non-rational desire is capable of setting our ends in action. Then, based on this account, we can show how reason can alter our ends.

The most straightforward way of understanding how desire sets ends is through perception. Many commentators of Aristotle's ethics suggest such an account. I have already mentioned two, Myles Burnyeat and Jessica Moss. In addition, we can include Sorabji (1980), McDowell (2009), Sherman (1908), and Tuozzo (1994), among others.⁸⁹ Taking Moss's theory as an example, when one is habituated to an end, this habituation has both desiderative and cognitive consequences. Habituation causes us to take pleasure in the end and hence to desire the end to which we are habituated. In coming to desire this end, we come to *perceive* the end as something that is good and worth pursuing. When we perceive the possibility of this action in the future, this evokes a desire in us, which ultimately motivates us to act for that end. Thus, desire sets ends via perception.

However, more must be said than just this. For Aristotle, action necessarily involves rationality, and desire and perception are non-rational capacities. Looking at Moss again, we see that the intellect plays the role of grasping the ends that perception presents. Once an end is grasped, the intellect can then do the work of calculating how to achieve it. Aristotle's *De Anima* and its account of the relation between perception and thought supports this interpretation. For instance, there Aristotle maintains that the intellect thinks in terms of perceptual images (see *De Anima* 3.7). These images serve as the content of thought so that when we think of an object what we are doing is recalling a past perception of it (a *phantasma*). With respect to action, the

⁸⁹ Not all of these commentators have concluded that ends are non-rationally established. In particular, commentators such as Sorabji and Tuozzo have taken this sort of end-establishing perception to be a kind of rational or "intuitive" perception, i.e. *nous*. Consequently, they have maintained that *reason* sets ends. In Chapter 1 of this dissertation I argue that this perception cannot be rational.

view that emerges from this account of psychology is one on which perception sets our ends and the intellect simply grasps those ends.

To be sure, this view has radical consequences, at least as Jessica Moss presents it. On her view, what we experience as desirable (for Moss this is pleasure) determines what we *believe* to be good and worth pursuing. There are many ways that one could object to this admittedly sketchy account of action. However, what I would like to suggest here is that the most radical aspect of Moss's view, the close connection between perception and thought, gives us a way of understanding how thought can influence desire and ultimately our ends. For Moss, this close connection shows that our perception of good and bad determines what we think of as good and bad. However, I will argue that this influence can go the opposite way, too. Because perception and thought are so closely linked, when we think about things in new ways, this can cause us to *see* those things in new ways, ultimately causing us to desire different ends.

Philosophically speaking, there are a number of examples that one could give to demonstrate how perception is vulnerable to reason. Perhaps the most straightforward are figures from Gestalt psychology. These figures have the potential of being seen two ways, e.g. as either a young or old woman. Initially, one may be able to see only one of the two images. But if one learns that a certain line forms the outline a woman's mouth or jawbone, one's perception of the image is transformed.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Similar phenomena occur in aesthetic appreciation more generally. Take the case of painting. By giving the perceiver background information about the painting and asking her to focus on certain aspects of it, one can cause the perceiver to see the painting in a new way. The paintings of contemporary artist Keltie Ferris serve as an example. At first glance, Ferris seems to merely be rehashing motifs already explored by abstract expressionists such as Rothko and Hans Hofmann. However, Ferris's paintings take on a new dimension when it is pointed out that the organization of shape of the color patches are made to resemble something far more contemporary, namely artifacts that result from overly compressed digital image files. Once this connection is made, Ferris's paintings are perceived differently. They do not merely evoke the past, but illuminate the artistry in the effects of data

I believe that Aristotle suggests that our perceptions can be altered in a similar way in the *Rhetoric*. In what follows I argue that oratorical arguments containing well-crafted metaphor can cause an audience to make connections between its perceptions. These connections can cause the audience to see a given end with new eyes, similar to the way that one can see an image or hear music differently as a result of a suggestion. My argument will have two parts. Using Moss's reading of Aristotle's psychology, I will give an account of the psychological effects of argumentation. I will subsequently discuss Aristotelian notions of stylization and show how stylized arguments are particularly effective at persuading audiences, even corrupt audiences, to take up new ends.

2.1. Psychological Interpretation of Argument

As I observed above, Moss argues that thought has a perceptual basis. When one thinks of an object, one recalls one's past experience of it in the form of an image. This means that when the orator presents the audience with an argument maintaining that a certain end ought to be pursued, we can think of him as instructing the audience to perceive or imagine that end (in the form of a *phantasma*) as pleasant and worth pursuing. If the argument succeeds and the audience comes to see the end as pleasant, then the audience will be moved.

Take as an example a line from passage (3) above: "the hard thing is better than the easy, because it is rarer." The orator might use this consideration as a guide and construct an argument persuading an audience not inclined to be healthy to pursue a healthy life. It is more difficult to lead a disciplined healthy life, he could maintain, than it is to lead an undisciplined, unhealthy

life. Consequently he might argue that a healthy life is better, since it is a rarer, more refined sort of life. And by extension, when presented with a choice between eating broccoli or a hamburger, one ought to choose broccoli, for this is the rarer choice. Psychologically speaking, by making his audience think through the argument, the orator prompts the audience to imagine a healthy life as pleasant by connecting the image of health—something the audience does not see as particularly pleasant—with the image of rarity—something that is seen as pleasant. By extension, he prompts the audience to imagine broccoli as connected to rarity and consequently makes the choice to eat broccoli appear more pleasant. We see, then, that through the connection between thought and perception, argument affects perception. By making an audience think through an argument, the orator prompts the audience to think of certain images in combination with each other, causing them to perceive those images in different ways. In the case of practical persuasion, an argument can cause an image to appear more pleasant to the audience than it previously did.

However, by itself, this argument and the resulting images of pleasurable health and broccoli are weak, easily defeated motivational forces. As I will show, this is because these resulting images will likely not appear as particularly vivid or true, especially if they are considered alongside the choice to eat something that the audience has been habituated to enjoy, such as a hamburger. The images' weakness may be partly due to the fact that the thought of health and broccoli as pleasant is new and not ingrained through habituation like the pleasure of the hamburger may be.⁹¹ In addition, the pleasure of health offered by broccoli is likely more difficult to achieve than the gustatory pleasures offered by the hamburger. One does not

⁹¹ We might think of it as akin to hearing an argument that numbers are part of the objective world when previously we thought they were merely ideal objects of mind. One might be convinced by the argument, but it may take a while for the objective reality of numbers to settle in.

immediately receive health by eating broccoli. Health comes with time, and one can doubt whether it is true that one will acquire it from eating broccoli. In contrast, the pleasure from a hamburger is immediately felt as one is eating. As a result, for some, the pleasure of health may seem less vivid and less easily acquired than gustatory pleasure. To present more persuasive arguments, the orator needs an additional rhetorical resource capable of enhancing the vividness of the images he evokes. The orator must present those images as truer and as exhibiting something more easily achieved than competing images. Aristotle's account of style offers just this resource.

2.2. Style

So far, I have focused on passages from the *Rhetoric* concerned with how persuasive arguments should be constructed. In contrast, turning to the topic of style (*lexis*), Aristotle begins an examination of how arguments should be presented to the audience to give them greater persuasive effect. In an ideal situation, Aristotle admits, one would not have to focus on style at all; presenting sound arguments would be enough. But in the context of the *Rhetoric*, style is especially important because Aristotle's audience is not well brought up and has unvirtuous, corrupt desires. He writes, "It is not enough to have a supply of things to say, but it is also necessary to say it in the right way, and this contributes to speech having a certain quality" (*Rhet.* 3.1.2-3/1403b15-18). For style "has great power, as has been said, because of the corruption of the audience"(3.1.5-6/1404a8). By adding stylistic flourishes to his speech, the orator can formulate arguments that are more persuasive, especially in the face of corrupt audiences.

Aristotle's discussion of the persuasiveness of style relies on a conception of language that Aristotle briefly presents in the *Rhetoric*. "Speech," says Aristotle, "is a sign" (3.2.1/1404b3), and well-crafted speech conveys its message to the listener in a clear manner. According to Aristotle, ordinary language is the clearest, most transparent mode of communication. By contrast, poetical language uses words in unusual and surprising ways. In doing so, it makes its subject matter appear elevated, strange, and far off, "and," says Aristotle, "people are admirers of what is far off, and what is marvelous is pleasant" (3.2.3/1404b20). However, poetic speech has a downside: though it elevates the subject matter, its prolixity can obscure meaning and subjects that are represented as "far off" can appear to be fanciful and thus false.

Does this mean that the orator should use only ordinary language to persuade his audience to favor a given end? Not necessarily. As we saw above in Moss's account of Aristotle's psychology, if an audience is corrupt—i.e. not well brought up—it will be unable to see that a certain end is good and worth pursuing. Style is a way of combating this blindness. In order to overcome this corruption and succeed in effectively communicating with the audience, Aristotle argues that the orator ought to use a mixture of ordinary and poetical speech, striking a balance between the two such that the speech uses artifice without appearing artificial. By doing so, the orator will construct a speech that is clear to the corrupt audience and ultimately persuasive. As Aristotle writes,

Many [kinds of words] accomplish this [i.e. making language seem "far-off"] in verse and are appropriate there; for what is said [in poetry] about subjects and characters is more out of the ordinary, but in prose much less so, for the subject matter is less remarkable . . . As a result authors should compose without being noticed and should seem to speak not artificially but naturally. The latter is persuasive (*pithanon*), the former the opposite . . . (3.2.3/1404b12).

...it is clear that if one composes well, there will be an unfamiliar quality and it escapes notice and will be clear. (3.2.6/1404B36-38).

Aristotle's thought seems to be that in using poetical-like language, the orator will be able to have the best of both poetry and prose. His language will be pleasant and alluring, but it will also appear true. The corrupt audience will be drawn to this truth and the language will thus be clear to them. As I show below, this clarity ultimately aids in learning (3.2.6/1404b35-8, 3.10.2/1410a9-15) and creates new beliefs.

Aristotle claims that metaphor is one of the most effective means of controlling the poetical aspect of language (3.2.8/1405a8). The meaning of a word is partly constituted by the manner in which it picks out its referent. Metaphor functions by substituting one word in an expression with another word that picks out the same referent in a different way. It consequently changes the way the audience thinks of the word's referent. This is indicated by Aristotle's criticism of the sophist Bryson. Bryson, Aristotle says, claims that whether a word is ugly or beautiful merely depends on the object it picks out.⁹² But in truth, this is too simplistic. By signifying an object in a particular way, a word can make the same object appear either beautiful or ugly. "One word," Aristotle says, "does not signify in the same way as another, so in this sense also we should posit one as more beautiful or more ugly than another . . ." (3.2.13/1405B11-12).

To put it in a way more familiar to contemporary philosophy, if we take two words that have the same referent, the sense of those words can be distinct. One word could pick out a

⁹² More accurately, Bryson says that no word is ugly in itself. Whatever word one uses to denote an object, that word will have the same meaning as any other because they will all pick out the same object. Thus, whether a word is beautiful or not, thinks Bryson, is relative to the object it picks out. In some cases a word might be beautiful because it picks out a beautiful object, in other cases ugly because it picks out an ugly object.

referent in a positive or beautiful way, the other in a negative or bad way. This feature of language gives the orator the opportunity to switch between sufficiently similar words in order to compel the audience to think about something in a particular way. Exemplifying this, Aristotle writes,

...if you wish to adorn, borrow metaphor from something better in the same genus, if to denigrate, from something worse. I mean, for example, since they are opposites in the same genus, saying of a person who begs that he ‘prays’ (εὐχέσθαι) or that a person praying ‘begs’ (πρωχεύειν), because both are forms of asking (3.2.10/1405A14-16).

The phrase “to beg” typically has negative connotations. Consequently, to call the act of asking for money “begging” is to present it in a negative way. To present it positively, we might describe it as praying, since praying often has a positive connotation.

Aristotle goes on to explain that metaphor can be a powerful tool for presenting ideas in a new light, since it can make meaningful and informative connections between ideas. To construct good metaphors, Aristotle suggests that meanings “should be transferred from things that are related but not obviously so, as in philosophy, too, it is characteristic of a well-educated mind to observe likeness even in things very different” (3.11.5/1412a10-14). This suggests that the connections made in philosophical discourse can also be made through metaphor. Philosophy is capable of making non-obvious connections that change our understanding of the world. Similarly, metaphor can make non-obvious connections to enact similar changes in our understanding. Aristotle gives an example that demonstrates this ability: “Thus, Archytas said that an arbiter and an altar were the same thing; for one who has been wronged flies to both” (3.11.5/1412a13-4). By comparing an arbiter and an altar, Archytas is able to present religion and the activity of praying in a new light. Whereas one may have previously thought praying to

be an honorable or pious activity, this metaphor reveals praying to be a dishonorable activity, since it is undertaken by a person in a position of weakness.

A pithy modern attempt at such metaphor comes courtesy of Geoffrey Stone, an appointed member of Barack Obama's NSA Surveillance review group. Defending Obama's January 17, 2014 speech about NSA surveillance, Stone writes, "abandoning the [NSA surveillance] program would be like throwing out your fire alarm because you haven't had a fire in seven years" (Stone 2014). In this, Stone urges us to see the surveillance not as something threatening, but as something good, as a preventative measure that functions only if it constantly in operation.

Psychologically, the workings of metaphor are not significantly different from ordinary, non-metaphorical argumentation. Both forms of argument draw connections between two images in one's mind. However, in metaphor it is unimportant whether the connections one draws are true or logical. Rather, the aim of metaphor is to draw connections that evoke vivid mental images. When thinking of something, we think or see it in a certain way. If the audience sees praying as something good, an effective metaphor drawing a connection between praying and begging will cause the audience to see a connection between the two activities. In doing so, the metaphor will alter the audience's perception of prayer. It will see the weakness and servility inherent in praying.

This perceptual interpretation of metaphor, i.e. that metaphor operates by changing our perception, gains support from Aristotle's discussion of effective metaphor as "bringing-before-the-eyes" ($\pi\rho\delta\ \delta\mu\acute{\mu}\alpha\tau\omega\nu$)(3.9.1/1411b27). By "bringing-before-the-eyes," Aristotle means, "that things are set before the eyes by words that signify actuality" (3.9.1/1411b27). Thus, the phrase

“bringing-before-the-eyes” is used to designate a particular way that the orator can make something apparent, such that the images evoked “signify actuality.”

But what does “signifying actuality” mean? In the context of the passage, Aristotle gives examples of the sorts of metaphor that one should use (3.9). These examples have in common the aim of provoking images that seem real. They encourage the audience to imagine what is being said as actually happening or being the case. This interpretation harmonizes with Aristotle’s claim above that the orator ought to use stylistic flourishes, but in a way that is unnoticeable, not artificial, and ultimately makes things clear. Metaphor that brings-before-the-eyes does just this. In bringing-before-the-eyes, metaphor presents an image to the audience that it can recognize so clearly that it cannot help but be attracted to it as an image that is real.

The value of bringing-before-the-eyes is not merely aesthetic in nature. By presenting good metaphors that conjure vivid and clear images, the orator shows truths to the audience. In doing so, the orator causes his audience to learn (3.10.4/1410b20).⁹³ As Aristotle says: “To learn easily is naturally pleasant to all people, and words signify something, so whatever words create knowledge in us are pleasantest . . . Metaphor most brings about learning” (3.10.2/1410b20). This effect can be so strong that it becomes clear to the listener that he “learned something different from what he believed, and his mind seems to say, ‘how true, and I was wrong’” (3.11.6/1412a21).

To sum up, rhetorical flourishes such as metaphor can be used to adorn bare argumentation to make those arguments more convincing. Well-crafted metaphor can evoke

⁹³ The orator could, presumably, convince his audience of something false. If he did so, it would be difficult to see how the audience “learns” something from him. Thus, we have two choices. We must either assume that Aristotle is taking it for granted that the orator is convincing his audience of something true, or we must take Aristotle’s usage of “learning” as equivalent to something like “convincing” or “persuading.” My thanks to Robert Bolton for pointing out this difficulty.

potent images in the audience's mind. Seeing these images, the audience receives a flash of what appears as an undeniable truth while also seeing that what they previously saw as true to be false.⁹⁴

This psychological change is an admittedly mysterious event. However, it can be clarified with a non-metaphorical example that is, nonetheless, analogous to the way that metaphor operates. Imagine that one has no taste for Earl Grey tea but hears from a friend that it pairs well with a poppy seed bagel. As a consequence of this suggestion, one drinks a cup of Earl Grey while eating a poppy seed bagel. Sure enough, the tea pairs with the bagel. The flavor of the bagel has helped to 'pick out' an aspect of the tea's flavor to which one was not previously sensitive. We might even imagine one saying, "Earl Grey tastes good and I was wrong when I thought otherwise."

An analogous process occurs with metaphor in persuasion. The tea-promoting friend is analogous to the orator and her suggestion analogous to the orator's speech. The decision to consume the bagel and tea together corresponds to the act of calling to mind two images suggested by a metaphor spoken by the orator. The perceptual switch that emerges from tasting the tea and the bagel together and which causes one to taste the tea as good is akin to bringing-before-the-eyes. Just as the tea drinker comes to perceive Earl Grey in a new way, by perceiving two images brought together by a skillfully crafted metaphor, the audience comes to perceive an object in a new way. As a result of this new perception, both the tea taster and the audience acquire a new belief.

Finally, to demonstrate how metaphor can function in speech to alter one's ends, let us look at a contemporary example. This is taken from a speech that George W. Bush made on

⁹⁴ See note 93.

September 11, 2001 in which he established for the first time a justification for a “war on terror.”⁹⁵ Bush’s speech begins with a series of subtle metaphors used to paint the September 11 criminals as evil, immoral monsters. He states, “Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror.” And further, comparing them now to murderers, “These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat.” By referring to the acts as “evil” and “acts of mass murder,” Bush, by connection, paints the people responsible for these acts as evil and murderous. His characterization is important because evil is not simply an act. It is an essential trait; it defines one’s character. In short, these metaphors increase the perceived badness of the perpetrators.⁹⁶

Within the speech, these metaphors lower the audience’s estimation of the value of achieving the end of peace in relation to security and justice. Following the metaphor, Bush clarifies that he is a supporter of peace while simultaneously juxtaposing this claim with notions of security and justice. He writes, “America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world and we stand together to win the war against terrorism.” And further, “This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace” (Bush 2001). However, despite his support for it, in relation to the evil of the terrorists, the image of peace loses much of its appeal. Bush makes this apparent in a final dramatic metaphor:

Tonight I ask for your prayers for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security has been threatened. And I pray they will be comforted by a power greater than any of us spoken through the ages in

⁹⁵ Bush’s usage of metaphor in his characterization of “the war on terror” has been well documented in the news media. While this metaphor occasionally verges on vulgar, it is nonetheless still subtler than the pithy one-liner from Geoffrey Stone quoted above. As such, it is closer to Aristotle’s recommendation that metaphor should be unnoticed and consequently requires a longer discussion than the previous metaphors mentioned in this article.

⁹⁶ See Lakoff (2001) for further discussion of these metaphors.

Psalm 23: "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me" (Bush 2001).

We, and our peaceful lives, rest in the dark, deathly shadow of the terrorists. As a consequence, we must not pursue peace, but rather security and justice. Thus, in his conclusion, as in the above passage, Bush does not mention peace at all. He refers only to justice, along with an indication that in order to achieve justice, we must confront our enemies in what he earlier called a "war on terror." He says, "America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day, yet we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world."

The effect of this speech on the audience is a shift from taking up peace as an end to taking up security and/or justice as an end. The perceived value of peace is lowered when—through Bush's use of metaphor—it is juxtaposed with the evilness of the terrorists while the value of security and justice is heightened. Bush's point, then, is that we should not pursue the lower valued end of peace but rather work toward the ends of security and justice.

3. An Objection

Before concluding, I would like to confront the most pressing textual objection that this account faces. I sketched above a non-rationalist account of moral psychology: our non-rational desires for pleasure and pain establish our ends by causing us to perceive certain objects as good and worth pursuing or as bad and worth avoiding. On the basis of this account, I have argued that through rhetorically ornamented arguments, one's perception of the world can be changed and hence, so too can the ends that one perceives as worth pursuing and avoiding. Thus, reason can affect ends. However, the final book of the *Ethics*, *NE* 10, seems to contradict this conclusion:

Now if words (λόγοι) were sufficient in themselves for making people decent, “Many and fat the fees they’d earn” (to quote Theognis), and justly, and words would be what had to be provided; but as it is they appear to have the power to turn and motivate those of the young who are civilized, and to be capable of bringing about possession by excellence in a character that is noble and truly loves the fine, but to lack the power to turn the majority of people towards refinement of excellence. For most people are not of the sort to be guided by a sense of shame but by fear, and not to refrain from bad things on the grounds of their shamefulfulness but because of the punishments; living by emotion as they do, they pursue their own kinds of pleasures and the means to these, and shun the opposing pains, while not even having a conception of the fine and the truly pleasant, since they have no taste of it. What kind of talking, then, would change the rhythm of their life? For it is not possible, or not easy, for words to dislodge what has long since been absorbed into one’s character-traits (10.9.1179b5-19).

For the person who lives according to emotion will not listen to talk that tries to turn him away from it, nor again will he comprehend such talk; how will it be possible to persuade someone like this to change? And in general it is not talk that makes emotion yield but force. Before he acquires excellence, then, a person must in a way already possess a character akin to it, one that is attracted by the fine and repulsed by the shameful (10.9.1179b27-31).

What are we to make of these passages? Both appear in a portion of the text where Aristotle is asking what his audience of aspiring politicians ought to do with their newly acquired knowledge of the greatest good. That is to say, he is asking, “How ought these politicians rule, given what they now know?” He makes a point of arguing how they *cannot* expect to rule. Just as character virtue cannot be gained by simply acquiring knowledge, one cannot expect to change a citizenry’s behavior merely through words. Thus, these passages seem to conflict with my claim that an orator *can* change an audience’s ends, and hence the way an audience behaves, through argument.

Yet, this conflict is merely apparent and is resolved by noting the difference in focus between these passages and Aristotle’s point in the *Rhetoric*. In these passages, Aristotle’s focus is on character. He writes, “For it is not possible, or not easy, for words to dislodge what has long since been absorbed into one’s character-traits.” In contrast, I have argued that an orator can

alter an audience's *desires* and *ends*. This difference in focus eliminates the *prima facie* conflict. For even if the orator is successful in persuading his audience to take up a new end by persuading it to see that end in a new way, the audience's character still remains alongside these new ends. Thus, we can accept that the politicians cannot change the citizenry through words, while also maintaining that one can be persuaded to pursue a new end through words.

I believe that this alone would overcome the difficulty presented by these passages. However, we do not even have to accept that reason lacks *all* ability to manipulate character, since Aristotle stops short of saying it is *impossible* for the politicians to change a citizenry through words. Rather, he says that it is “not possible, or not easy,” suggesting that it *is* possible to change character—although very hard. Given the view I have presented so far, we can speculate about what Aristotle is thinking when he says that it is “impossible, or not easy.” *Prima facie*, it seems impossible to dislodge one's character through words. Character is developed over a long period of time while the orator's or politician's time with the audience is brief. And it would seem impossible to re-habituate an audience in the duration of a speech.

However, there is a sense in which it *is* possible to dislodge a person's character through words, although, from a ruler's perspective, it is very impractical. In order to see this scenario, let us distinguish between two types of rhetorical success. On the first type, an orator is successful if he is able to compel an audience to pursue a given end for a particular occasion or limited number of occasions. On the second type, the orator is successful by going beyond this initial success and convincing his audience to pursue a particular end over a long period of time. By doing so, the orator convinces the audience to habituate itself to this new end, effectively altering its character through his speech. This second type of success would admittedly be

difficult to achieve, although not impossible. Moreover, its possibility is supported by Aristotle's claim that style can cause us to perceive something as true while also causing us to see what we previously believed to be false. Such a psychological alteration suggests that the orator can effect long-term change in his audience.⁹⁷ Thus, the difficulty presented by these passages has been averted. What the orator changes most immediately are the audience's ends, not its character. However, as the passages indicate, it is still conceivable that the orator could change the audience's character, just with greater effort and difficulty.

4. Conclusion

I began this paper with a puzzle in Aristotle's moral philosophy. By and large commentators have given rationalist interpretations of the *NE* according to which rationality can mold our non-rational desires in light of our conception of the good. However, such a view conflicts with certain passages in the *NE*. Most troublingly, Aristotle states in no uncertain terms that character and hence our non-rational desires, not reason, determine the ends that we pursue. This has led a number of commentators to suppose, against rationalist interpretations, that our ends cannot be altered by reason and are always established by desire. Yet in the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle seems to suggest that a person's ends *can* be rationally altered. What are we to make of these seemingly conflicting passages? I have maintained that this conflict is merely apparent and that the passages can be accommodated by a rationalist interpretation of Aristotle. We can accept

⁹⁷ A good deal more can be said about the inability of rhetoric and specifically *logoi* to serve as a reliable tool for ruling a citizenry. To take one example, metaphor, that which above all is capable of making language (and the objects it references) seem pleasant, is not something that one can learn to craft well and hence not something that can be taught (*Rhet.* 1405a7-8). Thus, in an account of how to rule that presumably aims to establish a stable state, rhetoric would seem to be a particularly poor tool. Moreover, even if a state were successfully ruled through rhetoric, this success would be too closely tied to the skills of a particular person and hence not right for establishing a stable government.

Aristotle's claim that non-rational desires establish the ends that we pursue yet also maintain that reason can indirectly alter those ends by altering our perceptions of what we see as worth pursuing.

My argument rests on an account of psychology at which Aristotle hints in the *Rhetoric*. On this account, desire establishes our ends through perception. When we are habituated to a particular end, we come to take pleasure in that end and thus come to desire it. This desire causes us to perceive the end as something that is good and worth pursuing. When we see the possibility of taking this action in the future, this perception evokes in us a desire that ultimately motivates us to act for the perceived end. Therefore, desire sets ends via perception.

However, according to the *Rhetoric*, through carefully crafted argument and metaphor, an orator can change his audience's perception. Argument and metaphor draw connections between objects in the audience's mind. By thinking of two things together, the audience imagines them together in the 'mind's eye,' so to speak. If the metaphor is good, the combination of images will cause the audience to see the world in a new way. For instance, by comparing praying to begging, an orator can cause the audience to see praying as something that is weak, dishonorable, unpleasant, and hence as something to be avoided. Similarly, by carefully constructing a metaphor about virtue, e.g. courage or peace, an orator can cause the audience to perceive virtue as something pleasant and worth pursuing.

We see, then, how to resolve the interpretive puzzle with which I began. We can grant Aristotle's claim that character sets ends while maintaining that reason has a role in altering these ends. By and large, character does establish our ends by determining what we see as good and

bad. However, reason can manipulate our perception of the world and cause us to see as pleasant something that was previously painful and vice versa.

This account has implications beyond this interpretive puzzle. It sketches a foundation for a general account of how the rational part of the soul interfaces with the non-rational, desiderative part. Independent of concerns about ends, Aristotle maintains, as we saw above, that the desiderative part is responsive to reason. Now we can see how this might be so: the intellect can interact with our desires through perception. Through its ability to alter our perception of the world, it can alter the things that we see as worth pursuing or avoiding and hence alter what we desire. Thus, this account gives us a model on which we can maintain a strict distinction between the rational and non-rational parts of the soul while giving us a way to understand how these elements of the soul interact.

CHAPTER 4

PERSUASION IN THE *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*

In the previous chapters, I offered an account of how the reason of another person could alter one's non-rational soul and thereby alter the ends one pursues. But I largely confined this discussion to the *Rhetoric*. In what follows, I offer a reading of part of the *NE*'s argument that brings out its rhetorical aims and characteristics. I maintain that in the *NE*, Aristotle employs the same arguments he offers in the *Rhetoric* to convince his audience to take up new ends. This comparison reveals two aspects of the *NE*: (1) that Aristotle's audience is less than perfect, in possession of ends different from those that Aristotle argues for in the *NE*. And (2) the argument Aristotle develops in the *NE* using rhetorical techniques allows Aristotle to change the audience's perception of the good. This allows them to actually *see* contemplation as good and thus to take it up as their own end.

Most discussions that aim to illuminate Aristotle's methodology in the *NE* compare it to works in the *Organon*, and particularly the *Prior Analytics* and the *Topics*. The dominant view maintains that the *NE*'s method is dialectical:⁹⁸ it starts with common and wise beliefs and then works through puzzles raised by these beliefs to arrive at a conclusion of what is true. Terrence Irwin (1999), who is perhaps the scholar most commonly associated with dialectic, offers the following explanation:

The method of ethical inquiry is dialectical, described in *Top.* i 1-4, 10-12. Hence it begins from common beliefs, what seems or appears to the many or the wise... [Aristotle]

⁹⁸ Dialectical readings have also been held (at least in part) by Roche (1992), Owen (1975), Barnes (1980), Crisp (2000), Broadie (2002), and Finnigan (2006), Nussbaum (2001), Smith (1994), Bolton (1991).

takes common beliefs as starting points because they are known (or ‘familiar’) to us... Discussion of these common beliefs shows that they raise puzzles, *aporiai*, when we find apparently convincing arguments from common beliefs for inconsistent conclusions... To solve (or ‘loose’ 1146b7) the puzzles, Aristotle looks for an account that will show the truth of most and the most important of the common beliefs (1145b5). This account will provide us with a principle that is ‘known by nature’...because it justifies claims to knowledge (326-7).⁹⁹

According to Irwin ethical inquiry begins with what is familiar to us and seems to most people to be true. Dialectic, then, raises problems prompted by these beliefs and then works through them to arrive at a conclusion that is better known by nature, i.e. a conclusion that explains these previous beliefs.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Salmieri (2009) argues that there are too many instances in the *NE* where Aristotle strays from a dialectical method to consider his method dialectical. He argues that Aristotle’s method is closer to a didactic method, an argument that is deduced “from the starting-points appropriate to each study and not from the opinions held by the answerer” (319). For Salmieri, Aristotle works not from commonly held beliefs, but from a set of principles that are better known by nature.

In contrast to these interpretations, yet consistent with the dialectical interpretation, this chapter examines the rhetorical aspects of Aristotle’s argument in the *NE* and the text’s connections to the *Rhetoric*. The secondary literature has, for the most part, ignored these aspects.¹⁰⁰ I argue that the *Nicomachean Ethics* gives us examples of how an orator can use rhetorical arguments to convince an audience to take up new ends. Some of the works that focus on the *NE*’s rhetoric are primarily studies of Aristotle’s language within the *NE*, and do not focus on the *Rhetoric* or its connection to the *NE*, as in the case of Netz (2001) and Natali (2007).

⁹⁹ Quoted in Salmieri (2009).

¹⁰⁰ There are treatments of Aristotle’s rhetoric in the *Nicomachean Ethics*: Natali (2007), Netz (2001), Olmsted (2013), Rowland and Womak (1985), Adkins (1984)

Those that have drawn such a connection have laid the groundwork for a more thorough study of the relation between the works by showing that the different aims of the two works do not make such a study impossible. Rowland and Womak (1985) show this in general. They argue that although the *Rhetoric* states that the field of rhetoric is not concerned with the truth, it can nonetheless be used to ethical ends. Olmstead (2013) focused more specifically on the topic of deliberation and investigates the ethical implications of rhetorical arguments. Garver (1994) has used the *Rhetoric* to understand the close connection between practicality and rationality in action, arguing that the most rational end is an end that can actually be acted upon. Of the literature that discusses the methodology of the *NE* and the structure of its argument, only Smith (1994, 2000) appears to have analyzed *NE*'s method and overall argument in connection with the *Rhetoric*, focusing primarily on the text's arguments about character excellence (primarily Books III-V and VIII-IX).

Like Smith, I argue that portions of Aristotle's argument use strategies laid out in the *Rhetoric*.¹⁰¹ However, in contrast to Smith, I specifically focus on Aristotle's argument that concerns his search for the human good in *NE* I and X; I do not focus on Aristotle's discussion of character virtues. My thesis is that Aristotle argues to his conclusion by beginning with beliefs that the audience can accept and then uses these beliefs to slowly move them to see contemplation as the greatest good using the same rhetorical arguments and style discussed in the *Rhetoric*.

Using my account of Aristotle's psychology in Chapter 3, in support of my thesis I will emphasize the extent to which these rhetorical arguments and style can be seen as affecting the audience's perception of their ends. In particular, I will focus on connections that Aristotle

¹⁰¹ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of this topic.

makes between things that the audience already sees as good or bad and things that Aristotle wants the audience to see as good or bad. Through comparisons to donkeys, the sick, and slaves, as well as through language at key points that is strategically indeterminate, I show that Aristotle gradually moves his audience to see that some people are in the unfortunate situation of not being able to see truly pleasant ends as pleasant. Finally, I will show that Aristotle turns this argument on the audience themselves, arguing that their present ends, while pleasant, are not the most pleasant, and that they should imagine as most pleasant the activity of contemplation.

To reiterate, my account of the *NE*'s rhetorical method is not meant to suggest that this is the *only* method that Aristotle follows, to the exclusion of any other methodology. Rather, my argument is simply meant to illuminate how the *NE* utilizes the rhetorical strategies of the *Rhetoric* to persuade its audience to take up new ends.

1. Two Suppositions

There are two suppositions that the following argument will make. First, it will assume that the *NE* represents a set of lectures presented by Aristotle to an audience, likely populated of aspiring politicians, i.e. people who are dedicated to leading a public life. This seems to be the usual way of understanding the context of the *NE*.¹⁰² Second, I will assume that in the *NE*, Aristotle argues that the greatest human good is contemplation. This account, which is known as an exclusivist account, has been challenged by scholars in the literature maintaining an "inclusivist" reading of Aristotle, that is, a reading on which the human good is composed of many different ends, such as friendship, justice, and contemplation.¹⁰³ I am in agreement with

¹⁰² See Salkever (2007) as well as Tessitore (1990) (cited in Salkever).

¹⁰³ Thorough defenses of exclusivist readings can be found in Kraut (1991) and Lear (2006).

Gabriel Lear's contention that inclusivist views are reactionary, motivated by a worry about the troublesome upshots of an exclusivist reading rather than the by view's textual merits.¹⁰⁴ To give an example of an exclusivist problem, if contemplation is the greatest good—the single end that a good person should pursue—it seems that a 'good' person on Aristotle's view could turn out to be morally bad. That is to say, that person might have lived a life aimed at contemplation while being uncourageous or even cowardly.

However difficult the exclusivist reading might be, it is clearly sanctioned by the text. Aristotle writes, "...if happiness is activity in accordance with excellence, it is reasonable that it should be activity in accordance with the highest kind; and this will be the excellence of what is best" (1177a12-14). And later, "...what belongs to each kind of creature by nature is best and most pleasant for each; for man, then, the life in accordance with intelligence is so too, given that man is this most of all. This life, then, will also be happiest. But the second happiest is the life in accordance with the rest of excellence" (1178a5-10). I will, then, assume an exclusivist reading of Aristotle.

The argument that follows is organized into three sections. It begins in (1) by broadly describing the features of a *Rhetorical* argument. It then compares these features to arguments in the *NE*. This comparison begins in (2) by arguing that the *Ethics* shares one of the most basic features of a *Rhetorical* argument: it aims to convince an audience of something that it was not previously convinced of. As recommended by the *Rhetoric*, the *NE*'s argument begins with the beliefs of the audience in order to convince it to see as good an end that it previously did not see as good. Continuing this comparison, (3) enumerates a series of arguments in the *NE* that are, if not identical, then very similar to arguments that Aristotle recommends the orator use in the

¹⁰⁴ Lear (2006).

Rhetoric. (3) shows how these arguments are employed in Aristotle's attempt to persuade his audience to take up the new end of contemplation. This discussion will be sensitive to the psychological and perceptual effects of Aristotle's argument, which he accomplishes by drawing connections and setting up juxtapositions between their perceptions. By drawing these connections, Aristotle controls how his audience imagines particular activities in the service of his ultimate goal, thereby persuading it to take contemplation as the greatest good for man and itself.

2. Features of Rhetorical Argument

The *Rhetoric* defines rhetoric as the ability to find the means of persuasion in any situation (1355b8-9). The *Rhetoric* itself is devoted to helping the orator locate those means and laying out argumentative strategies to exploit them.¹⁰⁵ Aristotle's recommendation for how to construct a persuasive argument can be summarized in the following way. Similar to dialectic, in rhetoric the orator should begin with the beliefs of the audience (*Rhet.* 1.1.12). With these beliefs in mind, the orator should formulate arguments that work from and exploit them to persuade the audience that a certain conclusion is true.¹⁰⁶ In doing so, the orator will take as his starting point something that the audience already sees to be true. This will allow him to incrementally move the audience from this starting point to a new belief that they previously did not hold.

In the case of practical arguments, i.e. arguments concerned with action, this form of argumentation is especially important, as it allows the orator to influence both the audience's

¹⁰⁵ The *Rhetoric* takes into account the persuasive power of a wide array of different factors including the structure and formulation of arguments, the emotional state of the audience, and the appearance and likability of the orator, among other things. Here I will be concerned only with providing analysis of those means of persuasion relating to argument and its formulation.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 4 for examples of such arguments.

beliefs and desires. The orator can begin with something that the audience sees as truly good and worth pursuing and move them to see some new end as good. Doing this successfully, the orator can cause his audience to desire this end and finally act.

3. Starting Points in the *NE*

The argument that Aristotle presents to his audience in the *NE* closely resembles what can be thought of as the basic structure of rhetorical argumentation. As the *Rhetoric* suggests, in the *NE*, Aristotle constructs an argument that begins with the beliefs of the audience with the aim of persuading them to see as an end an activity that they previously did not take to be an end. That the construction of the *NE*'s argument begins with the beliefs of the audience is initially indicated by Aristotle's well-known statement that the audience must be experienced:

[1] Each person judges well what he knows and is a good judge of these things (so the person who is educated in a given thing is a good judge of that, and the person who is educated in everything is a good judge without qualification). This is why the young are not an appropriate audience for the political expert; for they are inexperienced in the actions that constitute life, and what is said will start from these and will be about these (1094b28-1095a5).

In this passage, Aristotle argues that there is a type of person best suited to listen to his lectures, namely the person who has had a lot of life experience. "Why," we might ask, "are those who have had experience with life suited to listen to Aristotle's lectures while others are not?" There is a common sense reason why one must have the right experience in order to be the right sort of audience member. Take as an example a lecture about fishing. In order to truly understand the lecture, it is likely that one must know some basic facts about fishing, e.g. what tools it requires, how to generally operate those tools, what its goal is, etc. Similarly, if one is to understand a lecture about life, one must have some basic knowledge of action and life.

However, the discussion in the *NE* is importantly distinct from a lecture on fishing, insofar as the *NE* is meant to be practical and hence spur action. We have already seen in Chapter 2 what is required to have a belief that moves one to act. In order to believe an end is good to pursue, one must *see* that end as good and this perception comes from one's pleasant experiences in the world. This higher bar for practical belief is also found in the *NE* in Aristotle's distinction between theoretical and practical reason. According to this distinction, theoretical reason is concerned merely with what is true and false, whereas practical reason is concerned with action, i.e. the truth about what to do in accordance with right desire. As Aristotle says,

[2] What affirmation and denial are in the case of thought, pursuit and avoidance are with desire; so that, since excellence of character is a disposition issuing in decisions, and decision is a desire informed by deliberation, in consequence both what issues from reason must be true and the desire must be correct for the decision to be a good one, and reason must assert and desire pursue the same things (6, 1139a21-26).

Aristotle's point in this passage is that it is not enough for practical reason (of which decision is a part) to be concerned with truth and falsity. Because practical reason is concerned with what to do, it must also be coordinated with desire so that one actually does what one believes is good to do. In light of [2], [1] can be understood as saying that without the proper experience, people will not be able to *practically* follow Aristotle's arguments. People might be able to intellectually follow what Aristotle is saying, but they will not be moved (or, speaking in the *Rhetoric's* terms, be persuaded) to act in accordance with Aristotle's arguments. To be moved, people must already possess a certain amount of experience in life, and already see certain things as good.

That Aristotle's arguments in the *NE* are in fact meant to be practical is supported by the sentence that follows passage [1] above. Continuing his thought that the best listeners of his lectures will be those who are experienced, Aristotle writes, "What is more, because they have a

tendency to be led by the emotions, it will be without point or use for them [i.e. potential members of the audience] to listen, *since the end is not knowing things but doing them*” (I.3, 1095a4-6).¹⁰⁷ That is to say, Aristotle excludes certain people from his audience on the basis of the fact that they will not be moved to act by his arguments. In other words, they will not be persuaded. This is why, in the next chapter, Aristotle says that his inquiry is “a political inquiry in a way” (1094b12), since the good it seeks is τὸ πάντων ἀκρότατον τῶν πρακτῶν ἀγαθῶν, “the topmost of all *achievable* goods” (1095a16).¹⁰⁸ Aristotle is not just giving an abstract philosophical lecture, meant to inform the audience about first principles. Nor is his inquiry practical, just because it is *about* action. He is presenting an argument that he expects will move his audience. For it to be successful, this audience must have the right sorts of experiences. Going back to [1], Aristotle’s suggestion that his audience be experienced should, then, be understood as a requirement that his audience have the right sorts of experiences such that they will potentially be moved by his argument.

Given this, I think that the *NE* can be understood as taking its starting points from a place similar to that recommended in the *Rhetoric*. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle suggests that an orator find persuasive arguments by constructing them out of the beliefs of the audience. Let us call this method fitting the argument to the audience. Similarly, in the *NE* Aristotle is constructing an argument that takes its start from the beliefs of the audience. However, instead of trying to identify the beliefs of his audience, he stipulates the appropriate audience, and hence, the appropriate starting points. We can call this method fitting the audience to the argument. But despite this difference, the arguments are sufficiently similar. They construct their arguments

¹⁰⁷ Emphasis is mine.

¹⁰⁸ Emphasis is mine.

beginning with the beliefs of the audience in order that those arguments will actually be persuasive and cause a change in the audience's actions.

4. The Imperfect Ends of the *Nicomachean Ethics*' Audience

In the previous section, I indicated that in comparing the *Rhetoric* to the *NE*, we have reason to believe that the *NE* begins with the beliefs of the audience so that it may successfully persuade the audience of its conclusion. In the context of the *NE*, this means persuading the audience that a new end or set of ends is good.¹⁰⁹ Implicit in this is the contention that the audience's beliefs are different from the conclusion that the argument aims to convince them of. However, there are prominent interpretations of the *NE*'s method that deny that the audience's beliefs are substantially distinct from the conclusion of Aristotle's argument. For instance, Broadie (1991) argues that the *NE* does not aim to move the audience towards new ends. Rather, it provides clarifications and explanations for the ends that the audience already has. I do not think that these passages necessitate such an interpretation. They leave room for my contention that Aristotle can be seen in the *NE* as persuading his audience to take up new ends, i.e. goods that the audience did not previously take to be ends.

The passage that most strongly supports Broadie's interpretation is Aristotle's note about methodology in *NE* 1:

[3][a] We must keep in mind that there is a difference between arguments that begin from first principles and arguments that work to first principles. Plato too used to raise difficulties here, and rightly: he would inquire whether the movement of the discussion was from first principles or to them, just as in the stadium the runners might be moving away from the race stewards towards the turn or in the reverse direction. [b]. For one must begin

¹⁰⁹ Although I am assuming an exclusivist interpretation of *NE*, I say that Aristotle moves the audience to an end or set of ends because I see him as first persuading his audience that rationality in general is good (which includes more than one excellence and hence more than one end) and then to a specific function of rationality.

[ἀρκτέον] from what is knowable, but there are two senses of ‘knowable’: there is what is knowable in relation to us, and what is knowable without qualification.

[c] Presumably, then, in our case, we must start from what is knowable to us. [d] Consequently, in order to listen appropriately to discussion about what is fine and just, i.e. about the objects of political expertise in general, one must have been well brought up. For the starting point [ἀρχή] is that it is so, and if this were sufficiently clear to us—well, in that case there will be no need to know in addition why. But such a person either has the relevant principles [ἀρχάς], or might easily grasp them” (1095a30-1095b9).

In this passage, Aristotle begins by making a number of methodological points, starting with two familiar distinctions in [a] and [b]. [a] distinguishes between arguments that work toward first principles and arguments that work from first principles. [b] specifies where those arguments begin. Some arguments start from what is knowable in relation to us; others start from what is knowable in relation to nature. As suggested in the passage above and in other Aristotelian remarks on method, first principles are better known by nature.¹¹⁰ Thus when we have arguments that work to first principles, we start with what is better known to us. When we have arguments that work from first principles, we start from what is better known by nature. Thus, when Aristotle concludes in [c] that we must start with what is knowable to us, he means that we are working *to* first principles.¹¹¹

Following [c], the sentences in [d] are introduced as an explanation of the sort of audience that Aristotle’s lectures require given his conclusion that we must start from what is better known to us. In short, it maintains that the audience must have the relevant starting points known-to-us so that they may properly understand Aristotle’s lecture and be led to the starting points better-known-by-nature. Based on [d], it is commonly acknowledged that Aristotle does

¹¹⁰ The passage usually cited in addition to this *NE* passage is *Physics* 184a10-21: “It is clear, then, that in the science of nature as elsewhere, we should try first to determine questions about the first principles. The naturally proper direction of our road is from things better known and clearer to us, to things that are clearer and better known by nature; for the things known to us are not the same as the things known unconditionally (*haplōs*). Hence it is necessary for us to progress, following this procedure, from the things that are less clear by nature, but clearer to us, towards things that are clearer and better known by nature.”

¹¹¹ See Broadie (1991, 22) for a similar interpretation.

not address himself to moral skeptics; i.e. he does not provide arguments to those who would challenge Aristotle's contention that virtue is good or, perhaps, even that particular virtues are good.¹¹² This has led some scholars to interpret this passage as maintaining that Aristotle's audience must already have the right moral ends before hearing his lectures. Broadie (1991) writes:

[w]e start, then, with the things known to us, which is to say the goods we ordinarily recognize as such, and in all the shapes in which we know them. To make a start we do not need to know why they are good (1095b6-7). But we do need to be brought up in good ways of feeling and acting (1095b4-6). We must have sound values, because our actual values afford the only possible ethical starting points, and unless they are sound the starting points will be false (22).

She then continues on the next page:

...in arguing as he will that this highest good in a sense consists in morally virtuous action, he cannot be seeking to cast morally virtuous action in such a light that his listeners will be more disposed to engage in it than if they did not know of this argument. Those for whom the investigation is intended are by upbringing committed to moral goodness (23).

Having stated this, Broadie recognizes that this calls into question the value of Aristotle's enterprise in the *NE*. If the audience is already moral, what good will these lectures do? She explains:

... it is one thing to be virtually living the sort of life that is best, and another to make the most of that best and be able to pass it on uncorrupted. Aristotle's inquiry assumes that to make the best of the best which we already have, we must reflect on it philosophically (23).

In brief, the *Ethics* provides a philosophical reflection on the ends that the audience already has, helping them to see those ends more clearly, Sherman (1989) seems to express a similar sentiment about this passage when she writes, "thus, we do not begin with a defense of virtue,

¹¹² For instance, see Kraut, Richard, "Aristotle's Ethics", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/aristotle-ethics/>>.

but with a commitment to it” (194) (even if this stands in some tension with some of the other points she makes in the book about revising ends).

However, these strict interpretations of this passage are not necessary. If we look at accounts of Aristotle’s dialectic to which this passage is a reference, we see that the starting points—what is better known to us—are messy. That is to say, we do not simply start with those activities that are actually starting points and then look for explanations of why these are starting points in order to arrive at what is better known by nature. Rather, we begin with a whole series of potential ends, not all of which will end up being ‘true’ ends in Aristotle’s theory. For instance, according to Irwin (1988), we begin with common opinions and the opinions of the wise that seem to be true. On the basis of these beliefs, we then try to come up with a theory that will explain as many of them as possible. Most often, this will lead to puzzles, as not all of the initial opinions can be true at the same time (47). In the case of the *NE*, this means beginning with goods that seem to be ends and then, through dialectical argument, coming to see that some or all of these goods are not ends, or at least not final ends. Some other activity is a final end.

This allows that the goods that the audience takes to be goods at the beginning of Aristotle’s lecture are not necessarily the goods that they take to be ends at the end of Aristotle’s lecture. If I am right, then we can interpret passage [3] above as requiring the audience to accept a certain collection of ends as good which will provide the raw materials for Aristotle’s argument. This argument aims to show the audience what is truly good.

This contention, that Aristotle moves his audience from an initial set of ends to a new set of ends, is supported by scholarship on what Aristotle’s audience would have initially been educated to believe about excellence and the good. At the very end of *NE* I, in chapter 13,

“excellence” comes to refer to something very specific, which is then further refined in the books that follow. Excellence, in short, refers to the intellectual excellences and the character excellences. The latter includes courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, pride, and patience, among other traits. However, as Smith has argued, this Aristotelian account of excellence differs from the virtues that the audience would have valued highest (Smith 2000). Indeed, as Adkins (1993) noted, “traditional education, founded on Homer and other admired poets, in fact inculcated very different values [in the Aristotle’s audience].” Given this, I think Aristotle’s comment about his audience being well brought up is best understood as a requirement that his audience have a sufficiently good upbringing such that there is the possibility that they might be persuaded by Aristotle’s lectures. In other words, Aristotle is requiring that his audience be good *enough* to hear his lectures, not that they must be perfectly brought up. They must, for instance, at least see honor or perhaps their particular Homeric virtues as good to some degree. All that is disallowed by Aristotle’s comments is that his audience not find these initial starting virtues to be repugnant. For instance, he argues against certain sets of popular goods as not counting as ends at all, such as mere pleasure and money. If one initially saw wealth as the highest good with honor as a close second, these arguments might persuade one to see honor as better than wealth.

Thus, the starting points between the *Rhetoric* and the *NE* are similar: both works start with the beliefs of the audience in order to move them to a conclusion that they previously did not see. Moreover, we can now see that Aristotle’s discussion of starting points better-known-to-us and starting points better-known-by-nature does not upset this similarity. This passage does not have to be taken to indicate that the audience must already be perfectly brought up, with good

character and the correct ends. Their characters can be imperfect, pointed at ends that the wise person would not pursue. Given that he is arguing for those ends that the wise person would pursue in the *NE*, we can understand him as trying to convince his audience to take up a new end or ends.

5. Parallel argument in the *Rhetoric* and *NE*

So far, we have seen that the *NE* begins, as the *Rhetoric* recommends, with a persuasive argument: the beliefs of an audience composed of individuals who are less than perfectly brought up. Moreover, the *NE* attempts to move the audience from what it currently sees as a good end or ends to a different conception of what is good, namely contemplation. In the remainder of this chapter, I argue that one of the ways Aristotle moves his audience from these starting points to his particular conception of the good is by using rhetorical strategies laid out in the *Rhetoric*. These strategies harness the beliefs of the audience to persuade it to see as good what it previously did not.

In Chapter 3, I discussed at length a number of arguments found in the *Rhetoric* aimed at persuading an audience to take up new ends. In section 5.1 below, I revisit some of these arguments and list those that are especially important to the *NE*. In 5.2, I show that these same arguments appear in the *NE*. In 5.3, I demonstrate how these particular arguments are used in the *NE* to persuade the audience to take contemplation as its end.

5.1. Rhetorical Arguments in the *Rhetoric*

To begin, let us look at a selection of those arguments in the *Rhetoric* that Aristotle recommends to the orator as useful for persuading an audience to take up a new end. They are as follows:

[1] since both sides in a debate often agree about what is advantageous but disagree about which is more advantageous [Kennedy adds, “among possible courses of action”], something should next be said about the greater good and the more advantageous. . . . Since, then, we call something good that is chosen for itself and not for the sake of something else . . . and since what exists for itself is an “end” (and the “end” is that for the sake of which other things exist) . . . it necessarily follows that more things are a greater good than one or few . . . (1.7.1).

[2] And what is more desirable* (αἰρετώτερον) in itself [is a greater good] than what is not, for example, strength than what is wholesome; for the latter is not sought for itself, while the former is, which was the meaning of the good (1.7.8, 1364a1-5).¹¹³

[3] And what has less need than another for other things [is a greater good than what has more]; for it is more [self-sufficient] (αὐταρκέστερον), and “to have less need” is to need fewer things or things easily gotten (1.7.9, 1364a5-7).

In addition to giving an elaborate chain of reasoning to justify why having more goods is better than fewer, passage [1] gives us a preliminary explanation of what counts as a good. It is something that is chosen for itself and not for the sake of something else. This definition of a good is utilized in [2]. Here, Aristotle is suggesting that an end is better than another based on its “desirability” or “choice worthiness.” If we choose something for itself and another ‘end’ for the sake of something else, that difference in choice worthiness makes the former end better than the latter. If the orator could convince the audience that something that it took to be an end were merely a means, he could convince them to take up something else that is truly an end.

¹¹³ Translation is Kennedy’s. In the starred bracket I have replaced “preferable” with “desirable” to make the translation consistent with the corresponding *NE* passage. The bracketed portion without the star indicates Kennedy’s addition to make the passage more comprehensible.

In [3] Aristotle highlights a property that will allow the orator to argue that one end is better than another, given its self-sufficiency. By this Aristotle means an end or good that requires fewer things in addition to itself in order for one to possess it. Thus, in comparing sports, we might say the tennis is a better sport than football because it requires less: fewer players, less equipment, and less space. This makes it easier for one to participate in, and thus better than football.

5.2. Rhetorical Arguments in the *NE*

Aristotle uses these very arguments in the *NE* when he discusses what the greatest good for man is. Because the rhetorical arguments are meant to persuade an audience to see new ends as good, this suggests that in the *NE* Aristotle is doing the same, trying to convince his audience to take up a new end or ends. First, let us list the arguments that the *NE* shares with the *Rhetoric*. Aristotle notes in the first line of the *NE* that our actions are always for some end (1094a1). This end, Aristotle points out, is better than the means done for the sake of it. He then applies this to certain ways of life, noting:

[4] The life of the money maker is of a sort that is chosen under compulsion of need, and wealth is clearly not the good we were looking for, since it is useful, and for the sake of something else. Hence one might be more inclined to take as ends the things mentioned before, because they are valued for themselves. But it appears that they are not what we are looking for either; and yet there are many established arguments that focus on them (1096a5-10).

Thus, at the very beginning of the ethics Aristotle utilizes the first two suggestions offered in the *Rhetoric*. He establishes with his audience that ends are things done for themselves and that ends are better than means. If one thought that money making was a goal that one ought to pursue, one

would be mistaken, for there is something higher than mere money making. Money is merely a means to some other end.

Aristotle elaborates on this. He first introduces his notion of “completeness” and then “self-sufficiency,” ultimately coming to the conclusion that the greatest good is happiness because it possesses these features. The rhetorical benefit of happiness, as the *Rhetoric* points out in a passage that is strikingly similar to the *NE*, is that everyone desires happiness. Consequently, if Aristotle is able to show that these features pick out what is desirable about happiness, the audience will thereby be accepting that these are features that the greatest good must have.

Beginning this argument Aristotle writes,

[5] We say that what is worth pursuing for itself is more complete than what is worth pursuing for the sake of something else, and what is never desirable (αίρετόν) because of something else is more complete than those things that are desirable both for themselves and because of it; while what is complete without qualification is what is always desirable in itself and never because of something else. Happiness seems most of all to be like this; for this we always choose because of itself and never because of something else, while as for honour, pleasure, and intelligence, and every excellence, we do choose them because of themselves since if nothing resulted from them, we would still choose each of them, but we also choose them for the sake of happiness, supposing that we shall be happy through them (1097a31-1097b5).

Here, Aristotle establishes a hierarchy based on features of an object’s desirability or choice worthiness, what we would today likely call value but which he calls “completeness” (τέλειον).

A thing can be desirable for at least two, not mutually exclusive reasons: either because it is something that one sees as desirable in itself or else because one desires to have it because it will allow one to get a hold of some further thing that is desirable. These properties allow Aristotle to establish a hierarchy of goods: those things that we desire solely for themselves and never for the sake of something else are best and most complete (τελειότατον). There is nothing above them, so to speak. While those things that we desire for themselves and for the sake of themselves are

less good and less complete. And those that are desirable only for the sake of something else are least complete.¹¹⁴

This matches up with passage [2] above from the *Rhetoric* where Aristotle focuses on a thing's desirability. His explanation and example in that passage illuminate the common sense thinking behind this *NE* passage. There, he states that "what is more desirable in itself is a greater good than what is not, for example, strength than what is wholesome." The connection between desirability and goodness that this passage expresses is the following. It is assumed that what we are looking for is the better good, i.e. that object or action that is more worthy of being called an end. Those things that we treat as goods are things we desire, for instance strength and what is wholesome. But they are not equally end-worthy. Strength is desirable in and of itself. In contrast, what is wholesome is also desirable, but primarily for its relation to other things, particularly strength. Strength is consequently a better good in the sense that it is more capable of being an end than wholesomeness. An end is an end of action, that for the sake of which we do other things, and something that is desirable because of what does not belong to it will inspire further action and hence will not function as an end. In this *NE* passage, Aristotle characterizes these levels of goodness as completeness and takes it one step further by noting that sometimes a thing can be desirable both in itself and for the sake of something else. Such an object, while it might be a serious contender for being an end or good, is less end-worthy than another object which is always only desirable in itself. For this latter sort of object would be better at functioning as an end for the reason that it would not inspire any action beyond it. For this reason, it is more complete.

¹¹⁴ That is to say, least complete of things that are desirable at all.

Notably, this interpretation of completeness, which connects the *NE* to Aristotle's comments in the *Rhetoric*, provides evidence for an exclusivist reading of Aristotle against Ackrill's famous inclusivist reading ([1972] 1980). Ackrill argues that the passage about completeness (and in connection, the closely related concept of self-sufficiency discussed in the next paragraph) is "making a clear conceptual point, not a rash and probably false empirical claim" (21). That is to say, Aristotle is making the unobjectionable claim that when we consider "*eudaimonia*" we simply mean that thing for the sake of which we do everything that we do. He is certainly not making the highly objectionable claim that in fact there is some particular activity that is most complete over all other activities. But against Ackrill, looking at [5] in conjunction with the *Rhetoric* allows us to read this passage in the controversial way that Ackrill thought so offensively objectionable. Indeed, Aristotle is making a contentious claim, but its difficulty is masked both by how commonsensical the suggestion seems and by Aristotle's vagueness at this point about what constitutes *eudaimonia*. Aristotle is attempting to persuade his audience, warming them to this principle so that he can then, later on, use the principle to draw out a more controversial conclusion.¹¹⁵

Closely associated with completeness is Aristotle's notion of self-sufficiency which he presents as a property coextensive with completeness:

[6] The same appears to also follow from considerations of self-sufficiency (τῆς αὐταρκείας); for the complete good seems to be self-sufficient. . . . the 'self-sufficient' we posit as being what in isolation makes life desirable and lacking in nothing, and we think happiness is like this—and moreover most desirable of all things, it not being counted with other goods: clearly, if it *were* so counted in with the least of other goods, we would think it more desirable, for what is added becomes an extra quantity of goods,

¹¹⁵ I am not suggesting here that Aristotle is not *also* engaging in reasoned argument. Indeed, given that his audience likely has some education, it is likely necessary that the argument at least *seem* logically sound since if it did not, the rhetorical effects would likely be lost. This is connected to Aristotle's insistence in the *Rhetoric* that rhetorical arguments at least *seem* true.

and the larger total amount of goods is always more desirable. So happiness is clearly something complete and self-sufficient, being the end of our practical undertakings (1097b7–1097b20, emphasis is Rowe's).

This passage, which corresponds to *Rhetoric* passage [3] above, extends upon completeness, bringing into sharper focus the affective benefits of having an end that is more complete. One might recognize, based on [5], that a more complete end has a greater claim to being an end. [6] tells us why one should adopt that end: the end will improve one's life. Ends that are not complete when achieved will leave one wanting more. More complete ends will leave one less wanting. In short, they will make one more self-sufficient. Consequently, the most complete end is the most desirable: when it is achieved, one will want nothing more. This is how we think of happiness, since once we possess it, we will not want anything else.

Passages [4], [5], and [6] represent the three argumentative points that frame Aristotle's discussion about the greatest good or end. Given that very similar arguments also appear in the *Rhetoric*, these arguments provide compelling evidence that the *NE* is shaped by the *Rhetoric*, or at least by rhetorical concerns, and that the *NE* employs arguments that are aimed at being persuasive.¹¹⁶ That is to say that the arguments are formulated in such a way that they are sensitive to what is likely to rationally and emotionally affect the audience.¹¹⁷ They utilize common sense considerations that the audience can accept about what makes something better than another thing and more worthy of being an end. These rhetorical arguments are sometimes developed alongside the construction of sound, logical arguments (whether explicit or in the

¹¹⁶ I do not wish to make any assertions about the chronology of Aristotle's works, hence my hedge that the argument in the *NE* is either influenced by the *Rhetoric* or influenced by rhetorical concerns.

¹¹⁷ This emotional sensitivity will be elaborated on in (3c).

background) while at other times arguments' rhetorical structure is, at least on the surface, at odds with rigorous logical form.¹¹⁸

5.3. Argument in Action in the *NE*

These arguments are used in the *NE* to serve (one of) the larger tasks of the work: persuading Aristotle's audience to see that contemplation is the greatest good for both man and itself. Chapter 3 wrestled with the psychological difficulties facing arguments concerned with ends. Such arguments, we saw, must not only change the audience's mind, they must also alter the audience's perception.¹¹⁹ The *Rhetoric* showed how this perceptual change is possible. By connecting an object that the audience already sees as good with another one that the audience is perceptually ambivalent towards, an argument can cause the audience to see this other ambivalent perception as good, thus motivating it to act for the object. In light of this, I will be sensitive to the connections that Aristotle draws in his *NE* argument about the greatest good since these connections are needed to convince the audience that this new end is good for it to pursue. Some of these connections are drawn by metaphor, the most effective way of drawing such connections. However, as we will see, they are also drawn by the order of arguments as well as certain vagaries that Aristotle lets stand. Carrying out this analysis of the *NE* will give us an example of specifically ethical rhetorical argument.

¹¹⁸ This is not to say that I think any of the above arguments in the *NE* are necessarily indefensible. I merely note this to distinguish what I take to be the rhetorical emphasis of the arguments from what might be called the "logical" or more properly "dialectical" aspects of the arguments.

¹¹⁹ This is arguably necessary for any argument to succeed but in the case of ends—as opposed to the case of means—it is especially difficult. In the case of means, the method of persuasion is essentially schematizable. By showing that an activity is a means to an end that one sees as good, a connection is drawn between the means and the end. As a result of this connection, one comes to see the means as good. Arguments that change one's perception about the end are more difficult to come by and cannot be easily schematized. As we saw in Chapter 3, Aristotle noted that metaphor was the most capable (although not the only) means of effecting this sort of change. However, one cannot schematize how to formulate good metaphor.

Aristotle develops the argument that contemplation is the greatest good for man throughout the *NE*. It begins in the very first book of the ethics, *NE* 1.1, with an account of the role that goodness plays in action. All of our actions are done for some end that we take to be good. Thus Aristotle wonders, what is the best or highest good that one could engage in? His discussion of this question begins with a survey of possible candidates for such an end. This survey utilizes beliefs tailored to his particular audience. The most obvious evidence for this is his treatment of the life of pleasure. Aristotle opposes the common belief that such a life is good. He writes,

to judge from their lives, most people, i.e. the most vulgar, seem—not unreasonably—to suppose it to be pleasure; that is just why they favor the life of consumption. . . . Now most of the utterly slavish sort of people obviously decide in favor of a life that belongs to grazing cattle, and not without reason, given that many of those on high places behave like Sardanapallus (195b15-22).

Here, Aristotle does not present an argument so much as an *ad hominem* attack against those people who take pleasure in itself to be the good. He writes them off with what the *Rhetoric* would categorize as a stylistic flourish, a comparison between the pleasure seekers and beasts, without giving a reason why such people are bad or even a justification for his comparison. This indicates that Aristotle does not think his audience needs convincing that pleasure is not the greatest good and hence he does not bother to offer an argument that it is not.¹²⁰

In contrast, his discussion of honor begins by complimenting those who take it to be the greatest good. But here, too, there is no argument justifying why honor is a good life. Rather, it is

¹²⁰ Again, I take it that this argument can have other interpretations when considering, e.g., its logical structure. Because I am specifically interested in the particularly rhetorically stylistic elements of this argument and their psychological affects, I leave these logical interpretations to the side. Note that because of this focus, it may look like I am attributing bad arguments to Aristotle. However, I am not as I do not deny that the same argument can have a quite different interpretation when considered in a different light, e.g., when trying to make sense of the logical—rather than rhetorical—structure of the argument.

taken as a given that it is good and those who agree are spoken well of. Aristotle writes, “People of quality, for their part, those who tend towards a life of action, go for honour; for pretty much this is the end of political life” (1095b23-24). Again, just as the previous passage about pleasure indicates that the audience already believed that pleasure was not the greatest good, this indicates that the audience either took honor to be the greatest good or at least already saw it as a viable candidate for the greatest good. It need not be convinced. Indeed, given that Aristotle’s audience was populated by aspiring politicians, this is very likely so.¹²¹

Of course, Aristotle quickly proceeds to discard honor as the candidate that they are looking for. This marks his first attempt to persuade his audience with respect to ends by offering them an argument. In this argument, he lists two reasons why honor cannot be the greatest good. The first reason relies on the principle of self-sufficiency. Aristotle writes, “[b]ut it appears more superficial than what we are looking for, as it seems to be in those doing the honouring rather than in the person receiving it, and our hunch is that the good is properly something that is god given and difficult to take away from him” (1095b24-28). It would seem that honor is not the greatest good, because possession of it depends to a great extent on other people. If the audience saw honor to be the greatest good, Aristotle’s suggestion would help in causing the audience to doubt that perception. A good that does not rely on other things for its goodness is better than a good that does.

The peculiarly rhetorical nature of this argument should be noted. I do not deny that a perfectly sound argument could be supplied to support Aristotle’s point that the good should be something that one has without having to rely on others. But the details particular to what Aristotle actually says indicate his interest in rhetoric and persuasion, rather than the construction

¹²¹ cf. Adkins (1993, 350), Salkever (2007).

of a logical argument. First, it is unclear in what sense honor is “in” the people doing the honoring rather than “in” those who are honored. Even if honor is bestowed upon one by others, honor seems to still belong to one, even if its possession is not as stable as one would like.

Even if we grant Aristotle this point, the second implied distinction makes it even more problematic. Aristotle says that we think of the good as “god given.” This nicely contrasts with a good that is given by the many. What is better, a gift from a human or a gift from the divine? The latter, of course. But if Aristotle’s first claim were true, namely that honor is *in* or *belongs* to those who do the honoring, then it raises some questions: should it not be the same here, that if honor is given to us by God, it is still then *in* God? In dissolving this tension, one could go on to show that there is a dissimilarity between people and gods, such that gods can actually transmit honor to us, whereas people can merely temporarily bestow it. But Aristotle does not do this. In any case, regardless of the possibility of constructing a sound argument from what Aristotle has said, on the surface it is far under-explained. Yet, perhaps because of its brevity, it is constructed such that it remains pointed and immediately persuasive.

After presenting this argument and building on it, Aristotle gives another reason why honor cannot be the greatest good. He utilizes the principle of completeness, previously seen in the *Rhetoric*: that the end is something that is good in itself and never for the sake of anything else. In wanting to be honored, we don’t just desire honor: we want it for the sake of demonstrating to ourselves that we are good. This is indicated by the fact that we don’t want to be honored by just anyone, but by distinguished people. As Aristotle writes, “Again, people seem to pursue honour in order to be convinced that they themselves are good: at any rate they seek to be honoured by people of discernment, and among those who know them, and to be honored for excellence”

(1095b28-30). Unlike the previous passage, this argument is not entirely negative. In dismissing honor as the final good, Aristotle introduces “excellence,” something related to but better than honor. Unfortunately, even excellence is not quite the good that Aristotle is searching for. In introducing another qualification that the final good must meet, Aristotle notes that the good must be something *active*. It cannot simply be a state in which we exist. It must be something we do. Thus, because Aristotle takes excellence to be a state, excellence too cannot be the final end he is searching for.¹²²

Overall, this series of arguments makes three important points. First, it provides a sample of the rhetorical techniques in Aristotle’s speech. Knowing that his audience shares certain beliefs, he can take certain claims for granted and presume that there are certain points that his audience will be predisposed to agree with, namely, that pleasure is not the greatest good and that honor is. This series of arguments also provides evidence that Aristotle does not presume that his audience is well (i.e. perfectly) brought up and already in possession of those ends that he thinks are best for man. For after bringing up pleasure and honor, Aristotle sees the need to offer his audience more substantial arguments about why honor and subsequently excellence are the greatest goods. If they had already been in agreement about their goodness, Aristotle would not have needed to offer such arguments. Finally, the passages give a demonstration of Aristotle’s skillful transferal of the audience from one end to the next. He presumes the audience to think that honor is the greatest good and, on the basis of this belief, is able to move the audience to (as yet unspecified) excellence.

¹²² Admittedly, this same move might be logically astute. But given that Aristotle is being sensitive to the rhetorical elements of his argument (as part 3b gave us reason to believe) this part of the argument is also rhetorically important.

This last point is important. At this stage in the argument, excellence is left completely unspecified, allowing the audience to put in its place whatever they take to be excellences. As Smith (2000), Adkins (1993) and Salkever (2007) have all argued, the audience does not share Aristotle's values. The audience is influenced by Homeric virtues (Adkins) or is overly committed to external value such as wealth (Smith). The vagueness of Aristotle's argument is intentional here, since it allows the audience to easily accept that excellence is the greatest good.

Having made these arguments, Aristotle ends with a mention of the life of contemplation only to put it off again until the next chapter. When he does get to it, the ensuing argument, which secondary literature calls the "function argument," demonstrates his attempt to move the audience from the thought that excellence may be greatest good to the exercise of reason being the greatest good. The function argument begins by considering the relationship between a thing's function and its excellence (1097b25). For instance, the function of a sculptor is to sculpt, and a good sculptor is one who performs his function well. By analogy, if Aristotle can show that humans have a function and he can identify it, he will be able to find the human excellence (1097b30). How exactly the function argument works (and whether it works at all) is a matter of some debate and one that I need not tackle here. All that needs to be acknowledged here is that the audience does indeed believe that humans have a function (1097b33) and indeed it is at this very point that Aristotle employs a stylistic flourish. As Adkins (1984) has noted, "When Aristotle inquires whether man has no *ergon*, but is *argos*, the translators render 'without a function'; but *argos* is the everyday Greek for 'lazy,' and Liddell-Scott-Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, cites no other example of the sense 'without a function.' The choice of word is a donnish joke; and it directs the attention to the 'task, work' sense of *ergon* even as Aristotle

embarks upon his biological argument from the *De Anima*” (37). In other words, Aristotle connects the “no” answer to the question “does man have a function?” with laziness, something that is bad and which makes such an answer appear ridiculous. This in turn makes the answer “yes” appear good.

Given that humans have a function, Aristotle surveys the various functions that a human actually performs and comes up with three: mere life (ζῆν εἶναι), perception, and rationality. The first two are ruled out because they are not unique to humans. Mere life is shared with all living things, even plants, whereas the life of perception is shared with non-human animals (1098a1-4). It is the third that is unique to humans as thus constitutes the uniquely human function. As Aristotle writes, “There remains a practical sort of life of what possesses reason; and of this, one element ‘possesses reason’ in so far as it is obedient to reason, while another possesses it in so far as it actually has it, and itself thinks” (1098a3-6). The parts that Aristotle discusses are the rational and desiderative parts of the soul.¹²³ Thus, the distinctively human functions are reasoning itself and in connection with this, the ability to act in obedience to reason. Following Aristotle’s initial statements about the relation between function and excellence leads us to the following conclusion about the uniquely human excellence: the life lived reasoning well, with the part of the soul obedient to reason being obedient to excellent reason about what to do and doing it.

This is, I think, essentially what Aristotle’s actual formulation states, although his is significantly more verbose. He writes,

[7][a] If the function of a human being is activity of the soul in accordance with reason, or not apart from reason, [b] and the function, we say, of a given sort of practitioner and a good practitioner of that sort is generically the same, as for example in the case of a

¹²³ See the previous chapter for a lengthier discussion of this point.

cithara-player and a good cithara-player, and this is so without qualification in all cases, when a difference in respect of excellence is added to the function (for what belongs to the citharist is to play the cithara, to the good citharist to play it well)—[c] if all this is so, and a human being's function we posit as being a kind of life, and this life as being activity of the soul and actions accompanied by reason, and it belongs to a good man to perform these well and finely, and each thing is completed well when it possesses its proper excellence: [d] if all this is so, the human good turns out to be activity of the soul in accordance with excellence (and if there are more excellences than one, in accordance with the best and most complete) (1098a8-18).

In this formulation, Aristotle first redefines in [a] the human function, namely that it is activity of the soul in accordance with reason. He then rehashes parts of the function argument. In [b] he takes pains to state that the difference between a good x and an x is not a difference in kind or *genera*. Rather, the difference lies in the extent to which a particular x approximates the excellence of the kind x . Hence, Aristotle claims that the difference between a cithara-player and a good cithara-player is “a difference in respect of excellence . . . added to the function.” That is, there is not a difference in kind, but a difference in how good an instance of a kind that particular x is. In [c] we turn back to talking about humans. The function of the human kind is activity of soul and action done in accordance with reason. Now, a good instance of this kind is a person who performs “these well and finely,” where “these” presumably refers to the activities of reasoning and action in accordance with reasoning.

The final clause, [d], pulls together Aristotle's account of human excellence with the final good, producing Aristotle's most definitive statement of the human good.¹²⁴ Picking up his requirement that the good must be active (first mentioned in the previous chapter of the *NE*), he concludes that the human good must be the activity of the most complete rational virtue, which (as we will see) turns out to be *theoria*. To be sure, this is a controversial conclusion, in line with an exclusivist reading of the *Ethics*. Although I am largely taking it for granted that Aristotle

¹²⁴ Glassen (1957), Roopen (2006)

presents an exclusivist account in the *NE*, I'll discuss a few reasons in favor of reading the passage in this way. One of the difficulties with this final passage is that the unparenthetical portion of [d] is overly vague and can only be understood in context.¹²⁵ The trouble is that Aristotle says that the human good “turns out to be activity of the soul in accordance with excellence.” Read in isolation, this passage is nearly tautological. At the opening of the function argument, Aristotle states as given that a thing's good is performing its particular function excellently. Clause [d], read in isolation, seems to simply be restatement of this earlier definition. A human's good is activity in accordance with excellence. The only thing he seems to be adding in [d], if he is adding it at all, is an emphasis on the fact that in order to be excellent, one must actually *perform* one's function well. In order to make this statement more substantive we must ask *what* excellence, and the clearest answer is that it must be the only excellence unique to humans mentioned in the entirety of Aristotle's function argument, namely reason. Thus the distinctively human good consists of excellent reasoning and, because it is not enough to simply *be* rationally excellent, one must actually use one's rational capacity to reason excellently.¹²⁶

Of course it must be granted that all of the human excellences, both the excellences of the rational part of the soul and the excellences of the non-rational, desiderative part of the soul, are, in a certain manner of thinking, captured by having excellent reason. The human good requires action along with good reasoning and the character virtues are required for good action, so the character virtues must also be a part of the human good. Indeed, this is how Ackrill's inclusivist account interprets Aristotle and he concludes that at the end of the function argument Aristotle leaves it open that *eudaimonia* might consist of a number of virtues.

¹²⁵ See Ackrill ([1978] 1980)

¹²⁶ This interpretation is similar to Korsgaard (2008).

The final, parenthetical clause seems to rule this out though since it appears to limit the human good to a single excellence: “and if there are more excellences than one, in accordance with the best and most complete.” Ackrill’s interpretation of this final clause is wholly inadequate. He writes that it refers “to *complete* and not some one *particular* virtue” (29). But this must be a false reading. First of all, Ackrill seems to be relying a little too heavily on the meaning of the English word “complete” here in making his point, rather than Aristotle’s Greek technical term. This is important because the earlier discussion of completeness seemed to involve a single good. This indicates that Aristotle is comparing particular virtues here and concluding that the human excellence will be in accordance with the best and most complete *particular* virtue; he is not comparing a complete set with an incomplete set.

Regardless of how this passage is finally interpreted, the important point at the end of this argument is Aristotle’s focus on rationality and *explicitly not* any other virtues, even if those virtues are somehow tied to the rational virtues. To return to the analogy with the knife, man’s various character traits are similar to the physical traits of a knife. The function of a knife is to cut. In order to cut well, a number of things must be true of the knife. It must be hard, well balanced, well shaped, and sharp. However, even so, the good of a knife is not any one of these things or even the combination of them. Rather, the good of a knife is to cut well and these things are good *insofar* as they allow the knife to cut. If a dull knife made out of butter could cut better than a sharp steel knife, then we should do away with steel and make our knives out of butter. The same is true of the human. Even if a human must have certain non-rational qualities to be a good reasoner, this does not mean that the end itself is identical to these non-rational qualities. It may be that in order to exercise one’s reason well that one’s non-rational soul must

be in a certain state, but this does not mean that the good, i.e. the excellent exercise of reason, is identical to these states. Man's function is reason, and the best reasoning man will be the most virtuous man.

6. From Reason to *Theoria*

This interpretation demonstrates the rhetorical subtlety of Aristotle's argument while explaining some of the passages' ambiguities. Aristotle manages to subtly move from honor to excellence by showing the audience that what they take to be good in honor can be better found in excellence. He then moves from excellence in general to the exercise of reason itself as an end. Before the function argument, excellence is referred to very generally, without much specification, allowing the audience to conceive it as they wish. But by the end of the function argument in I.7, excellence has been made more specific. It is the excellent exercise of reason in particular and the human good is activity in accordance with this excellent reason. By making this specification, Aristotle has refocused happiness/the human good/the final end on reason rather than simply the sort of person one is, whether one is truthful, brave etc. As I will argue, this allows Aristotle to make his final move, convincing his audience that the exercise of reason in the activity of contemplation in particular is the most virtuous activity that one can engage in.

We should note that any interpretation which maintains that it is the *NE*'s contention that the good for man is contemplation faces a significant challenge. In particular, it must explain why Aristotle concludes that the greatest good is an intellectual activity after having spent most of the ethics discussing character excellences and activities associated with them. I admit that I do not have a conclusive answer to this challenge. Rather, my interpretation contributes an

additional explanation that will stand alongside the explanations that other commentators have already offered. For instance, Kraut (1991) has argued that while contemplation is the greatest good, being practically virtuous is still the second best sort of life and one that will be available to far more people than contemplation. Additionally, the different emphases placed on the topics covered in the *NE* could be the consequence of an editor, not Aristotle. And finally, Gavin Lawrence (1993) has argued that having the character virtues is necessary for living the contemplative life. I add to this list in the following way. I will argue that speaking at length about the character virtues is rhetorically valuable, since it allows Aristotle to switch from maintaining that practical wisdom is the highest good to maintaining that contemplation is the highest good. The manner in which he makes this switch is both surprising and persuasive.

When people talk about the virtues of the *NE*, they rightly think of the virtues in terms of the intellectual virtues, which belong to the rational part of the soul, and the ethical virtues, which belong to the non-rational part of the soul. They also think of *NE*'s chapters as being roughly divided in the same way: part of 3, and all of 4, 5, 8, and 9 are thought of as being devoted to the non-rational virtues while 6, 7 and 10 are devoted to the rational virtues. This way of slicing the *NE* up is accurate to a certain extent, since Aristotle does talk about the non-rational in the cited chapters and about the rational soul in the other cited chapters. However, such a division ignores the fact that *what* these chapters on the non-rational soul give us is an analysis of the non-rational excellences that is addressed to the rational part of the soul, not the non-rational part. One might worry that this observation is so obvious as to be useless, yet it is rarely acknowledged, at least explicitly. In order to have the character virtues, one must also know what these virtues are, how to identify them, how to organize them, and so on. In short, the

important thing about the non-rational virtues is their corresponding rational element that organizes them and brings them about as a result of thinking about life and action. And this is precisely what Aristotle is giving us in these chapters: the rational *logoi*, that is, the sort of thought that a happy life requires (although, as we see below, it turns out that such a life is the second most happy life). He considers how each of the virtues should be thought of, what their relationship with each other is, how to consider the value of other people in our lives. In going through this, he shows the audience what constitutes excellent reasoning. Moreover, he shows them how to think about their lives in an architectonic manner according to which they are organized around ends that are virtuous.¹²⁷

Now, if this is right, all of these discussions of the character virtues count as examples of exercising practical wisdom. Rhetorically speaking, this means that Aristotle has subtly shifted from talking about excellences generally in *NE* I to talking about rational excellence in particular—with his audience barely noticing, at least from books III–V. For if one’s aim is to exercise reason well in planning and acting in one’s life and if well thought out actions are actions that help instantiate the non-rational virtues, then talking about the exercise of practical reason will of course closely involve the non-rational parts of the soul. The difference resides in the emphasis of the discussion and, more substantially, in how to think of what exactly is valuable in performing virtuous action. Thus, at this point, to the audience, the emphasis on rationality will not be substantially different from Aristotle’s earlier consideration that excellence resides in the character excellences, for instance honor.

¹²⁷ To be clear, my view is not the view that Aristotle’s discussion of the character virtues is entirely unimportant and that discussion of them will be uncontroversial to the audience. Rather, I think that Aristotle’s choice of virtues is substantial and controversial but I also think that what is important about these virtues is how to *reason* and *think* about them.

This shift sets the stage for Aristotle's final, more provocative argument about ends in *NE X*, which maintains that contemplation is the best activity, not practically virtuous activities. This argument in particular and *NE X* more generally raise a number of questions. Here I focus on one, since its resolution highlights Aristotle's rhetorical agenda. Why, in the very last chapter of the *Ethics* does Aristotle finally choose to tackle the topic of pleasure at length? In the overall scheme of the *NE*, he might have expanded on pleasure earlier, in *NE III* for example, when he was specifically concerned about deliberation and choice, or in *NE I*, when he was considering pleasure as an end. Aristotle's choice to delay his elaboration is also puzzling because it prefaces *NE X*'s argument about contemplation, an argument that could have potentially come much earlier in the *NE*. Indeed, he had the necessary components for such an argument in *NE I*. There, he established the good as a kind of rational activity both self-sufficient and complete. Practical rational activity, to a degree, met all of these conditions. However, contemplation, the exercise of theoretical rationality, meets all of these conditions to an even higher degree than practical rationality and hence has a better claim to being called the human good. I will contend that these two discussions about pleasure and contemplation go together. The discussion of pleasure can be understood as a preamble to Aristotle's argument about contemplation aimed at preparing the audience to accept Aristotle's conclusion.

There is a straightforward reason why Aristotle begins *NE X* with a discussion of pleasure. It gives him yet another standard by which he can judge contemplation superior to excellent activity: contemplation can be sustained longer than excellent activity and thus can give us more pleasure than excellent activity. This, I think is correct. However, I also think that there is a deeper reason for Aristotle's discussion of pleasure that demonstrates why Aristotle spends so

much time on it in *NE X*. It gives the audience the psychological resources to see their own good as less pleasant than contemplation, an activity in which it cannot yet fully participate.

Let us start at the beginning of Aristotle's discussion of pleasure in *NE X.1*. As I noted, Chapter 2 opens with Aristotle's observation that pleasure is central to practical life, even though it is not the greatest good.¹²⁸ He writes, "their effect [i.e. the effect of pleasure and pain] extends through every part of life, constituting a powerful influence in regard to excellence and the happy life, for it is pleasant things that people choose, and painful ones that they avoid" (1172a23-25).

The ubiquity of pleasure and pain, Aristotle argues, has led many people to misunderstand what role they play in our practical lives. Some have thought pleasure to be *the* good in life, while others have perceived pleasure as bad and to be avoided. Aristotle denies both of these views. Instead, he maintains that pleasure is an affection that accompanies all activities and as such is good if it accompanies a good activity. To show this, Aristotle argues that pleasure accompanies actions that are good or excellent while pain accompanies those that are bad or vicious:

[b]ut since every sense is active in relation to the sense-object, and completely active when the sense is in good condition and its object is the finest in the domain of that sense (for something like this, more than anything else, is what complete activity of a sense seems to be; let it be a matter of indifference whether we say the sense itself, or what it is in, is active)—this being so, well, in the case of each of the senses the activity that is best is the one whose subject is in the best condition in relation to the object that is most worth while in the domain of that sense. But this activity will be most complete and most pleasant. For all the kinds of sensory activity give rise to pleasure, and so too do thought and reflection; but the most complete is the most pleasant, and most complete is that whose subject is in good condition, in relation to the most worth while of the objects in the domain of the sense; and pleasure is what completes the activity (1174b15-24).

¹²⁸ As Aristotle maintained in *NE I*.

In this passage, Aristotle argues for different degrees of an activity's pleasantness by making an analogy between sense perception and thought. A sense's activity is most complete¹²⁹ when (1) it is in good condition and (2) is perceiving an object which is of the best sort that the sense is capable of perceiving. In such cases, not only will the activity that takes place be best, it will also be the most pleasant. Pleasure "gives rise to" or "supervenes on" or is "yoked to" activities.

In the passage above, Aristotle seems to base his ideas on his analysis in *NE* 1 of characters and their corresponding ends. People of different character states will identify different objects as pleasant. For instance, a musically oriented person will be interested in listening to music and will get pleasure when hearing music. But there are degrees in the sort of pleasure such people can have. A person interested in music with a well trained ear will get the most pleasure out of listening to good music while a person who is interested in music but does not have a well trained ear and/or who is not interested in the best sort of music will receive a lesser amount of pleasure. In short, more expertise and more training will allow one to have more complete experiences that are accompanied by more pleasure with respect to the objects of expertise. The same goes for thought and reflection. The better one's faculties of thought are and the better the object of consideration is, the more complete that activity will be. And in being more complete it will be more pleasant.

Continuing, Aristotle argues that this close relationship between activity and pleasure indicates that pleasures differ in accordance with the activities with which they are associated. This means that just as there are different kinds of activities, so too are there different kinds of pleasures. This is indicated by the fact that the pleasure one gets out of engaging in an activity motivates one to further pursue that particular activity and not some other sort of pleasant

¹²⁹ That is to say, an activity is most of all not lacking in something when (1) and (2) hold.

activity. In Aristotle's words, "each gets better at his own task though taking pleasure in it; and the pleasures contribute to the increase; but what contributes to increasing something belongs to it as its own, and where things are different in kind, what belongs to each is different in kind" (1175a35-1175b2). This difference of kind among different pleasures is further revealed by cases in which one is impeded from doing one activity because of the pleasure from another activity. Aristotle writes, "[l]overs of pipe-music are incapable of paying attention to a discussion if they happen to hear someone playing the pipes, because they take more pleasure in the pipe-playing than in their present activity. So the pleasure in pipe-playing destroys the activity of discussion" (1175b4-6). This is further evidence that the pleasure that one takes out of an activity is peculiar to a specific activity. It is closely bound up with that activity to such a degree that people often mistake that the activity just *is* pleasure (X.5, 1175b34).

The close tie between pleasures and activities allows us to call some pleasures good and others bad. If the activity in which one engages is good, the associated pleasure is good. If the activity is bad, so too is the pleasure. We therefore already have a way of marking some pleasures as superior and others as inferior, namely the function argument. To show this, Aristotle notes that each animal has a proper pleasure associated with its function: "A horse's pleasure, a dog's, and a man's are different" (X.5, 1176a5-6). Moreover, the lower animals are such that they do not even have the capacity to recognize certain things as pleasant. Citing Heraclitus, Aristotle observes that "donkeys will choose sweepings to gold; something to eat is more pleasant than gold, for donkeys" (X.5, 1176a7-8). He concludes that a difference in animal results in a difference in pleasure: "If creatures are distinct in kind, then, their pleasures will be

different in kind; and if they are of the same kind, one might reasonably expect their pleasures not to differ” (X.5, 1176a8-10)

However, in the case of humans, we *cannot* expect individuals’ pleasures not to differ. There is in fact wide variation and what is pleasant to some is painful to others. Aristotle gives two comparisons to taste and health to explain why this is so. “The same things don’t seem sweet to the person with a fever and the one in good health, nor warm to those who are frail and those who are physically fit. This happens with other things too in the same way” (X.5, 1176a13-15). Aristotle goes on to compare this to properly moral cases. Similar to a sick person, the person who is corrupt will not see as pleasant the same thing that the person who is in good moral condition will see as pleasant. Given that what is actually good is determined by the person who is excellent, the corrupt will fail to see the same things as good and hence will take pleasure in what is not good.

The argument leads the audience to a position where it can see that other animals, whether those animals are non-human animals or humans more corrupt than itself, do not have the ability to see as pleasant what it sees as pleasant. By beginning with animals, Aristotle distinguishes between activities that give the audience pleasure and activities that give animals pleasure. In this distinction, the animal pleasures are clearly seen as inferior. What is more, non-human animals are cognitively blind to the higher pleasure of humans. They do not even recognize that such pleasures exist. Aristotle uses his distinction between pleasures to make an analogous distinction among human beings themselves. He states that a virtuous person will have the capacity to see good things as pleasant, while the corrupt person will lack the capacity to make

similar distinctions (X.5, 1176a20-24). Like the donkey and like the unhealthy person, corrupt people will receive inferior pleasures from inferior objects.

At this point, as far as the audience understands itself, it *is* excellent. Or, if not quite excellent then nearly excellent, for it believes it can now see as pleasant what is truly excellent. The audience's feeling that it is in the superior position of being able to see what is truly excellent as pleasant has been entrenched by Aristotle's lengthy discussion of how to reason about the character excellences. Now it, too, can reason well about what to do and about its character. And from its point of view, it can recognize those people are inferior who are not as well brought up as themselves, who have not had the opportunity to listen to Aristotle's lectures, and who are lacking these cognitive resources.

Aristotle reiterates his points in the next chapter, where he identifies slaves, a group people unlike those in the audience, as those who cannot receive the sort of pleasure that excellent people can. The happiest life is an activity and this activity cannot be amusements and childish play. For "just anyone can enjoy bodily pleasures, and a slave no less than the best kind of person; but no one thinks of a slave having a share in happiness, unless he also has a share in life" (1177a8-10). The happiest life must consist in the pleasure that one gets from excellent activity. Those who cannot appreciate excellence like the audience cannot experience the best sort of pleasure or be happy.

At the conclusion of this argument, the audience can appreciate that other people, such as slaves and the corrupt, are barred from experiencing higher pleasures and hence barred from experiencing happiness. As a reader of the text, the slave and corrupt person appear to be in a very unfortunate position. They do experience pleasure of a sort, but it is not the best sort of

pleasure. Worse, it seems that they will not even be able to understand the people who take part in those higher pleasures. It is therefore striking that just after the comment about slaves, Aristotle moves on to argue that wisdom (*sophia*) and contemplation, not character excellence and practical wisdom, produce the best sort of life. The audience is forced into the position of the corrupt person, since up until this moment, it perceived as most pleasant what was not. It has, by analogy, been placed into the position of the corrupt. However, it is in a better position than the average corrupt person, for it recognizes the inferiority of its position and can imagine contemplation as being more pleasant. For by the very same principles according to which the audience was moved by Aristotle to think of *themselves* as initially having a superior view of the good, namely self-sufficiency and completeness, the audience can now see that contemplation is the greatest good. It can now see that these principles describe aspects of the final good and that contemplation meets these aspects. This allows it, without having ever engaged in the activity of contemplation, to imagine contemplation in their mind's eye, so to speak, as something that is pleasant, indeed more pleasant than what it previously saw as most pleasant.

7. Conclusion

We can see now that in the *NE*, Aristotle presents an argument that is, at the very least, aimed at persuading his audience that contemplation is the highest good, although he has also convinced them first that excellence is a good, then reason, and then, finally contemplation. This argument is distinctive because of the moves that Aristotle makes in leading his audience from valuing one end to valuing another. This is especially true of Aristotle's final argument in *NE X*. There, Aristotle begins with pleasure, the very thing that makes one see an activity as worth

pursuing. Through comparisons to donkeys, the sick, and slaves, he moves the audience to see that some people are in the unfortunate situation of not being able to see truly pleasant ends as pleasant. Finally, he turns this argument on the audience itself. He argues that its present ends, while pleasant, are not the most pleasant, and that it should imagine as most pleasant the activity of contemplation.

My focus on the rhetorical structure of the *NE* also sheds light on some of the structural questions surrounding it. First, we have seen that the text's discussion of character virtues is used to Aristotle's rhetorical advantage (among other things). His lengthy discussion cements the audience's belief in its own ability to see as good what is truly virtuous. Aristotle takes advantage of the audience's belief and turns the belief against it in *NE X*.¹³⁰ His strategies reveal the centrality of pleasure to Book X specifically and to the *NE* as a whole. Aristotle's discussion of pleasure, typically seen as a preamble to his discussion of contemplation, is central to persuading the audience to see contemplation, not practical reason, as good.

¹³⁰ This is not to say that I think that this explanation is sufficient to explain the imbalance between the discussions of the character and intellectual virtues. The fact that the practically virtuous life is good to a secondary degree is, considered in isolation, a much better reason. Rather, what this rhetorical reading can show is that this structure is intentional and not an indication that *NE X* is an aberration that does not fit into the *NE*.

CONCLUSION

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SELF-CONTROL

Chapters 1 and 2 argued for a single account of motivation across Aristotle's accounts of motion (non-rational movement) and action (rational movement). According to Aristotle's account of motivation in movement, we are motivated to pursue those ends that we perceive to be pleasant. Such perceptions are made possible by *phantasmata*, sense experiences that have been saved in the soul. When we experience a perception similar to one of these *phantasmata*, the similar *phantasma* is recalled, enriching the perception. If this recalled *phantasma* is pleasant, our new perception will also be pleasant, and we will be motivated to act for the object that we see. For instance, because I have enjoyed the sweet smell of roses in the past, when I see a rose in the future, I will not only perceive it to be red, I will also perceive it as something with a pleasant smell that will draw me forward.

I argued that this account of perceptual motivation is the same account of motivation operating in Aristotle's account of rational action. I began by showing that in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle uses perceptual language to talk about how deliberation establishes our ends. We take as an end what we *see* to be good. This perception of the good motivates us to deliberate about how to achieve that perceived end. We could, I noted, take Aristotle's perceptual language to be a way of referring to intellectual activity, some kind of intellectual seeing. However, I argued that taking Aristotle's language in relation to ends as specifically perceptual is beneficial for two reasons.

First, interpreting his language in this way unites Aristotle's accounts of movement and action. This is beneficial because it allows us to have a broader, more integrated understanding of Aristotle's practical philosophy as well as his psychology and biology. Moreover, it helps explain why, when discussing motivation in movement, Aristotle seems happy to apply it to humans in situations when they are clearly using their reason.

Second, this account makes sense of Aristotle's claim that "[character] excellence makes our ends right" in a very straightforward way. The development of character through habituation determines how we perceive the world and hence what sort of activities we see pleasant and painful. Thus, character determines what sorts of ends we see as pleasant and painful and hence what ends we pursue. If we have a good character, then, this will make the ends we desire to pursue right.

However, despite these benefits, my account also presented a problem. When working through the particulars of the relation between perception and rational thought, it appeared to entail that reason could have *no* influence over what we took to be an end. The reason for this, we saw, is that perception determines our capacity for thought in a very important sense. Our ability to think about the world is enabled by our ability to have perceptual experiences; this is because when we think, we do so by means of our saved perceptions. Thus, I think and believe roses to be red because of my past experience with roses and my perception of their being red. This is limiting insofar as it restricts what we can truly think about the world. While one might be able to imagine a black rose, one cannot truly believe that roses are black.

This extends to action because our sense experience includes pleasure and pain, which determine the ends that motivate action. When we have had a pleasant experience with an object

in the past, this causes us to think of it as pleasant and therefore, I argued, as something that is a good to pursue in the future. As in the case of the rose, we can of course imagine an activity to be pleasant and hence good, but we will only be motivated to pursue those objects or activities that we have truly experienced (and hence perceived) as pleasant.

This moral psychology presents Aristotle in a Humean light. Indeed, as we saw, on the basis of this moral psychology, Jessica Moss argues that Aristotle *is* a kind of Humean and that reason cannot alter the ends that we pursue. On her view, our ends are always determined via perception by non-rational desire for pleasure and pain. However, based on evidence found in the *Rhetoric*, I argued that we did not have to conclude with Moss that Aristotle is a Humean. The *Rhetoric*, I maintained, showed that in the case of one person presenting an argument to another, reason is capable of altering one's perception and therefore of altering the ends that one pursues.

This account of rational influence operates by exploiting the same psychology that Moss thought must entail a Humean reading of Aristotle. As Moss and I argue, because thought must think with images, our perceptions do influence our thoughts in a deep way. However, I argued that this also means that influence can go in the other direction, from reason to perception, and the *Rhetoric* shows us how. By thinking of objects and activities in the world in creative ways, one rearranges the images that one thinks with, taking pieces of some and combining them with others. This allows for the operations of reason to change our perception of the world. Hence, an argument that encouraged one to think and thus recall certain perceptions while also creatively rearranging those perceptions would be able to change our perception of the world. And since pleasure is a content of our perceptual experience, such arguments—and hence reason—could alter whether we saw an object as good or bad and, consequently, as an end to pursue or avoid.

In the final chapter, Chapter 4, I applied the creative rhetorical arguments discussed in Chapter 3 to the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the *NE*, I argued, Aristotle is attempting to persuade his audience that contemplation is the greatest good to pursue. In pursuit of this conclusion, Aristotle utilizes the rhetorical arguments suggested in the *Rhetoric* capable of changing the audience's perception of its ends.

Broadly speaking, the account of practical reasoning about ends that I develop in Chapters 3 and 4 can be seen as a negotiation between reason and desire. The ends that people see as worth pursuing are largely determined by their unreasoned non-rational desires, although reason can have an impact on these ends by presenting alternate ends. However, the perceptual faculty will not accept just any end that reason presents; it must be able to see the presented end as pleasant. In order to accomplish this, reason must construct these ends by manipulating and reconfiguring stored *phantasmata* that perception already sees as good. Only when it is done in this way will the rational ends appear to one as good and hence as a real alternative end to pursue.

Moss assumed that these perceptions could only be presented as whole perceptions as they were experienced. I have argued that the *Rhetoric* shows us that they do not have to be. The orator can construct ends from bits of one's experience, borrowing the pleasure that one received from an activity one engaged in and connecting it to a new activity that the orator wants to persuade the audience to pursue. If the orator succeeds he will have presented an argument that alters the ends that his audience pursues. Thus ends can be rationally altered.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I noted that my account concerning the selection of ends would meet three constraints. The first two constraints are as follows: (1) it should treat

perception as a non-rational faculty and thus resist imbuing it with capacities typically reserved for rationality; (2) it should take at face value Aristotle's suggestion that rational activity can substantially alter the direction of one's life. Throughout, I have been able to limit the functionality of perception, thus maintaining its non-rational status, while also showing that it is capable of explaining motivation. Moreover, in explaining how an orator can alter one's ends with reason I have shown, at least in theory, that reason can alter the ends of one's life.

The third constraint stated that I should be able to take at face value Aristotle's claim that character makes our ends right. I have met this limitation for two reasons. First, on my account, although reason can affect ends, people are still largely guided by their characters and hence by their non-rational desires. One's character determines what one does and does not take pleasure in doing. These pleasures and pains determine the ends one pursues and avoids. Of course, there are cases where another person can alter these ends with an argument, but such occasions are rare. Thus, on my view it turns out that it is most accurate to say that character sets ends.

However, even in the cases where reason does influence ends, I think that Aristotle would still consider these ends to be set by the non-rational desiderative soul of which character is a state. To see this, we need only consider again the relationship between memory and remembering. We saw in Chapter 1 that recollection is an intellectual activity used by Aristotle to characterize the rational search one can engage in to provoke oneself into having a particular memory. In contrast, because humans and non-human animals share memory, Aristotle maintained that it must be non-rational. It is simply the state of actually remembering some past experience. This is true even in the case where memory is the result of recollection. That is, even

in the case where one goes through the rational process of recollection, the memorial state that one provokes is nonetheless a non-rational one.

We can make a similar claim about *phantasmata* and ends. The orator might successfully guide his audience to take up a certain end through rhetorical argumentation, but what the argument evokes is a non-rational, perceptual state, namely the perception of a particular *phantasma*. Moreover, the particular *phantasma* is perceived as pleasant or painful, good or bad, on the basis of an aspect or aspects of one's character, even if those aspects are rearranged by the argument. Consequently, even when reason influences ends, those ends are ultimately selected by a non-rational faculty and largely shaped by one's character states. Even in this case, my account can maintain that the non-rational element of the soul (of which character is a state), not reason, determines our ends.

On this reading of Aristotle, we can see that character, not reason, sets ends, while allowing reason to influence those ends. However, this account of reason is still incomplete. It has only shown how reason of *another person* can alter one's ends. This argument still requires an account of how one can rationally alter one's *own* ends, if indeed such a thing is possible at all. Unfortunately, there is little to no textual evidence for such an account. By contrast, there is much more evidence of people rationally influencing others. Nonetheless, we can derive such an account on the basis of the moral psychology that the previous chapters presented. Although not strictly based on the text, this account is close in spirit to Aristotle's text and is philosophically plausible. I will conclude, therefore, by sketching such an account.

1. Self-Control

A broad look at Aristotle's ethical works reveals that he believes that looking at one's life rationally, investigating the good, inquiring about what to do, and considering how to live can fundamentally alter the way one acts. His most explicit statement about the effects that one's rationality can have on the direction of one's life appears in the *Protrepticus*, at least according to Isocrates and reconstructions of this lost Aristotelian work. As the name suggests, this is a work of hortatory aimed at encouraging students to study philosophy. One strain of argument in the text appears to be similar to the argument that Aristotle presents to his audience in the *NE*. In the *Protrepticus*, he maintains that rationality is the best function man is capable of and the philosopher exercises this function to its highest degree. But in addition to this, he argues that another of philosophy's benefits is that it will affect one's life; it will show one how to live better:

[1] But it is clear that the philosopher is the only producer to have both laws that are secure and actions that are right and noble. [25|26] For he is the only one who lives looking at nature and at the divine and, just as if he were some good helmsman who hitches the first principles of life onto things which are eternal and steadfast, he moors his ship and lives life on his own terms (Iamblichus, *Protrepticus*, chapter X, 55.7-56.2, quoted in Hutchinson and Johnson 2013, 53).

[2] Now then, this knowledge is theoretical, but it provides us with the ability to produce, in accordance with it, everything. [4] For just as sight is a maker and producer of nothing (for its only function is to judge and to make clear each visible thing), but provides us with the ability to do an action in accordance with it and gives us the greatest help towards our actions (for we should be almost entirely motionless if deprived of it), so it's clear that, though the knowledge is theoretical, we nevertheless do thousands of things in accordance with it, accept some things and avoid others, and generally gain through it everything good (Iamblichus, *Protrepticus* X, 56.2-12, quoted in Hutchinson and Johnson 2013, 54).

In [2], Aristotle notes that the philosopher has theoretical knowledge ("this knowledge [i.e. the knowledge that the philosopher has that is discussed in [1]] is theoretical"). However, this

knowledge can be used in practical pursuits, to produce things. This is because the bits of knowledge that theoretical inquiry yields can be employed in practical pursuits, “and generally gain though [theoretical inquiry] everything good.” Now it is clear that Aristotle has in mind products gained from art (ποίησις).¹³¹ But it seems that he also means to include actions. For not only are actions part of “everything good” (πάντα τὰ ἀγαθὰ), in [1] he notes that one of the special aspects of the philosopher is that he is able to establish (“hitch”) as his ends (“first principles of life”) what is eternal and steadfast. In doing so, he lives his life on his own terms, rather than the terms of desire and emotion.

What does this say about an individual’s ability to take control of his/her own ends? In the case of the *Protrepticus*, Aristotle’s remarks are about a philosopher and not an ordinary person like those who might have read Aristotle’s letter. However, in going through this letter and thinking about its contents, Aristotle must think that his non-philosophical audience is capable of being persuaded to pursue philosophy. That is, he must think that people who do not currently take intellectual activity to be the greatest good can be persuaded to take up philosophy as their end. This interpretation reiterates what I have already argued in Chapter 4, that (mildly) corrupt people can be persuaded through arguments to take up new ends.

This implies that audience members can alter their own lives through their *own* thinking, without the help of philosophers. The mark that differentiates philosophers and non-philosophers is not simply their capacity for engaging in practical thought, but their ability to think *well* using beliefs that are *true*. As Aristotle notes in the first sentence of [1], the philosopher is the one whose actions are good and beautiful. Other people will have less consistent beliefs, will have

¹³¹ In the ethics, ποίησις (production) is the activity aimed at producing a product. This is distinguished from πράξις (action), which is an activity aimed at producing an action. Iamblichus’ use of the adjective ποιητικός in the first sentence of [2] could be used to suggest that theoretical knowledge can only be used in cases of production.

less capability of reasoning, and will have desires that stray from reason, but they too can reason. Because they can reason, they can potentially alter the ends that they see as pleasant through reasoning.

Examples of such reasoning that one may go through to convince oneself to pursue a new end is the very reasoning that Aristotle goes through in his *Protrepticus* and the *NE*. There is no reason why the members of the audience must hear Aristotle deliver the *NE*'s argument. They too could go through those intellectual motions and move themselves to new ends. For instance, based on the fact that a good life should be self-sufficient, one could, by oneself, consider a number of potential activities. These considerations could lead one to an end that one has never considered or even experienced before. In this case, if one truly sees self-sufficiency as something pleasant, one will come to see the activities to which it attaches as pleasant. Of course, having guidance from Aristotle is helpful. Aristotle provides us with the principle of self-sufficiency in the first place and his excellence of thought makes it likelier that one will arrive at ends that are good and go through reasoning that is valid. But Aristotle's guidance is not necessary.

Of course, the fact that one *could* proceed through this sort of thinking does not mean that one will. Another benefit of hearing a speech or lecture is that one is consistently urged to think and go through the argument that is being presented. Without the orator, one must be prompted to think by other means. The causes that might prompt such thought are potentially vast. One might be prompted to reconsider one's life after reading a book or after going through a traumatic experience. Or, despite having pursued those ends that one has experienced as

pleasant, one might come to feel a dissatisfaction with one's life and begin to consider a new end.

To get a better sense of how such prompting might or might not result in the formulation of a new end, consider the following example. Imagine a person who has worked his entire life to achieve a comfortable life of wealth and family. Having achieved this, this person feels a sense of dissatisfaction that results in aimlessness. In short, he has realized that his goals were not goals at all and that he must now devise new ends to pursue. How does he do this? He might consider other activities that he has enjoyed in the past which can serve as ends. Perhaps he has enjoyed the activity of fishing and, consequently, devotes his life to being a great fisherman. However, this method of choosing will not yield a new end, distinct from what the man already perceived to be good. For, in reflecting on his life, the man has chosen wholesale the pleasantest of the *phantasmata* that he found waiting in his soul. In order to devise a new end, the man must think more creatively. Imagine that instead of settling on fishing, the man reflects more deeply on his options, and as a result finds no activity sufficiently pleasant to pursue. What is the man to do in this case? He could imagine things that he *might* enjoy based on his past experience. Perhaps the man had a pleasant experience watching a guitar player in the past and knows that he likes working with his hands; because of the pleasure involved in these activities is he able to imagine that being a musician is pleasant, though he has never played guitar before. Indeed, when he first starts playing guitar, he finds the act unpleasant. However, given his imagination of how pleasant playing guitar will be when he becomes good, he persists. Eventually, the act becomes increasingly pleasant until he is finally able to have a pleasant experience playing guitar.

In this example, the end that the man establishes for himself is not entirely the consequence of non-rational desires. Nor is it a consequence of pure rationality. Rather, it is a negotiation between the two. Rationally, the man can construct the end he would like to pursue. But to be a genuine alternative, this end must be constructed from *phantasmata* of things that the man finds pleasant. However, these *phantasmata* do not have to be taken by reason as whole experiences. Reason can take aspects of some and match them with aspects of others, constructing a brand new imagination of an end that appears pleasant. In this way, the man can extrapolate from what he does find pleasant to what he might find pleasant, allowing him to determine his life in a more rational way.

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